

Transport Background Paper

Wirral Council Local Plan

21 January 2020

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

Wirral Borough Council are in the process of revising their Local Plan. Guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government¹ states that local planning authorities should undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation/review of that Plan. This document provides an overview of the transport evidence to date; it provides details on the transport work relevant to Wirral which has been undertaken in preparation for the local plan, along with an overview of existing transport context of the borough. The contents of this document will then be used in the preparation of the Local Plan.

Under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, the proposed issues and options documents for the Local Plan must be made available for consultation, and consultation bodies are invited to make representations. This background transport document will be included within the consultation process to summarise studies undertaken to date, and as evidence of the transport assessment work which has been undertaken as part of the development of the Local Plan.

Following this round of consultation, Regulation 19 consultation will take place, which is the second stage of consultation when forming a Local Plan. It will consult on proposed policies for the area within the draft Local Plan, to inform the subsequent finalisation of the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State.

1.2 Document structure

This document is structured as follows

- Chapter 2 – overview of relevant national, regional and local policy.
- Chapter 3 – Wirral's transport context.
- Chapter 4 – key issues relating to transport in Wirral.
- Chapter 5 – details of the transport evidence studies completed recently.
- Chapter 6 – next steps for Wirral for compiling the Local Plan.

¹ Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transport-evidence-bases-in-plan-making-and-decision-taking>

2 Policy and Guidance Overview

2.1 National

2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework²

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on the delivery and promotion of sustainable transport. The most recent iteration was published in February 2019. The framework sets out the government's policies on planning for England and how it expects these to be applied. The NPPF also provides a framework for local authorities and people to work within whilst still reflecting the needs of the local community.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and there is therefore a presumption in favour of sustainable development, in economic, social and environmental terms, within the NPPF. It is recognised, however, that proposals must still be considered against the latest Local Plan and be approved where they fall in line with it or refused if they conflict (unless other material considerations indicate otherwise).

Chapter 9 paragraphs 108-111 of the NPPF discusses the importance of promoting sustainable transport within new developments by setting out key issues, planning policy requirements and necessary development proposal assessments.

In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development it should be ensured that:

- Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes have been taken up, given the type of development and its location.
- Safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users.
- Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on the highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

The NPPF also states that “*developments should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe*”³.

Within this context, the NPPF also states that applications for development should:

- Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second -so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use.
- Address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport.
- Create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope of conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards.
- Allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³ NPPF, para 109, accessed online:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

- Be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Finally, the NPPF states that all developments that will generate significant amounts of movements should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

2.1.2 Local Transport Act (2008)⁴

This Act gives powers to local authorities to address increasing road congestion and improve the quality of bus services. It contains provisions to amend the law relating to:

- the responsibilities of local authorities in relation to local transport policies and plans
- the operation of local bus services and related matters, including provisions relating to traffic commissioners.
- the constitution and functions of Passenger Transport Authorities (“PTAs”), which are renamed as Integrated Transport Authorities (“ITAs”).
- the establishment and operation of local and London road user charging schemes (commonly referred to as “local road pricing schemes”).

The Act contains details on provisions relating to quality partnership and quality contracts schemes to support the improvement of local bus services, whereby local authorities can stipulate the level of service and facilities required by bus operators in their area. ITAs are able to implement a road charging scheme in conjunction with local traffic authorities and do not require Secretary of State approval for such schemes.

The Act retains the requirement for local transport authorities to develop local transport policies and plans and expands the scope of these policies so that they cover all aspects of transport, not elements relating to transport facilities and services. They should also contain consideration of how the environment can be protected and improved.

2.2 Regional

2.2.1 A New Mobility Culture for Merseyside, The third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside⁵

This statutory document, published in 2011, sets out the vision and strategy for enhancing and improving transport in Merseyside. It identifies six goals for transport in Merseyside, such as helping to create the right conditions for sustainable economic growth, providing and promoting a clean, low emission transport system, ensuring equality of travel opportunity for all and maintaining our assets to a high standard. The strategy then details how these will be achieved. Around 4 million trips start or end in Merseyside each day demonstrating the importance of ensuring the transport network can serve the needs of the region.

The strategy for delivering the vision is based on a series of principles:

- Prioritise maintenance programmes.
- Expand the range of public transport services including the role of other providers.
- Begin to implement the next generation of technology.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/26/contents>

⁵ [https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/Site%20Documents/Full%20LTP3%20\(lo%20res\)%20-%20Regional%20and%20National%20Strategy.pdf](https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/Site%20Documents/Full%20LTP3%20(lo%20res)%20-%20Regional%20and%20National%20Strategy.pdf)

- Work with the Freight Quality Partnership and other parties to develop and enhance the freight and logistics network.
- Implement the Active Travel Strategy.
- Implement the Low Emissions Strategy.
- Increase promotion of sustainable travel and behaviour change and support the Decade of Health and Wellbeing.
- Confirm the role of the Road Safety Partnership and introduce measures to control excessive speed on the highway network.

Modelling undertaken for the strategy shows that if fully implemented, traffic volumes on the highway network will reduce by 2024 from do minimum projections and have a significant positive impact on public transport, walking and cycle usage. CO2 emissions would also reduce compared to the do minimum scenario.

In addition to these principles, the LTP3 identifies priority economic and employment sites for the growth of Merseyside's economy, and the transport implications of the developments. Major transport schemes are detailed and the agency responsibility for delivery, covering highways, rail, and broader public transport schemes.

2.2.2 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Plan⁶

The Combined Authority Transport Plan published in June 2019 articulates the City Region's vision for transport and focuses on short term delivery. Whilst it is not statutory, it acts as the framework for deciding the allocation of funds for transport schemes in the City Region. Transport can support the city region's growth priorities by supporting access to key growth sites, places of learning and cultural venues; ensuring the city's transport transport-oriented growth priorities and opportunities are evidenced and exploited; and ensuring that transport and growth interventions support the Combined Authority's inclusive economy agenda. Economic growth in the LCR is tracking around 5% above the national average.

The Combined Authority Transport Plan has five strategic objectives and sets out the priority actions needs to achieve those strategic objectives. These actions cover:

- ensuring the Liverpool City Region is fully integrated and connected to the Northern Powerhouse and enabling sufficient capacity to accommodate increased long-distance rail services.
- growing the visitor economy and using the River Mersey as an international passenger gateway.
- expanding the role of Liverpool John Lennon Airport to serve more destinations including long haul.
- implementing the LCR Bus Strategy with its range of customer-driven initiatives such as smart, good value, multi-operator ticketing, coordinated timetables on key corridors and investment in new vehicles.
- implementing the LCR Long Term Rail Strategy, notably introducing new rolling stock on the Merseyrail network and addressing capacity issues at Liverpool Central Station.
- implement the Local Journeys Strategy, prioritised initially around 9 travel corridors.
- decarbonisation of the motorised transport network to move to a zero carbon LCR by 2040.
- raise the importance of quality of place and placemaking to make walking, cycling and public transport attractive, safe and convenient.
- integrate climate resilience into transport programmes.

⁶ <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCRCA-TRANSPORT-PLAN.pdf>

- secure a transport network that is well maintained, safe and resilient with roads that are safe for all.
- develop and implement a strategy for the Mersey Tunnels – vital links in the Key Route Network connecting Liverpool and Wirral.

The plan draws priorities from a range of current plans and priorities, updated in light of the Metro Mayor's vision and the Combined Authority's investment priorities. It reflects new structures, priorities and funds, such as High Speed 2, Transport for the North, Northern Powerhouse Rail, the Strategic Investment Fund and the Transforming Cities Fund.

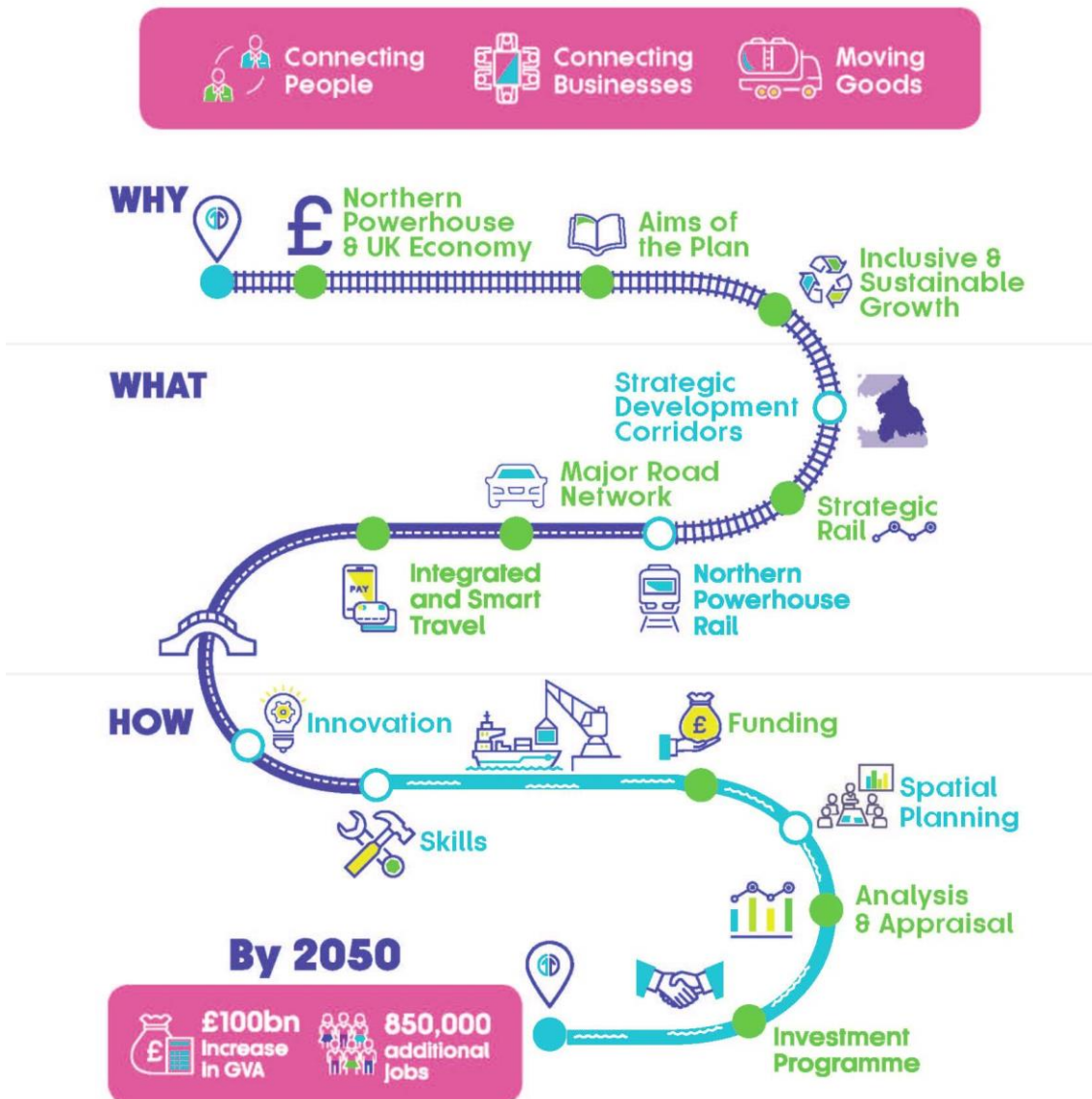
2.2.3 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan⁷

Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan (TfN STP) aims to speak as one voice for the North, to connect people, connect businesses and move goods. The North trails behind the UK average in productivity and that gap appears to be continuing to widen. The biggest challenge for the North's economy is to improve the economic interaction between the key economic assets and clusters of the North to improve the sharing of knowledge, supply chains, resources and innovation to drive agglomeration benefits and productivity. To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks.

The TfN STP, published in February 2019, identifies priorities for each mode of transport, but also considers 7 strategic development corridors which reflect the existing economic links across the North. These are the corridors which will drive transformational growth; they are: Connecting the Energy Coasts, West and Wales, Central Pennines, Southern Pennines, West Coast – Sheffield City Region, East Coast – Scotland and Yorkshire – Scotland. For each of the seven, the transport interventions required to sustain the future economy of the North have been identified to inform the Investment Programme which accompanies the TfN STP.

⁷ <https://transportforthenorth.com/wp-content/uploads/TfN-final-strategic-transport-plan-2019.pdf>

Strategic Transport Plan



Source: Transport for the North

2.2.4 Liverpool City Region Local Journeys Strategy⁸

The Local Journeys Strategy presents the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's framework for guiding the development of services and infrastructure that supports sustainable short trips across the City Region. The Strategy assists the City Region in delivering its aspirations for economic growth by supporting the use of low-carbon modes and improving access to jobs and services.

As part of the key objectives for achieving its long-term vision, the plan states that *"planning and promoting sustainable transport options as part of an integrated approach to development and regeneration can help create the conditions for healthier, happier and more economically productive places where people have a genuine choice about how they get around."*

⁸ https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCRCA_LCL_JRNYS_STRATEGY.pdf

2.2.5 Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy⁹

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Long Term Rail Strategy sets out a “*systematic and evidence-based approach to developing the rail network*” across the LCR. In short, the strategy presents “an ambitious vision of a network that meets future passenger needs and opens up economic opportunity”.

For the City Region, a range of developments for the rail network are put forward with the aim to ensure the network meets the LCR’s needs over the next 30 years and beyond. Within the committed projects package, the replacement of the current Merseyrail rolling stock, expected to commence delivery from 2020, would see both increased capacity and reduced journey time on the network.

The Long Term Rail Strategy identified 12 packages of developments which represent coherent targets for the realisation of the long term vision. Packages included: improving national passenger and freight connections; Merseyrail growth enabling; improved connections from Chester and Ellesmere Port; and Borderlands Line enhancements.

2.2.6 Mersey Tunnels Long Term Operations & Maintenance Strategy¹⁰

The Mersey Tunnels connect Liverpool with the Wirral Peninsula; they are the two longest road tunnels in the UK and are also regarded as the safest. They are a vital asset for connectivity, so it is important to ensure the tunnels remain sustainable and efficient to support and grow the local and wider economy.

The tunnels are in good condition and expected to last beyond their intended lifespan to around 120 years each. Regular maintenance inspections are carried out and regular maintenance and infrastructure works have extended their life expectancies. This strategy sets out how the tunnels will be maintained as well as options for increasing the level of automation to improve safety and efficiency and reduce operating costs.

2.2.7 Mersey Ferries Long Term Strategy 2014/15 to 2034/35¹¹

The aim of the strategy is to provide a long term programme for investment in the Mersey Ferries operation to 2034/35 to maximise their benefit to the local population and economy. They play an important role in the visitor economy, and also provide a useful service for commuters in the peak hours. However, the operation faces several challenges, such as the financial sustainability and the maintenance of the vessels, which are approaching life expiry.

The objectives of the Strategy are to ensure the ferries are available for future generations to enjoy, but are not a drain on the public purse, to operate safely, contribute economically and socially to the LCR, and reduce the environmental impact of the ferries. A key element for the success of the strategy is to have a fleet of new vessels, due to the age and increasing fragility of the existing fleet, which are becoming more expensive and difficult to maintain.

Like the vessels, the piers at Woodside and Seacombe are aging assets and it is recommended that Woodside is closed, and investment focused on Seacombe. The river explorer cruises and Manchester Ship Canal cruises are popular and more financially profitable.

⁹ https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCRCA_RAIL_STRATEGY_MAY18.pdf

¹⁰ <https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/documents/s41725/Enc.%201%20for%20Mersey%20Tunnels%20Long%20Term%20Operations%20and%20Maintenance%20Strategy.pdf>

¹¹ https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-information/Documents/9768%20MT%20Ferries%20Strategy%201.8_WEB.pdf

2.2.8 Liverpool City Region Bus Strategy¹²

Buses play a critical role in the success of the economy of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) with over 136 million passenger journeys a year. They provide many benefits to the region, but they need to serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors. In particular, they are vital for the most vulnerable in society who do not have access to a car. They enable young people to access education and training and the jobless with opportunities to access work. The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016, combined the Buses Bill, give local transport authorities greater powers for bus services in their area, such as the option for franchising networks of bus services.

When people make decisions about using the bus, important factors include joined up whole journey provision, frequency of services, reliable services, overall journey times, value for money, quality and comfort of buses. To increase usage of buses in the LCR, addressing the issues which affect customer satisfaction is key. However, it also requires changes to perceptions of buses among non-bus users, which is often seen as inferior to private car travel due to journey times, convenience and comfort.

The LCR Bus Strategy sets out how the bus network can be developed to achieve better provision and optimisation to meet contemporary needs. This can be done through regular reviews. Key areas of focus include:

- Optimising bus punctuality and reliability
- Improving customer experience on-bus and off-bus, such as comfort and cleanliness, on board facilities, real time information at bus stops,
- Growing the market by attracting new customers and find ways to reach new markets
- Ticketing and fares to ensure clear information and value for money.

2.2.9 Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)¹³

The Liverpool City Region Transport Partnership is leading the development of the Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), an ambitious strategy that sets out the long-term vision for cycling and walking in the city region.

Two-thirds of all journeys taken in the Liverpool City Region are less than 5km, but right now, around 50% of these are still taken by car. The LCWIP sets out a high level approach for how we can encourage more people to take these journeys on foot or by bike by creating a safe, integrated and well linked network of walking and cycling routes. The LCWIP outlines 31 key routes needed across the city region to help more cycling and walking.

A number of the routes will be implemented in Wirral with the 3.7km Leasowe – Seacombe Ferry Terminal Corridor being included in Phase 1. Planning for the second Wirral corridor is underway and will link New Brighton with Birkenhead via Liscard.

It is proposed that these strategic routes will be complemented by a network of local cycling and walking routes, including residential streets and routes through green spaces which will help make active travel more attractive.

¹² <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/Site%20Documents/9560%20Bus%20Strategy%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCWIP-REPORT-FULL.pdf>

2.2.10 Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy¹⁴

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act, to “take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents”. This means the Local Authority partners must:-

- Prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety;
- Carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads within their area, and take appropriate measures to prevent such accidents; and
- Take measures to reduce the possibilities of road accidents when building new roads.

The third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside (LTP3) has a transport vision for ‘A city region committed to a low carbon future, which has a transport network and mobility culture that positively contributes to a thriving economy and the health and wellbeing of its citizens and where sustainable travel is the option of choice’. To achieve this vision six goals were identified. Goal Three – Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing and road safety, sets out the LTP3 road safety strategy and the context for the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership.

Achieving safer roads requires the use of various methods and measures which reduce the risk to persons using the road network. The LCR strategy focuses upon the use of evidence for the prevention of serious injury and death at point of conflict; the essence of ‘casualty reduction’. The Partnership employs support officers, whose function is to monitor, investigate and analyse casualty data to ensure that a co-ordinated and intelligence led approach is undertaken across the City Region, ensuring the Partnership uses its available resources to target road safety interventions in the most cost effective way.

To meet the statutory requirements, and to deliver our vision, the Road Safety policies must work as a cohesive whole. Partnership working and collaboration are, therefore, central to this strategy. The activities of the Partnership, which are grouped under the traditional road safety 3 ‘E’s of Education-Enforcement-Engineering but supplemented by continuous Monitoring and Evaluation.

2.3 Local

2.3.1 Draft Strategic Regeneration Framework¹⁵

The draft Wirral Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) sets out the priorities and challenges for economic growth in the borough in order to guide and drive investment and economic activity across Wirral to deliver the borough’s ambitions for the local economy. Wirral is already an attractive place to live and work, and nationally significant economic development projects such as Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone and key growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, visitor economy and energy. The SRF identifies seven spatial priority areas which are significant for growth potential; these are:

- Birkenhead Town Centre
- Hamilton Square and Woodside
- Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone
- A41 Corridor
- Wirral International Business Park
- New Brighton

¹⁴ <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/LCR%20Road%20Safety%20Strategy%20FINAL%20v10%20-%20July%202017.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/regenerating-wirral/strategic-regeneration-framework>

- Local Town Centres

The SRF has the ambition of delivering 5,000 new jobs, £250m of new inward investment, £450m of tourism revenue, 3,500 new homes, 250 new businesses and 250,000 sq ft of new employment space by 2020.

2.3.2 Wirral Growth Plan¹⁶

The Wirral Growth Plan set out the aspiration for growth for the borough and the implementation of the plan will support the delivery of the following thematic outcome areas:

- Growing competitive businesses
- Increasing employment
- Workforce skills that match business needs
- Increase inward investment
- Develop a vibrant visitor economy
- Provide efficient, well maintained and accessible transport networks
- Assets and buildings are fit for purpose for Wirral businesses
- The provision of good quality housing.

2.3.3 Emerging Birkenhead Regeneration Framework

Work is in progress to develop a Regeneration Framework for Birkenhead. More information on this is provided in Chapter 5 on this emerging study.

2.3.4 Wirral Network Management Plan¹⁷

The plan sets out how Wirral intends to make transport accessible for all, to enable everyone to move around and access the goods and services they require. A joined up transport network helps Merseyside to grow and to be a better place to live, but the biggest challenge is to achieve this growth in an environmentally sustainable way with equal opportunity for all. Consequently, it has five objectives:

- Provide appropriate infrastructure for regeneration
- Ensure accessibility for all
- Manage demand through effective management strategies and awareness programmes
- Promote healthier communities
- Protect and enhance the environment

2.3.5 Wirral Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy¹⁸ and Wirral Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy¹⁹

The asset management policy describes the principles adopted in applying asset management to achieve the council's strategic objectives.

The asset management strategy sets out how the long term objectives for managing Wirral's highways are to be achieved. It links with other relevant documents, such as corporate plans,

¹⁶ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/regenerating-wirral/wirral-growth-plan>

¹⁷ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Parking,%20roads%20and%20travel/transport%20policy/Network%20Management%20Plan.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Parking,%20roads%20and%20travel/road%20maintenance/Highway%20infrastructure%20asset%20management%20policy.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Parking,%20roads%20and%20travel/road%20maintenance/Highway%20infrastructure%20asset%20management%20strategy.pdf>

and sets out the benefits of investing in the highway infrastructure within the context of any constraints, such as funding.

2.3.6 Wirral's Road Safety Plan 2018-2020

Wirral's Road Safety Plan covers the period from 2018-20, built around the ethos of "shared roads, shared responsibility". This supports the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership's Liverpool City Region wide vision "A reduction in the numbers of those killed and seriously injured to fewer than 400 by 2020, with the ultimate vision of a future where no-one is killed on Merseyside's roads and the injury rate is reduced."

The Road Safety Plan contributes to the three themes of the overarching Wirral Plan for the Borough up to 2020:

- Protecting the most vulnerable.
- Driving economic growth.
- Improving the local environment.

It also links closely with the Wirral Transport Strategy described above which pledges to "Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work".

Wirral Council is a key partner of the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, working together to delivering engagement and educational activities around road safety. We are committed to reducing the number of injury collisions on our roads to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured. No one should be harmed or affected by road traffic collisions going about their daily life.

3 Local Transport Context

3.1 Overview

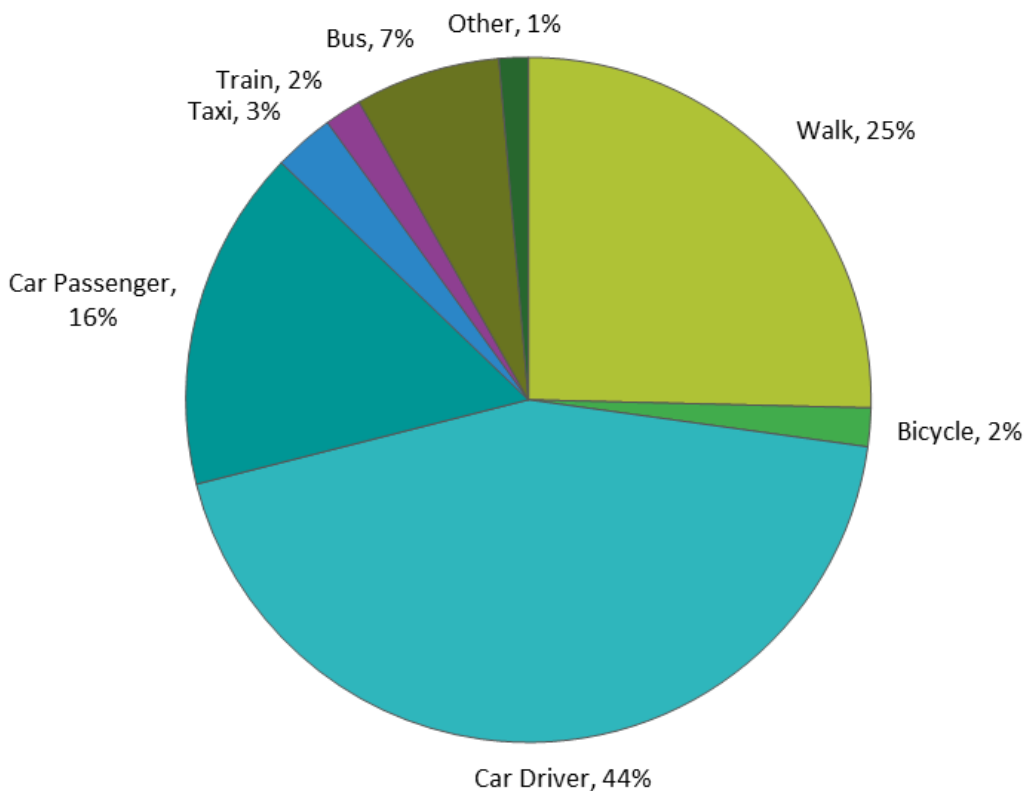
This section provides an overview of the transport context already in place in Wirral. It covers details on local travel behaviour, and provision and usage of highways, rail, bus, ferries, walking and cycling.

3.2 Local Travel

The borough of Wirral has a population of 323,200²⁰ and 72% of the 140,583 households in Wirral have access to a car or van; this is the same as the North West figure and slightly below the England figure of 74%. Car availability varies across the borough, with 90% of Heswall households having a car compared to 44% in Birkenhead. In the 2017 LCR Household Travel Survey, 65% of over 17s surveyed had a full driving licence, 2% had a provisional licence. 91.9% of trips made by Wirral residents were within Wirral. Wirral's population has a notably high proportion of older residents compared to the national average.

Figure 1 shows the mode share for trips made, all purposes.

Figure 1 - Mode share for trips, all purposes



Source: LCR Household Travel Survey, 2017

²⁰ ONS Population Estimates, 2018

3.2.1 Travel times

Table 1 shows the average travel time by mode in minutes to key destinations from origins within the borough²¹.

Table 1 – Average travel time (min) to key destinations

Destination	Car	Public Transport/ walk	Cycle
Employment centre with 500-4999 jobs	8	12	10
Employment centre with 5000 jobs	13	23	19
Nearest town centre	10	16	13
GPs (Doctors)	8	10	9
Primary School	7	9	8
Further Education	10	15	12

3.2.2 Travel to Work

According to Census 2011 data, around two-thirds of people who live or work in Wirral drive to work. On foot is the second most common method followed by bus, train and car passenger. This information is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Mode share by travel to work journey

Mode	Live in Wirral, work anywhere	Work in Wirral, live anywhere	Great Britain
Car as driver	65%	66%	60%
Car as passenger	6%	7%	6%
Bus	8%	8%	9%
Train	8%	5%	10%
Taxi	1%	1%	<1%
Bicycle	2%	2%	3%
On foot	9%	11%	12%
Other	1%	1%	1%

It can be seen that usage of the car for commuting is higher in Wirral when compared nationally; use of train, bus and walking is lower in Wirral than nationally.

²¹ Department for Transport, Journey Time Statistics 0401 - 0408

Table 3 shows the number of people commuting between Wirral and selected local authorities. The local authorities below have the highest commuting patterns. In addition, 74,137 people live and work within Wirral; this represents 63% of all Wirral residents who are in work. It can be seen that Wirral is a net exporter of commuters, with more people travelling from Wirral to other local authorities than travelling from other local authorities to Wirral. The strongest commuting links are with Liverpool and Cheshire West and Chester.

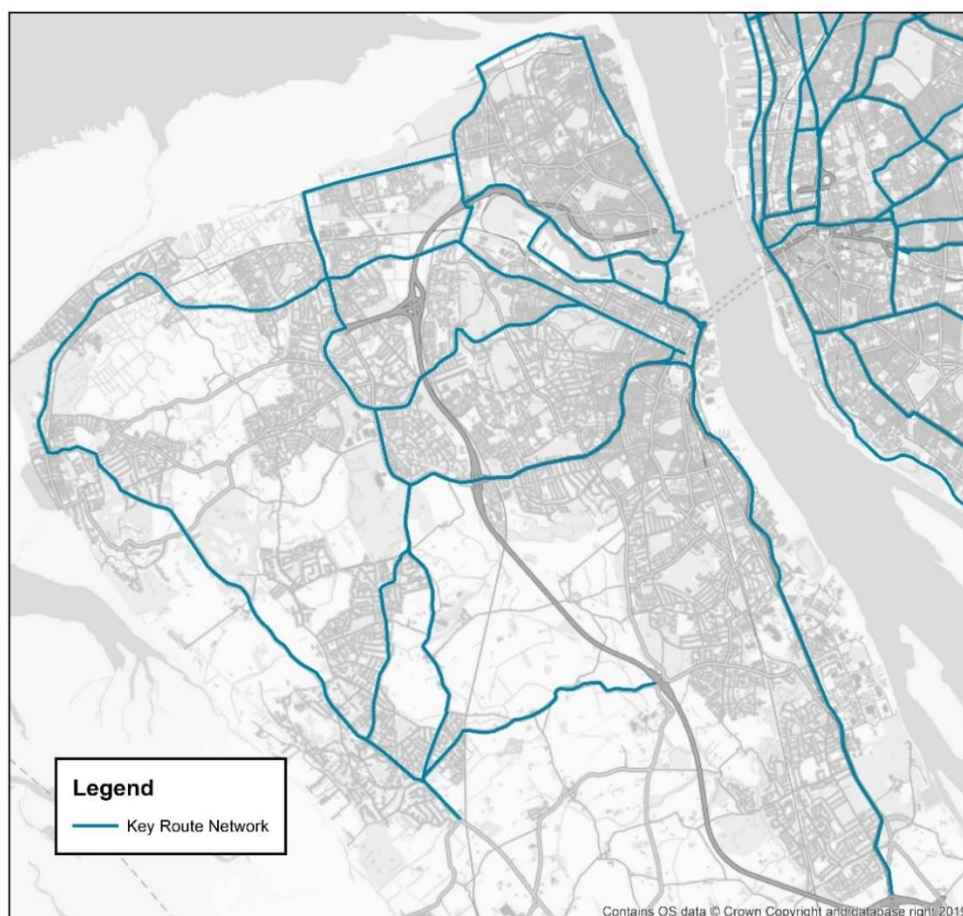
Table 3 – Commuting movements to/from Wirral by surrounding area

Local Authority	Commute to Wirral	% of all people who work in Wirral	Commute from Wirral	% of all working Wirral residents
Cheshire West and Chester	6,135	7%	10,189	9%
Flintshire	991	1%	2,828	2%
Knowsley	1,065	1%	1,305	1%
Liverpool	4,195	5%	18,094	15%
Sefton	1,194	1%	1,918	2%
Warrington	382	<1%	1,156	1%
Other	3,316	4%	8,826	7%

3.3 Highways

Wirral has 1,135km of highway; Figure 2 shows Wirral's Key Route Network – highways which are of strategic importance for the success of Wirral and the Liverpool City Region. The M53, A59 and A41 carry the highest volumes of traffic in Wirral. Wirral is connected to Liverpool by two road tunnels – the Kingsway tunnel and the Queensway tunnel. Between them, the tunnels carry around 90,000 vehicles a day between the two centres²².

Figure 2 - Wirral Key Route Network



Source: Mott MacDonald Ltd

²² Merseytravel: <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/media-centre/Pages/Facts-and-Figures.aspx>

In 2018, 1,065 million miles were made by motor vehicles in Wirral. This represents a 3% increase in traffic miles since 2004 but is below the 5% increase seen in Merseyside in the same period.

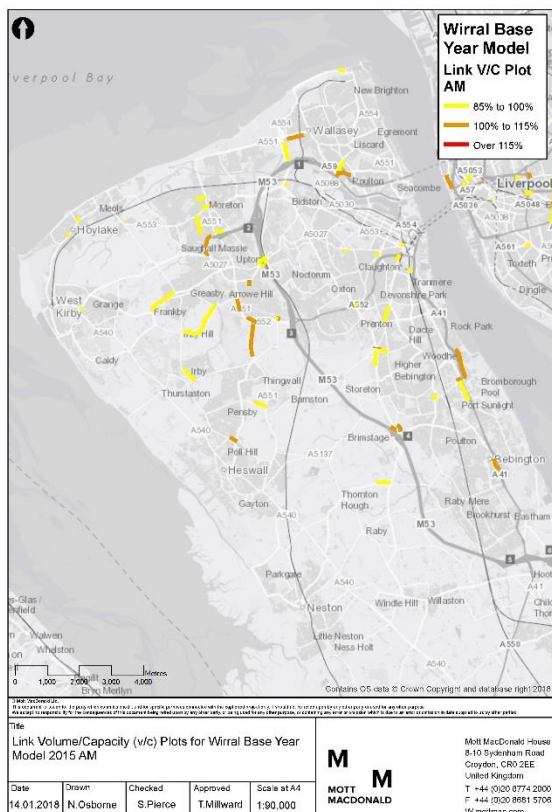
3.3.1 Congestion

Locations on the Wirral highway network which have been identified as having congestion problems are:

- Both Mersey tunnels between Wirral and Liverpool.
- A41 Rock Ferry bypass.
- M53 at J1.
- A552 Woodchurch Road between M53 and Arrowe Park Road.
- A540 between Telegraph Road and Chester High Road.
- A553 between West Kirby and Moreton.

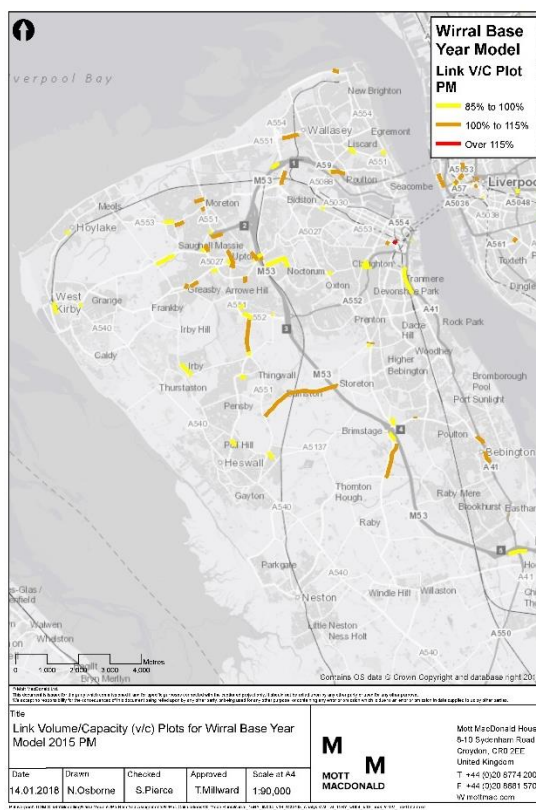
Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the links on the highway network which are currently experiencing capacity issues, with a volume over capacity ratio of 0.85 or higher, indicating queues and delays occur.

Figure 3 - AM Peak Congestion (2015)



Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 4 - PM Peak Congestion (2015)



Source: Mott MacDonald

3.3.2 Road safety

Department for Transport and Wirral figures on road safety show that there were 526 accidents reported in Wirral in 2018, broken down by severity as follows in Table 4.

Table 4 – DfT and Wirral road safety figures

Severity	Number of accidents
Fatal	7*
Serious	89*
Slight	430**

Source: * Department for Transport; **Wirral Council Road Safety Officer

Overall, there is a long-term improving picture of safety on Wirral roads with 430 injury collisions in 2018 compared to 1,379 in 2000. Whilst measuring collision data year to year is affected by annual random fluctuations, there were 1.6% fewer people injured on Wirral in road crashes in 2018 compared to 2017 and 24% fewer people injured comparing the average of the last 5 years (2014 – 2018; 651 casualties) to the average of the previous 5 years (2009 -2013; 860 casualties).²³

3.4 Rail

Wirral's rail network is constituted of the Wirral Lines of the Merseyrail network, and the Wrexham-Bidston Line operated by Transport for Wales between Bidston and Wrexham Central. Figure 5 shows the location of stations in Wirral. The east and north areas of Wirral are better served by rail than the centre, west and south areas. The Merseyrail network has four lines, terminating at Chester, Ellesmere Port, West Kirby and New Brighton. All four routes serve Hamilton Square, then cross the River Mersey, run around the Liverpool Loop Line and return to Hamilton Square and return to terminus stations.

All Merseyrail lines except Ellesmere Port run at a frequency of four services per hour Monday to Saturday daytimes; the Ellesmere Port operates at two services per hour. Outside this, frequencies generally drop to two services per hour across the network.

The Wrexham-Bidston service between Bidston and Wrexham Central operates at an hourly frequency Monday to Saturday daytimes. Enhancing this line was identified as an ambition within the Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy; this would include increased service levels, line electrification, new stations at Beechwood, Woodchurch and Deeside Industrial Park, and direct connectivity and integration with the Merseyrail Wirral Line.

Transport for Wales have committed to delivering the North East Wales Metro by increasing frequency on the Wrexham-Bidston line to 2 trains per hour (tph) from December 2021, with fully refurbished metro trains²⁴. A fleet of new rolling stock will be rolled out across Wales which will be operated using hybrid diesel electric engines. These will use diesel and batteries, which will negate the need to wait for lines to be electrified, with associated cost savings from this. North Wales will be the first to benefit from the additions to the fleet along the Wrexham to Bidston, Crewe to Chester and Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog routes²⁵.

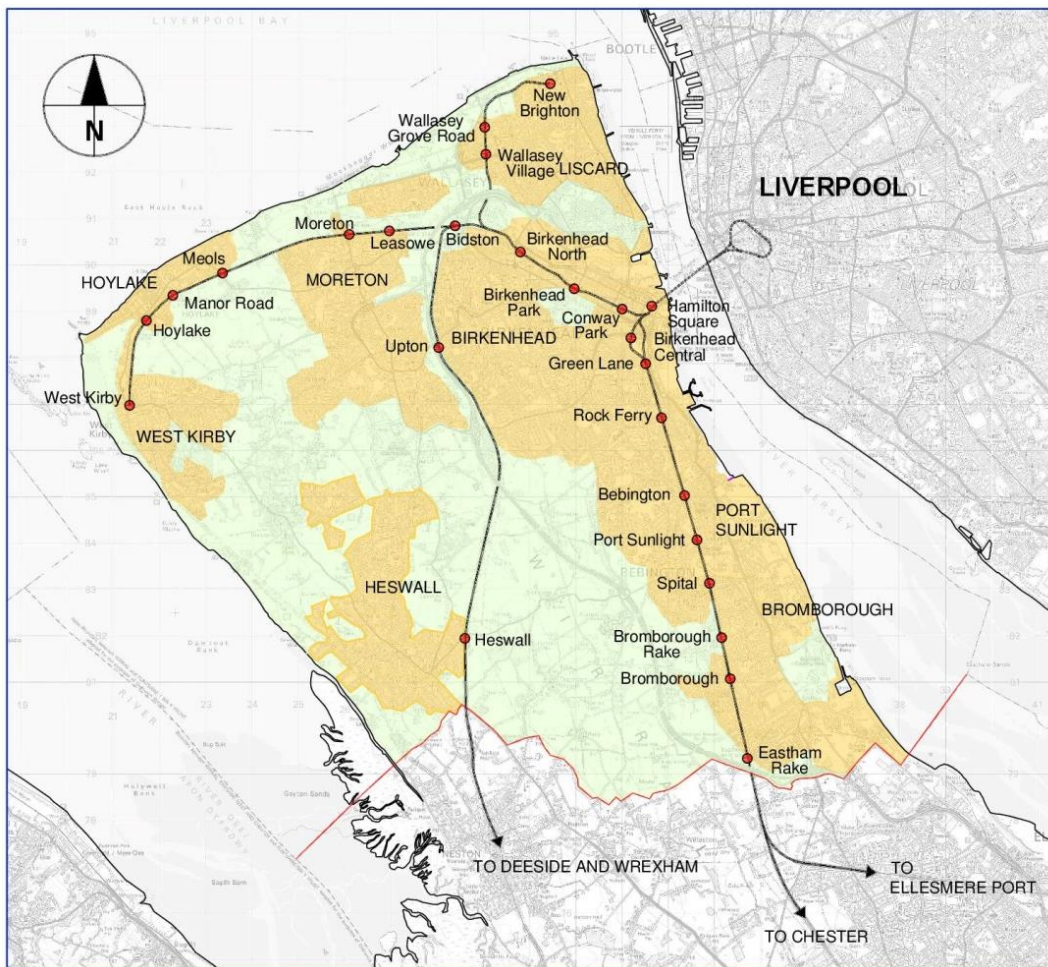
The Merseyrail network operates as a Park & Ride network for Birkenhead and Liverpool; consequently, many of the stations have car parks. Hooton, Birkenhead Park, Bidston and Wallasey Grove Road have the largest car parks, all of which are free except for Hooton (although it should be noted that Hooton is outside of Wirral and operated by Chester West and Chester).

²³ Wirral Road Safety Officer

²⁴ <https://tfw.wales/whats-happening-north-wales> (accessed 10/01/2020)

²⁵ <https://gov.wales/new-trains-will-be-boost-north-wales-rail-passengers> (accessed 10/01/2020)

Figure 5 - Merseyrail network map



Source: Merseyrail

Table 5 presents the number of passengers entering and exiting Wirral stations in 2017/18. Hamilton Square is by far the busiest station, followed by West Kirby. Hamilton Square is the sixth busiest station in Merseyside.

Table 5 – Merseyside station entries and exits 2017/18

Station	2017/18 Station Entries/Exits
Bebington	818,168
Bidston	288,614
Birkenhead Central	891,934
Birkenhead North	800,278
Birkenhead Park	663,700
Bromborough	594,140
Bromborough Rake	259,406
Conway Park	875,020
Eastham Rake	290,696
Green Lane	371,904
Hamilton Square	1,952,446

Station	2017/18 Station Entries/Exits
Heswall	58,452
Hoylake	469,360
Leasowe	543,822
Manor Road	246,568
Meols	377,958
Moreton	485,186
New Brighton	843,958
Port Sunlight	624,254
Rock Ferry	647,348
Spital	419,146
Upton	33,634
Wallasey Grove Road	452,690
Wallasey Village	468,604
West Kirby	1,106,030

Source: Office of Rail and Road; Station Usage Estimates 2017/18

Direct rail connections to destinations outside of Wirral and Liverpool are limited to the Borderlands line to Wrexham via Heswall, Shotton and Hawarden, and the Merseyrail lines to Ellesmere Port and Chester. However from Wrexham, Ellesmere Port, Chester and Liverpool Lime Street there are mainline connections to destinations including Manchester, Warrington, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, North Wales, Shrewsbury, Cardiff, London, Blackpool and Scotland.

Wirral specific rail patronage is not available, but 940 million passengers use Merseyrail every year.

3.5 Buses

Bus forms an important part of the public transport network in Merseyside. Despite the strong rail offer, around 80% of journeys made by public transport in Merseyside are by bus. Figure 6 shows the coverage of the bus network in Wirral.

Figure 6 - Wirral Bus Network



Source: Merseytravel

Stagecoach and Arriva are the two largest commercial operators in Wirral, with their services supplemented by a number of Merseytravel supported services operated by other operators where there is a gap in the network or a particular social need. In total there are 38 bus routes operating in Wirral. Only one of these, 471/472 between Liverpool City Centre and Heswall,

forms part of the LCR Bus Alliance Network, an agreement between Merseytravel, Arriva and Stagecoach to improve bus travel for people across the Liverpool City Region. The Alliance's ambition is *"for a thriving, affordable and sustainable bus network that offers the customer a value for money and hassle-free journey experience - leading to an increase in fare paying passengers"*²⁶.

This voluntary partnership has realised many benefits for bus users across the city region such as the fixed price "Solo" ticket accepted by all operators for unlimited travel in a day throughout the Liverpool City Region. Similarly, the "Walrus" smart card has digitised several bus ticket products allowing them to be loaded on to a card and then activated by users. This also provides future opportunities between wider interoperability for tickets between different regions and operators. The work of the Bus Alliance is believed to have assisted in the city region going against national trends of significantly decreasing bus usage. From the three years from Alliance's establishment fare paying passengers across LCR rose by 16.2% (LCR Bus Alliance, 2017). This does not align with DfT statistics.

Birkenhead bus station functions as the hub for the borough's bus network; Heswall also has a bus station. The network covers a significant proportion of the borough, although some routes operate at relatively low frequencies (hourly or less). In terms of bus connectivity outside of the borough, there are direct bus services from Wirral to Chester, Ellesmere Port and Liverpool. However, there is no direct bus connectivity to Deeside and North Wales.

Data on bus patronage is not available at for Wirral; at a Merseyside level, bus patronage, as is common nationally, has been declining from 110.8m passenger journeys on bus services in 2010/11 to 101.1m in 2017/18. Similarly, the annual number of bus journeys made per head of population in Merseyside has fallen from 82.1 in 2009/10 to 71.3 in 2017/18²⁷.

In October 2019, Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham announced the introduction of a new MetroCard smart travel scheme in 2020 to replace the Liverpool City Region's Walrus card. The scheme will provide an opportunity for online management of travel through a smart ticketing scheme with 'tap and go' travel, digital season tickets and online accounts for customers across bus and rail²⁸.

3.6 Ferries

Mersey Ferries operate services 7 days a week between Pier Head, Seacombe and Woodside. During peak commuter hours, a fast shuttle service operates every 20 minutes between Seacombe and Pier Head with a journey time of around 10 minutes between the two terminals. Between 10am and 5pm on weekdays and all day at weekends a cruise service operates, calling at all three terminals and taking around 50 minutes to complete the cruise.

Mersey Ferries services are operated by two vessels: Royal Iris of the Mersey and Snowdrop. These vessels are around 60 years old and approaching life expiry. The costs of maintenance is increasing and time is lost due to vessel failures is growing. Merseytravel heavily subsidise the operation of the ferry services and the terminals at Woodside and Seacombe.

Each year there are 450,000 to 500,000 passengers using the river explorer service which outnumbers the commuter service approximately three to one²⁹.

²⁶ <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/guide-to-Merseytravel/Pages/Buses.aspx>

²⁷ Department for Transport BUS0109 Statistics

²⁸ <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/new-metrocard-travel-scheme-to-replace-walrus-card/>

²⁹ Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Mersey Ferries Long Term Strategy 2015/16 to 2034/35

As part of the Mersey Ferries Long Term Ferry Strategy³⁰, funded by TCF investment, two new low carbon ferries, new bridges and an updated landing stage at the Seacombe Ferry terminal are planned. This will help to strengthen and improve connectivity across the Mersey between Liverpool and Wirral, supporting growth on both sides of the river.

3.7 Walking and Cycling

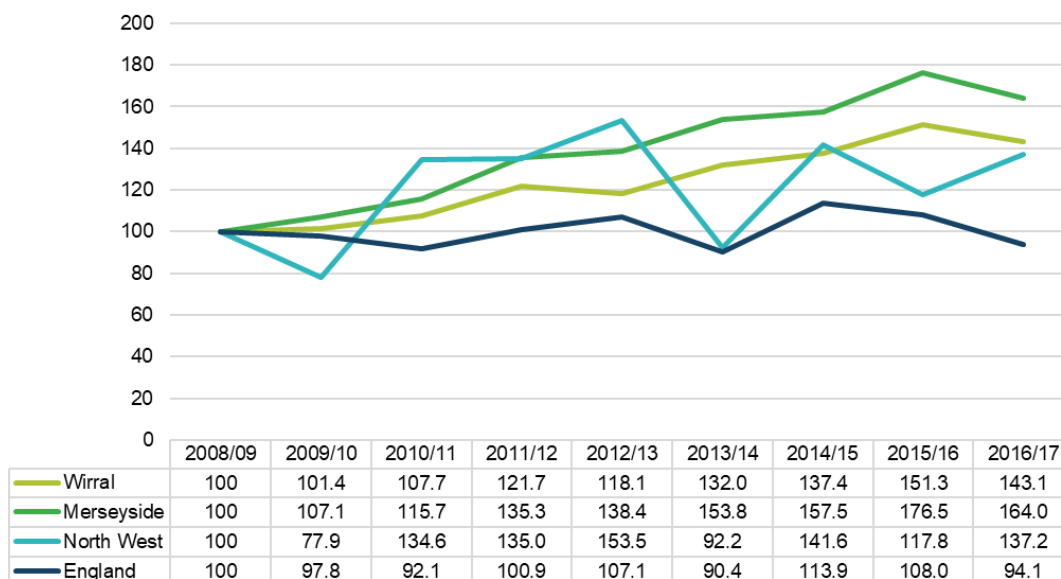
Wirral has a comprehensive walking and cycling network. The Wirral Circular Trail (Regional Route 89) is a 35 mile mainly traffic-free route around the perimeter of the boundary. In addition, national cycle route 56 runs from Chester to Neston then north through the centre of Wirral to Wallasey and New Brighton; the route continues through South Liverpool.

The quality of walking and cycling routes varies across Wirral but significant investment has been made over recent years to enhance and update facilities. DfT funding has supported the development of a cycle route along the A41 Corridor which, when the final section is completed during 20/21 provides a continuous link between Birkenhead and Junction 5 of the M53. The Council have been working with Highways England who in Spring 2020 are providing crossing of the Junction 5 roundabout and ultimate this route with link with a cycling corridor being promoted by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Cycling connectivity between key towns in Wirral is poor, worsened by the M53 which creates severance between the east and west of Wirral for cyclists. We are working closely with Highways England to address this issue of severance and works are planned for Junction 4 which will provide improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

The development of the LCWIP corridors (described in Section 2.2.9) will provide the strategic network of safe integrated and well linked cycling and walking corridors to enable more people to travel on foot or by bike. Figure 7 shows the change in the number of cycling trips undertaken between 2008/09 and 2016/17; 2008/09=100. There has been a steady increase in cycling in Wirral over that period, and rate of growth is above both England and the North West which is anticipated to continue with the on-going development of the strategic network through the LCWIP, with the Birkenhead to New Brighton route being one of the first in the LCR.

Figure 7 - Change in cycling (2008/09 – 2016/17)

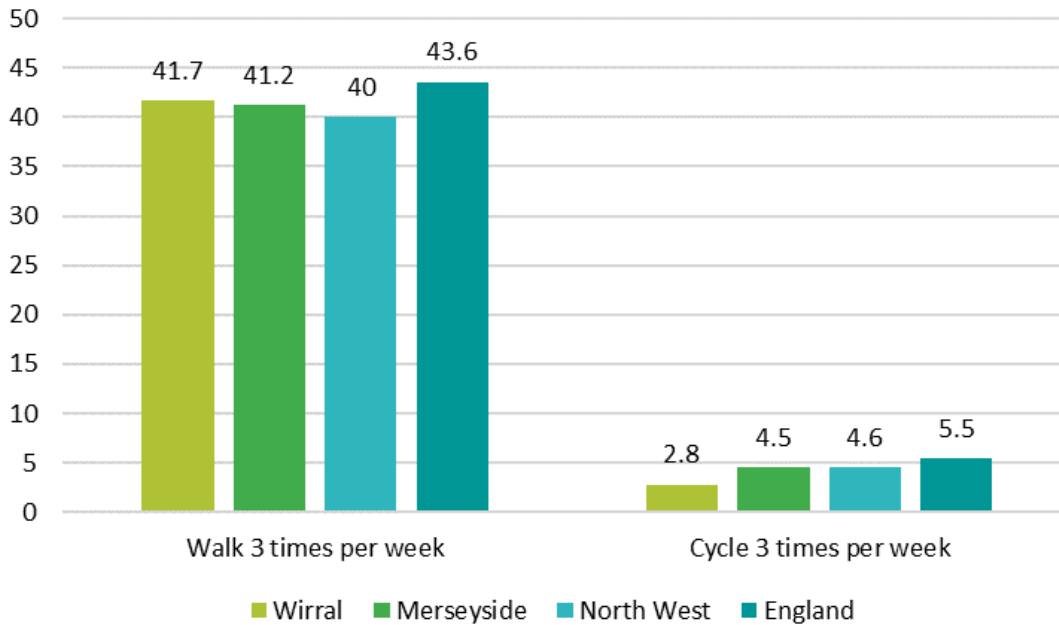


Source: Mott MacDonald

³⁰ Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Mersey Ferries Long Term Strategy 2015/16 to 2034/35

It can be seen in Figure 8 that the number of people regularly walking and cycling in Wirral lags behind the national average. However, walking rates are above the Merseyside and North West rates, whilst cycling rates are below the Merseyside and North West.

Figure 8 - Percentage of residents walking and cycling 3 times per week



Source: Department for Transport, CW0302 and CW0303, 2018

4 Key Issues

The following tables provide an overview of known key transport issues across Wirral, presented by mode.

4.1 Highways

Table 6 – Highways issues

Ref.	Location	Key issue
1	Birkenhead	Congestion on A41 and A552 corridors, A59 Kingsway Tunnel, and Queensway Tunnel.
2	Tunnels	Cross-river traffic is reliant on two tunnels which cause pinch points on the network, and in the event of an incident or closure reduce connectivity between Wirral and Liverpool.
3	A41	Operating close to capacity; congestion north of junction with M53 to Eastham
5	Heswall	Congestion on A540 between Telegraph Road and Chester High Road.
6	West Kirby / Moreton	Congestion on A553 between West Kirby and Moreton.
7	M53	Congestion on J5 northbound on-slip and between J6 and J5, and around J1.
8	Borough-wide	Heavy reliance on private car for journeys within Wirral.
10	Wirral Waters	Kingsway Tunnel Approach Road cuts a swathe into the landscape which generates severance particularly between Seacombe and Wirral Waters.
11	Seacombe	Congestion and conflicts between HGVs and other road users around the Ro-Ro terminal. HGV movements are expected to increase with development of the Ro-Ro and potentially Wirral Waters.
12	A41 North	Surplus of cheap, long stay car parking increases number of vehicles in area and discourages walking and cycling. Inconsistent charging and tariffs encourage this.

4.2 Rail

Table 7 – Rail issues

Ref.	Location	Key issue
1	Bidston – Wrexham line	Low frequency service on Wrexham/Bidston rail line; lack of integration with Merseyrail Wirral lines.
2	Borough-wide	Some stations on Merseyrail network are not fully accessible for disabled users.
3	Wirral Waters	Public transport connectivity to Wirral Waters is limited in provision.
4	Borough-wide	Interchange between bus and rail is limited at rail stations.
5	Borough-wide	Some urban centres in Wirral are poorly served by public transport, such as Heswall and Seacombe, as well as rural communities in the west and south-west of Wirral.
6	Borough-wide	Park and Ride provision at rail stations is limited.
7	Birkenhead / Cross-River	By 2045, demand for rail services through Birkenhead and through tunnels to Liverpool is expected to exceed 80% of capacity.
8	Borough-wide	Journey times by public transport can be 2-3 times longer than by car.
9	A41 North	Historic rail lines create severance for vehicle and pedestrian movement.
10	Borough-wide	Lack of flexible ticketing options to make savings on passes for people who want to use bus or rail 2-3 days a week.
11	Borough-wide	Most east-west bus and rail services require going through or changing in Birkenhead which increases journey times.

4.3 Bus

Table 8 – Bus issues

Ref.	Location	Key issue
1	Merseyside-wide	Bus patronage has been declining across the area, with the number of passenger journeys made by bus decreasing by 10% between 2010/11 and 2017/18.
2	Wirral Waters	Public transport connectivity to Wirral Waters is limited in provision.
3	Borough-wide	Interchange between bus and rail is limited at rail stations.
4	Borough-wide	Some urban centres in Wirral are poorly served by public transport, such as Heswall and Seacombe, as well as rural communities in the west and south-west of Wirral.
5	Borough-wide	Journey times by public transport can be 2-3 times longer than by car.
6	Borough-wide	Lack of flexible ticketing options to make savings on passes for people who want to use bus or rail 2-3 days a week.
7	Borough-wide	Most east-west bus and rail services require going through or changing in Birkenhead which increases journey times.

4.4 Ferry

Ref.	Location	Key issue
1	Ferries	Ferries are approaching life expiry and maintenance costs are rising as a result.
2	Ferries	Ferry terminals have ageing infrastructure and limited interchange with walking and cycling

4.5 Walking and Cycling

Table 9 – Walking and Cycling issues

Ref.	Location	Key issue
1	Borough-wide	Severance created by M53 limits east-west movements.
2	Borough-wide	Walking and cycling routes of poor quality in places which decrease the attractiveness of these modes.
3	Borough-wide	Rates of people walking and cycling at least three times per week are lower than national average rates.
4	Borough-wide	Rates of cycling are low, with around 2% of all trips undertaken by bicycle (although this is not lower than the national average) ³¹ .
5	Borough-wide	Off-road and segregated cycle routes are limited and discontinuous beside the Wirral Circular Trail.
6	Borough-wide	Limited cycling parking facilities across the borough to support increased numbers of cycle journeys.
7	A41 North	Major A roads create barriers to movement from residential areas south of Birkenhead into the town centre.
8	A41 North	Severance created in A41 North area by the flyovers around the Queensway Tunnel entrance, the tunnel toll plaza and the large number of A roads
9	Borough-wide	Walking and cycling could be better used as modes of choice for shorter journeys

³¹ National Travel Survey 2018; accessed via: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/823068/national-travel-survey-2018.pdf (accessed 10/01/2020)

5 Transport Evidence Studies

This chapter outlines the findings of selected transport evidence studies undertaken in Wirral. They set out the purpose of the study, the outputs and how it has helped to inform the shaping of the Local Plan.

5.1 East Wirral Study

In November 2016 Kellogg Brown & Root were commissioned by Wirral Council to produce an East Wirral Options and Feasibility Study. The objective of the study was 'To ensure that transport infrastructure supports and enables the future growth of Wirral and delivery of the Wirral Plan.' The Options and Feasibility study has involved:

- Assembling information from the previous studies;
- Engaging key stakeholders;
- Providing the scope for the next stage; and
- A review of the governance and programme delivery.

The East Wirral Options and Feasibility Study identified the following regeneration areas which transport would need to support:

- Wirral Waters - East Float / West Float;
- Woodside Waterfront;
- Hamilton Square;
- Birkenhead Town Centre;
- Hind Street; and
- The A41 Corridor.

The following key recommendations have been identified following the report:

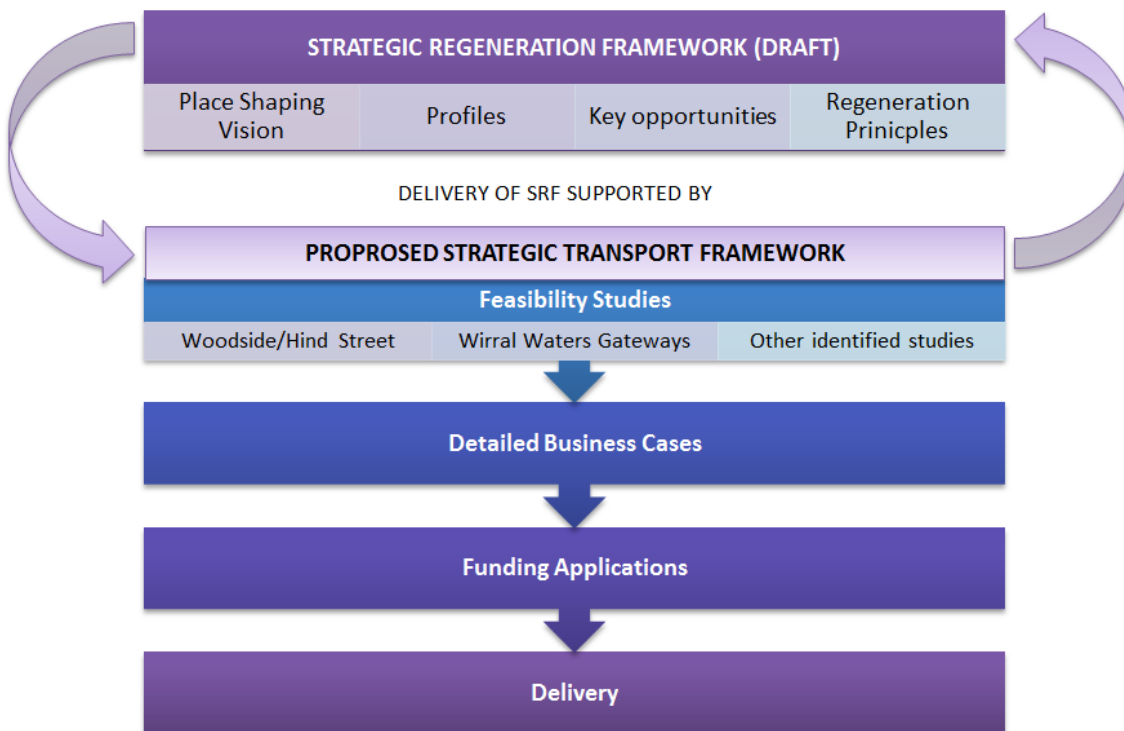
- Develop a 'Strategic Transport Framework for East Wirral' in order to identify a priority list of projects to support the regeneration ambitions for East Wirral.
- Progress the development of options, business cases and funding applications;
- Review current governance and programme delivery arrangements to ensure efficient decision making, accountability and efficiency.

5.2 Draft Strategic Transport Framework

5.2.1 Purpose

Wirral is ambitious about its plans for development and regeneration. Transport is essential for every resident, business and visitor in Wirral. The Draft Strategic Transport Framework (STF) builds on the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) to provide confidence, clarity and certainty to residents and businesses of the ambitions, plans and vision for the borough which will enable residents and businesses to access the opportunities they want. The draft STF will evolve as regeneration plans emerge, the STF Action Plan provides a framework to guide development and regeneration plans in the interim. The following diagram shows the relationship between the SRF and STF.

Figure 9 – Strategic Regeneration Framework interface with the STF (Action Plan)



Source: Wirral Council

5.2.2 Outputs

The STF Action Plan sits beneath the SRF and provides the transport links to the spatial priorities. The STF works through each of the five spatial priority areas of the SRF, outlining its potential and then assessing the current transport links and the transport investment required to realise that potential. The five spatial priorities are Birkenhead town centre, including Hamilton Square and Woodside, Wirral Water Enterprise Zone, A41 corridor, including Wirral International Business Park, New Brighton and Local Town Centres. For each area, a series of possible options for achieving the ambitions of that area are presented. Many of these options come from the Wirral Water and A41 North Corridor Transport Feasibility Studies, see below for further detail.

In addition to the five strategic priorities, the STF Action Plan presents borough wide transport investment opportunities, which includes improvements to the M53, smart integrated ticketing and improved signage and connectivity to the regional airports.

5.2.3 Contribution to Local Plan

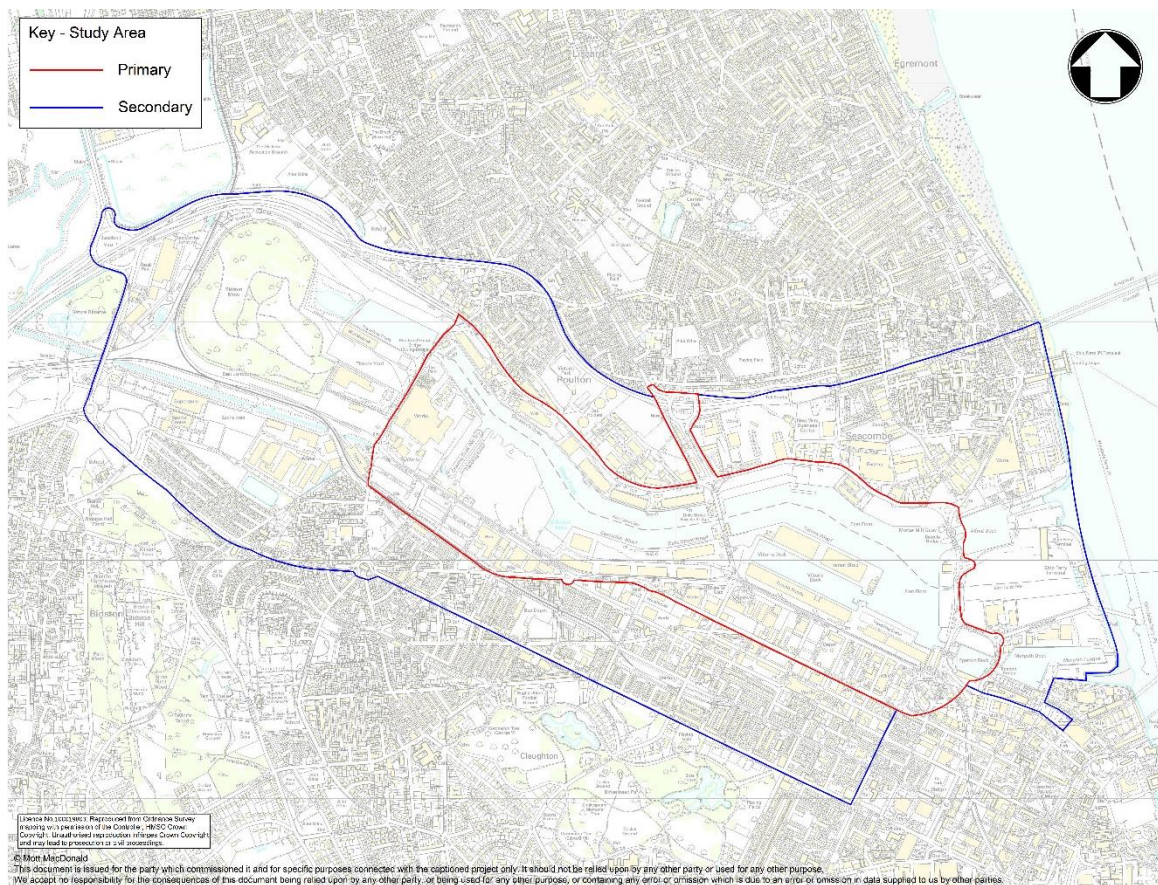
The STF Action Plan provides investment packages which will be utilised to assess the viability of proposed allocations. It supports the identification and prioritisation of infrastructure required from development which will be documented within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

5.3 Wirral Waters and Supporting Road Infrastructure: Feasibility Study (draft)

5.3.1 Purpose

Wirral Waters was designated as an Enterprise Zone by Government and Wirral Council has announced its desire for a wide-scale development and regeneration programme in the borough. The purpose of the study was to identify the transport constraints which currently impede the development of Wirral Waters, through review of development proposals, site analysis and stakeholder engagement. The study area is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Wirral Waters Study Area



5.3.2 Outputs

Analysis of the site included a detailed assessment of the accessibility by all modes of transport, at both strategic and local levels for people and goods. Stakeholder engagement primarily included Wirral Council officers and representatives for Peel, the site developer. From this, issues and opportunities were collated covering context, vehicular access, public transport, active travel and safety.

The second stage of the study was to develop a series of options which could address the issues and opportunities identified. Around 60 options were identified in total, gathered from the previous borough wide transport investment pipeline, supplemented by new ideas coming out of optioneering workshops. They covered themes such as gateways to Wirral Waters, cross dock connectivity, active travel connectivity, public transport connectivity and supporting road infrastructure.

Each of the options was appraised by assessing its fit with the three objectives of the Liverpool City Region A Transport Plan for Growth – low carbon, growth and access to opportunity. Schemes which were best positioned to enable growth at Wirral Waters were taken forward in the short list for further development and inclusion in the Wirral Waters Transport Strategy and the Wirral Strategic Transport Framework Action Plan. Shortlisted schemes were grouped into three phases – 0-5 years, 5-10 years and 10-20 years.

The final stage of the study was to develop concept designs for each of the shortlisted preferred options. Concept designs included a description of the scheme, a drawing, a review of the scheme's risks, and an estimate of the cost for implementing the scheme.

To further support development at Wirral Waters, a delivery strategy for a mass transit system is being developed, to consider how a scheme could be brought forwards and what this scheme could look like to support residential development in the area, and reduce reliance upon private vehicles.

5.3.3 Contribution to Local Plan

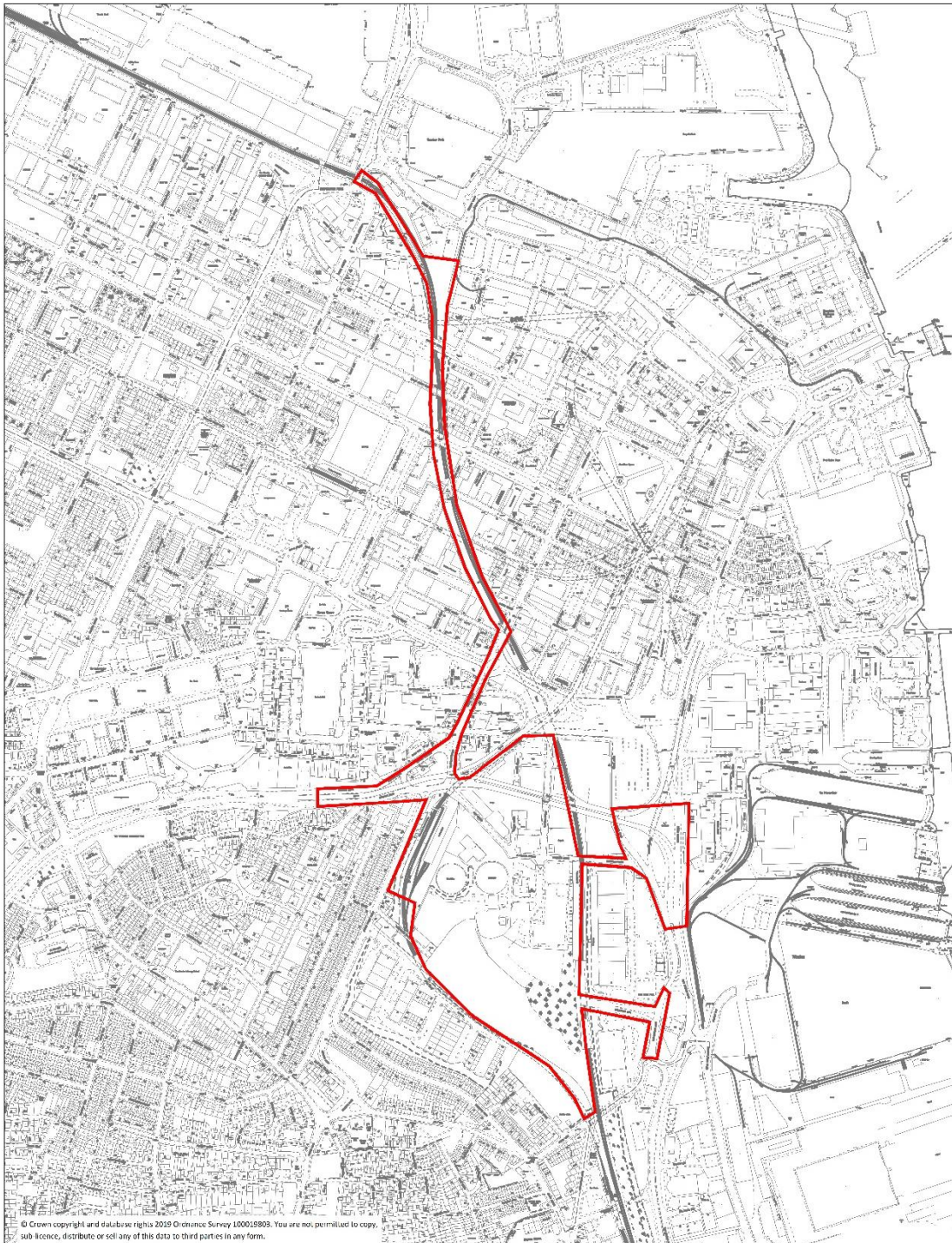
The Local Plan preferred urban intensification option is reliant on the delivery of Wirral Waters. This feasibility provides the evidence for transport investment required to support growth in the area by increasing development viability.

5.4 A41 Corridor Study Preferred Options Report (and baseline studies) (draft)

5.4.1 Purpose

The A41 corridor, on the east side of the Wirral borough, is one with significant development opportunities, such as at Hamilton Square, Woodside Waterfront, Birkenhead town centre, Birkenhead market and the Hind Street area. While it is a strategic corridor, the A41 also plays an important role locally as a gateway to Birkenhead town centre and the Queensway Tunnel. However, it also creates severance locally due to its busy nature. Wirral Council wished to investigate ways to reconnect areas along the A41 and improve investment, create jobs and develop skills in the area. The A41 study area is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 – A41 Study Area



5.4.2 Outputs

An initial baseline review was undertaken, to examine the study area of the A41 in terms of its geographical, historical and transport context, as well as the existing development opportunities along the corridor, as proposed in the Strategic Regeneration Framework and Local Plan. This initial baseline review was supported by stakeholder engagement discussions with Merseytravel, Wirral Council and Peel Group. Key issues and opportunities around the A41's

context, vehicle access, public transport, active travel, and safety and environment were collated.

Based on the key issues and opportunities in the A41 Corridor study area, a list of around 55 options were developed, covering themes such as Birkenhead town centre gateways and streetscape, bus/rail interchange enhancements, Hamilton Square regeneration, Woodside regeneration, site access improvements and sustainable connectivity.

The long list of potential options were appraised for their alignment with low carbon, growth and access to opportunity – the overarching objectives of the Liverpool City Region A Transport Plan for Growth. Within each of the three overarching objectives were a series of assessment criteria, such as supporting visitor economy, encouraging increased walking and cycling, and deliverability, which were assessed on a five-point scoring system. The most favourable schemes for delivering the desired improvements to the A41 corridor were taken forward and grouped according to the three time periods. Schemes in the early phase of delivery were focused around Wirral Line Enhancements, Birkenhead Town Centre Gateways and Streetscape, and the regeneration of Woodside and Hamilton Square, while longer term schemes were focused on development of the cross-river strategy.

The outputs of the appraisal process formed the basis of the A41 Transport Strategy, supported by the outputs of modelling the schemes. With the preferred options identified, the schemes were developed to concept design stage, with a drawing, review of scheme risks and an indication of budget required to deliver the scheme. One of the schemes identified as key to supporting the A41 Corridor was the implementation of a high quality, high frequency transit system to provide feasible alternatives to private car for accessing developments along the corridor. To assist this, options for rapid transit networks were considered, and their relative key characteristics, advantages and disadvantages compared to establish whether a preferred mode could be found. Four modes were recommended for further consideration: Wirral Streetcar, Tram-bus, bus rapid transit and electric trolley bus.

As well as the concept designs, the preferred options were subjected to a brief economic and social impact and benefits review. Traffic modelling identified junctions expected to be operating at over capacity by 2030, under different development scenarios. A review of available funding sources for implementing the A41 schemes covered long and short-term opportunities, at regional and local scales.

5.4.3 Contribution to Local Plan

This study has highlighted where there are known capacity constraints on the A41 corridor, a key corridor for supporting additional housing allocations in Wirral. Identification of locations which require mitigation regardless of future development demands enables these locations to be prioritised for funding for upgrade, and the development of programmes to deliver highway upgrades in accordance with proposed build out rates of Local Plan allocations.

5.5 Wirral Local Plan Baseline Modelling Report

5.5.1 Purpose

Analysis of the 2015 base year Wirral Traffic Model was undertaken to identify where there are existing capacity constraints on the highway network which will require intervention to enable the highway network to continue to operate efficiently with additional development in the borough.

A 2035 baseline forecast was developed which included forecast housing and employment from the following sources:

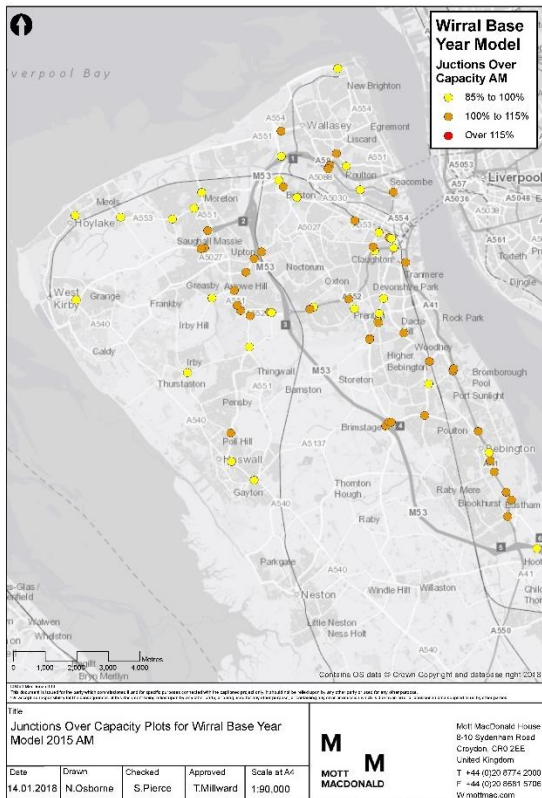
- Future year housing
 - Completions from the model base year of 2015 to 2017;
 - Planning permissions from 2018-2033;
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites from 2018-2033;
 - Windfall sites distributed over the district at a rate of 60 per year;
 - Demolition sites distributed over the district at a rate of 50 per year; and
 - Wirral Waters proposed development.
- Future year employment:
 - Baseline employment growth from the Strategic Housing & Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA), distributed using employment supply for Wirral;
 - Development based employment growth for major employment sites from the SHELMA ('growth' scenario), updated with the latest proposals for Wirral Waters.

5.5.2 Outputs

The Wirral Traffic Model was interrogated and the plots in Figure 12 and Figure 13 show the junctions which, in the 2015 base year, are already operating at over 85% volume/capacity, a value which indicates a junction is operating close to capacity and as a result there are increased queue lengths and delays. Junctions operating at over 100% capacity have queues and delays which are likely to grow exponentially.

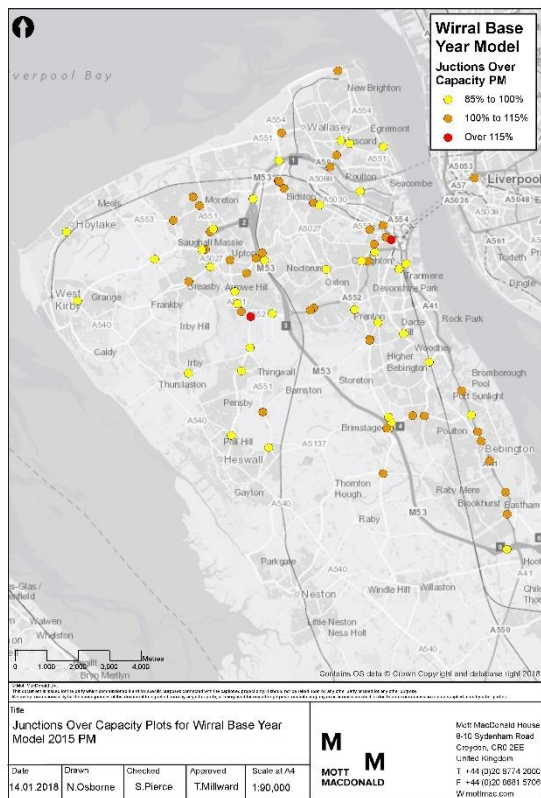
It can be seen there are junctions operating at over 85% capacity throughout the borough in both 2015 and 2035, with concentrations on the A41, central Birkenhead and around Upton.

Figure 12 - Junctions over Capacity in AM Peak 2015



Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 13 - Junctions over Capacity in PM Peak 2015

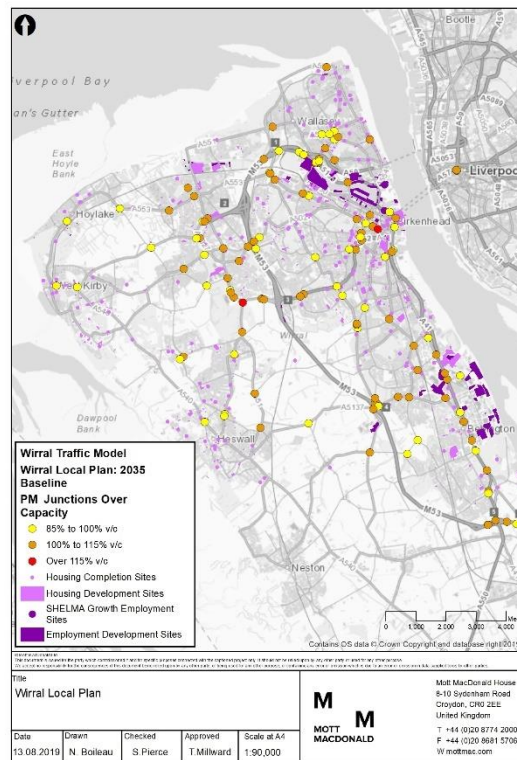
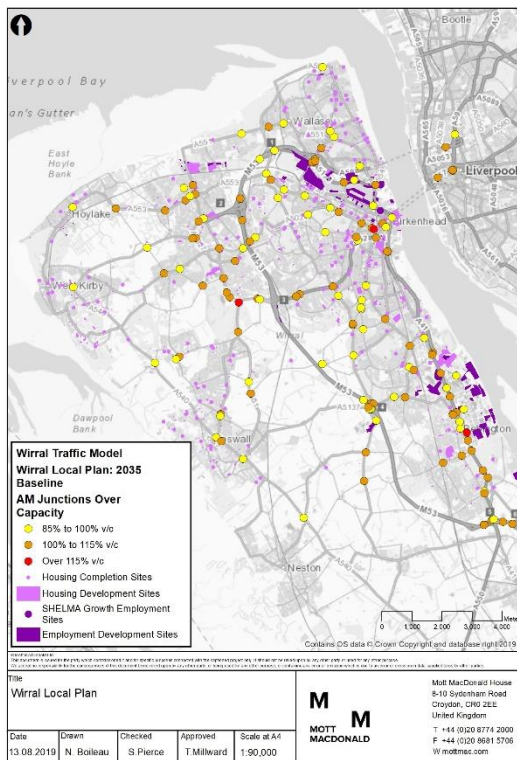


Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 14 and Figure 15 show the junctions which, in the 2035 baseline scenario, are already operating at over 85% volume/capacity.

Figure 14 - Junctions over Capacity in AM Peak 2035 Baseline

Figure 15 - Junctions over Capacity in PM Peak 2035 Baseline



Source: Mott MacDonald

Source: Mott MacDonald

It can be seen there are junctions operating at over 85% capacity throughout the borough in both 2015 and 2035, with concentrations on the A41, central Birkenhead and around Upton.

5.5.3 Contribution to Local Plan

Baseline modelling identifies the junctions and links on the highway network which are already operating close to or over capacity. Appropriate upgrades will need to be considered alongside the development of the Local Plan to ensure it can be delivered.

5.6 Wirral Local Plan Strategic Spatial Options Modelling Report 2019

5.6.1 Purpose

In addition to the baseline discussed above, three strategic spatial options have been modelled to understand the cumulative impacts on the transport network of developing all the sites.

These comprise of:

- Option 1A – Urban Intensification.
- Option 2A – Green Belt Dispersed Sites.
- Option 2B – Green Belt Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) Sites.

Option 1A comprises proposed urban housing allocations comprising 8,763 dwellings (including sites with planning permission, and 4,534 dwellings at Wirral Waters) together with relevant

allowances for net gains from conversions, changes of use, windfalls and empty homes. Several broad locations for growth are proposed in and around Birkenhead and New Brighton, covering years 6-10 and 11-15 of the plan period where additional acceleration and intensification could deliver additional housing supply in the plan period. The option also includes proposed urban employment allocations totalling 105 hectares.

Option 2A (Dispersed Green Belt release) proposes the release of a series of small to medium sized areas of land, which when added together, would allow sufficient land to be allocated to meet any residual housing needs within the Plan period.

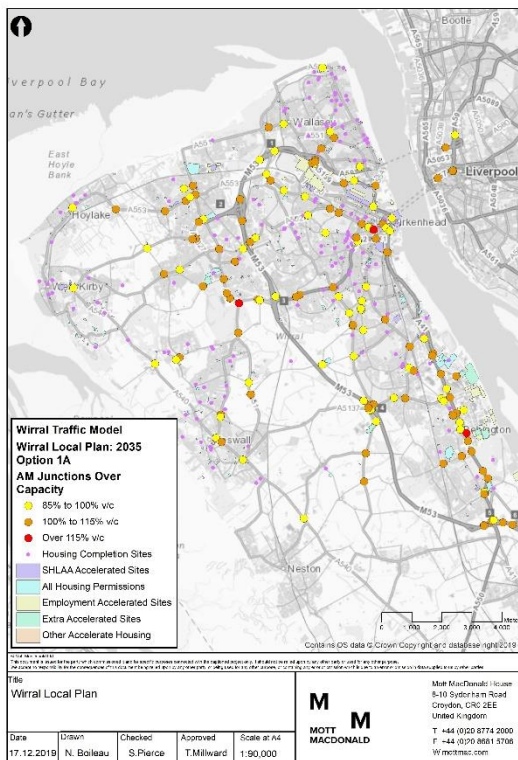
Option 2B proposes an alternative option to focus development more strategically into a single larger area around an existing settlement. This option still relies on the weakly performing Green Belt parcels but groups these together to identify a larger contiguous area for urban expansion. The most suitable location would be on land west of Barnston Road, Heswall.

5.6.2 Outputs

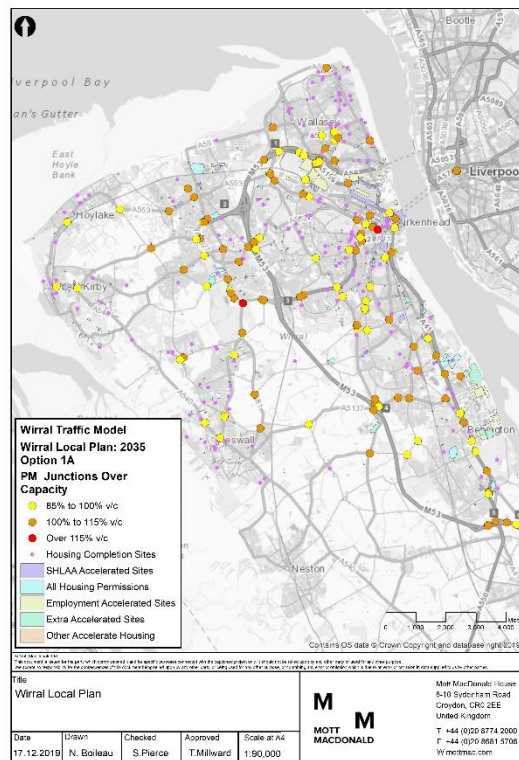
The Wirral Traffic Model was interrogated, and the plots below indicate which junctions have a volume/capacity of greater than 85% in each strategic spatial option.

Figure 16 - Junctions over Capacity in AM Peak 2035 Option 1A

Figure 17 - Junctions over Capacity in PM Peak 2035 Option 1A

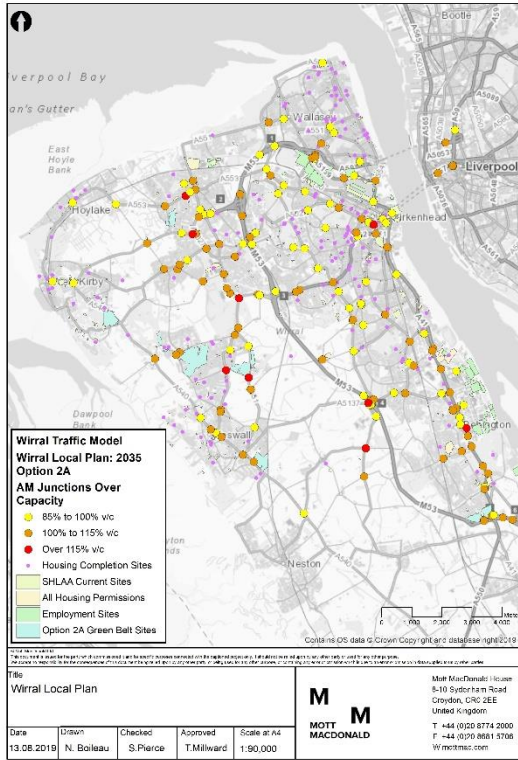


Source: Mott MacDonald



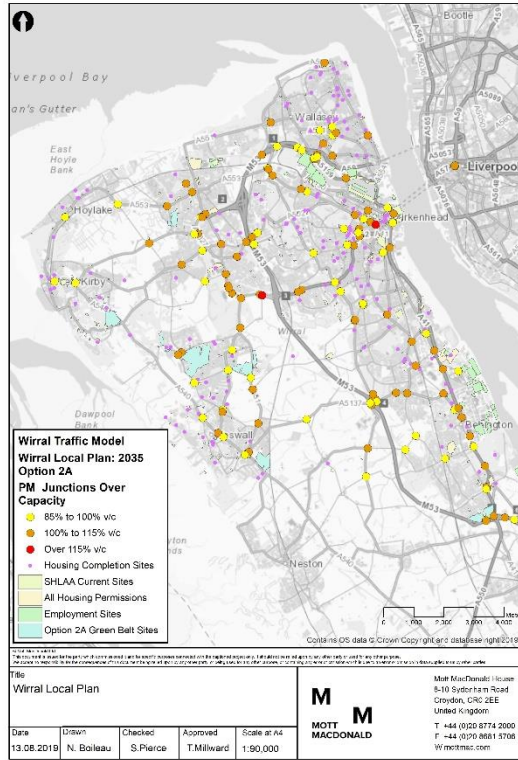
Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 18 - Junctions over Capacity in AM Peak 2035 Option 2A



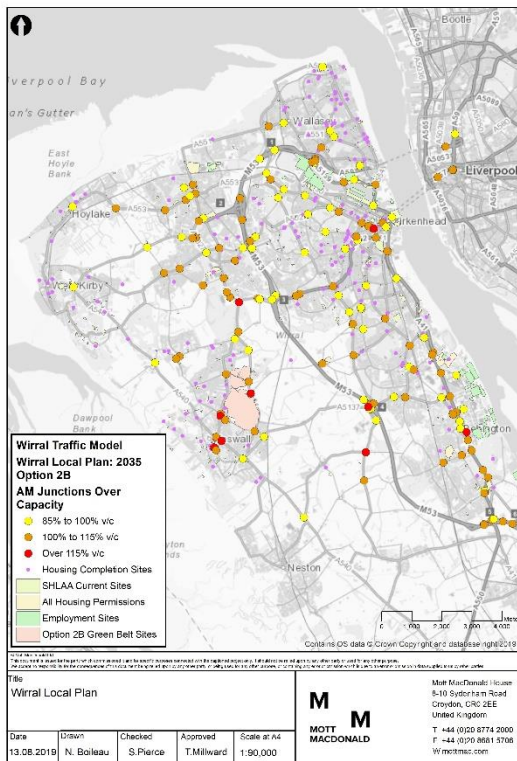
Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 19 - Junctions over Capacity in PM Peak 2035 Option 2A



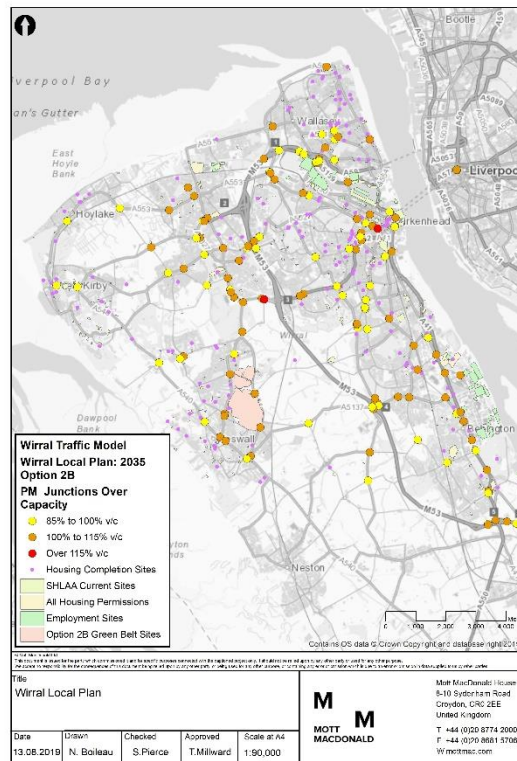
Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 20 - Junctions over Capacity in AM Peak 2035 Option 2B



Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 21 - Junctions over Capacity in PM Peak 2035 Option 2B



Source: Mott MacDonald

The modelling identifies the impact of each option on the transport network.

In Option 1A there are additional junctions approaching or over capacity compared to 2015 and the baseline scenario. These are focussed in east Wirral around Birkenhead and the A41 corridor. Approaches to the M53 and M53 junctions become over capacity in both east and west Wirral. There are some increases in junctions over capacity around Heswall and north west Wirral. The results are similar to the baseline with some extra junctions over capacity which would be expected given the additional housing contained in Option 1A.

In Option 2A there are additional junctions approaching or over capacity compared to 2015, the baseline and Option 1A. There are increases in in east Wirral around Birkenhead and the A41 corridor. Approaches to the M53 and M53 junctions become over capacity in both east and west Wirral. In Option 2A a number of junctions in west Wirral become over capacity especially around Heswall, Barnston and Greasby due to the location of the dispersed green belt sites.

In Option 2B there are additional junctions approaching or over capacity compared to 2015, the baseline and Option 1A. There are increases in east Wirral around Birkenhead and the A41 corridor. Approaches to the M53 and M53 junctions become over capacity in both east and west Wirral. In Option 2B a number of junctions in west Wirral become over capacity especially around Heswall, Barnston and Greasby. Around Heswall in the vicinity of the SUE site three junctions have a V/C of over 115% in the AM.

5.6.3 Contribution to Local Plan

Modelling of the strategic spatial options will assist with the development and implementation of the Local Plan by highlighting parts of the transport network which are likely to experience capacity constraints in due course. Modelling will therefore show where amendments need to be made to enable the Local Plan to be successfully delivered. This work will also inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, identifying necessary transport infrastructure will be required to support delivery of the sites across Wirral.

5.7 Wirral Local Plan: Green Belt Sites Transport and Accessibility Reviews

This work is combined in the following documents:

- Wirral Local Plan: Green Belt Sites for Further Investigation - Transport & Accessibility Review and Addendum of Green Belt Weak Parcel Sites.
- Wirral Local Plan: Option 2B Single Urban Extension Transport and Accessibility Review.

5.7.1 Purpose

This review assessed the potential of a series of parcels of Green Belt land for their accessibility and deliverability potential for being the locations of future housing development.

5.7.2 Outputs

A review was carried out of c.60 parcels of Green Belt land (some clusters are treated as single sites) within the borough to assess the potential of these sites for future housing developments. The review covered key information of indicative number of dwellings which could be created on the land parcel, potential trip generations to and from the site, level site considerations and general accessibility to the site.

Access to a range of basic amenities by bicycle or walking within a specified time frame was also assessed. Amenities included primary and secondary schools, GP surgery, retail, leisure facility and pub/restaurant. Access to town centres by public transport was assessed to determine how accessible the town centres are from the existing public transport provision in the area.

Integration with the surrounding area and the ease of delivering the site were assessed using a Red Amber Green (RAG) system.

For each site, the review identified transport and accessibility mitigation measures which would be needed to enable development at the site, such as improvements to highway links and junctions, new or improved footways and cycle routes, and public transport improvements. Finally, an approximate cost for accessing the site and carrying out the transport and accessibility mitigation in the local vicinity was included.

5.7.3 Contribution to Local Plan

The review serves to provide guidance on the suitability of Green Belt sites for consideration as potential options for housing in the Local Plan.

5.8 Emerging Urban Brownfield Site Assessment Study - Transport and Accessibility inputs

5.8.1 Purpose

This review currently is assessing the potential of a series of parcels of brownfield land for their accessibility and deliverability potential for being the locations of future housing development.

5.8.2 Outputs

This study is reviewing 16 sites considering their existing transport provision (highways, public transport and walking and cycling), local road safety issues, and existing access options and their suitability to provide access for any future residential development. Work being undertaken includes calculation of the expected trip generation of sites, and a qualitative review of potential off-site impacts, plus any necessary off-site transport improvements and a high-level cost estimate of those off-site mitigation measures.

A red, amber, green scale rating will be given to sites according to the outcome of the assessment process, with red indicating sites which have major access concerns and would require significant mitigation, while green will indicate sites with no or negligible concerns requiring little or no mitigation.

This work is to be combined with other non-transport assessments for the sites such as considering environmental constraints (i.e. flooding), site viability, potential masterplan layouts of sites to inform utility estimations and identify access points.

5.8.3 Contribution to Local Plan

The review serves to provide guidance on the suitability of sites for consideration as potential site allocations for housing in the Local Plan.

5.9 Infrastructure Delivery Plan Evidence Base

5.9.1 Purpose

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Evidence Base (IDPEB) used a review of local policy, meetings with stakeholders, and information provided by appropriate parties to identify infrastructure priorities for the borough and the potential funding sources available for their delivery. Four elements of infrastructure were covered within the review: utilities, transport, education and green spaces.

5.9.2 Outputs

The IDPEB reviewed existing information available on infrastructure. From this, the requirements for utilities, transport, education and green spaces which will be required to deliver the Local Plan have been identified. This has enabled the Council to understand what need investment in infrastructure is required to deliver the Local Plan.

5.9.3 Contribution to Local Plan

This work will inform the development of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the proposed site allocations, identifying necessary infrastructure to support delivery of the sites.

5.10 Birkenhead Studies

A series of studies have recently or are in the process of being carried out. These include development of an outline business case for the A41 North project, the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework and a bid to the Future High Streets Fund for the town centre. These will provide a detailed understanding of the transport infrastructure needs to support and link development areas and begin to fund schemes identified to support growth in the preferred Urban Intensification option.

5.10.1 A41 North Outline Business Case

An Outline Business Case for the A41 North Phase 1 package is in the process of being prepared, to apply for Transforming Cities Fund from the LCRCA. The A41 study area was previously provided in Figure 11.

The package comprises two distinct schemes – the Green Corridor and Birkenhead Central Enhancements – which will bring about transport improvements and infrastructure, reduce severance between key development areas and open up land for major development opportunities. It builds on existing work done in the A41 North Transport Feasibility Study and the Strategic Regeneration Framework, which identified the A41 North Corridor as in need of major changes to support development and regeneration in the area.

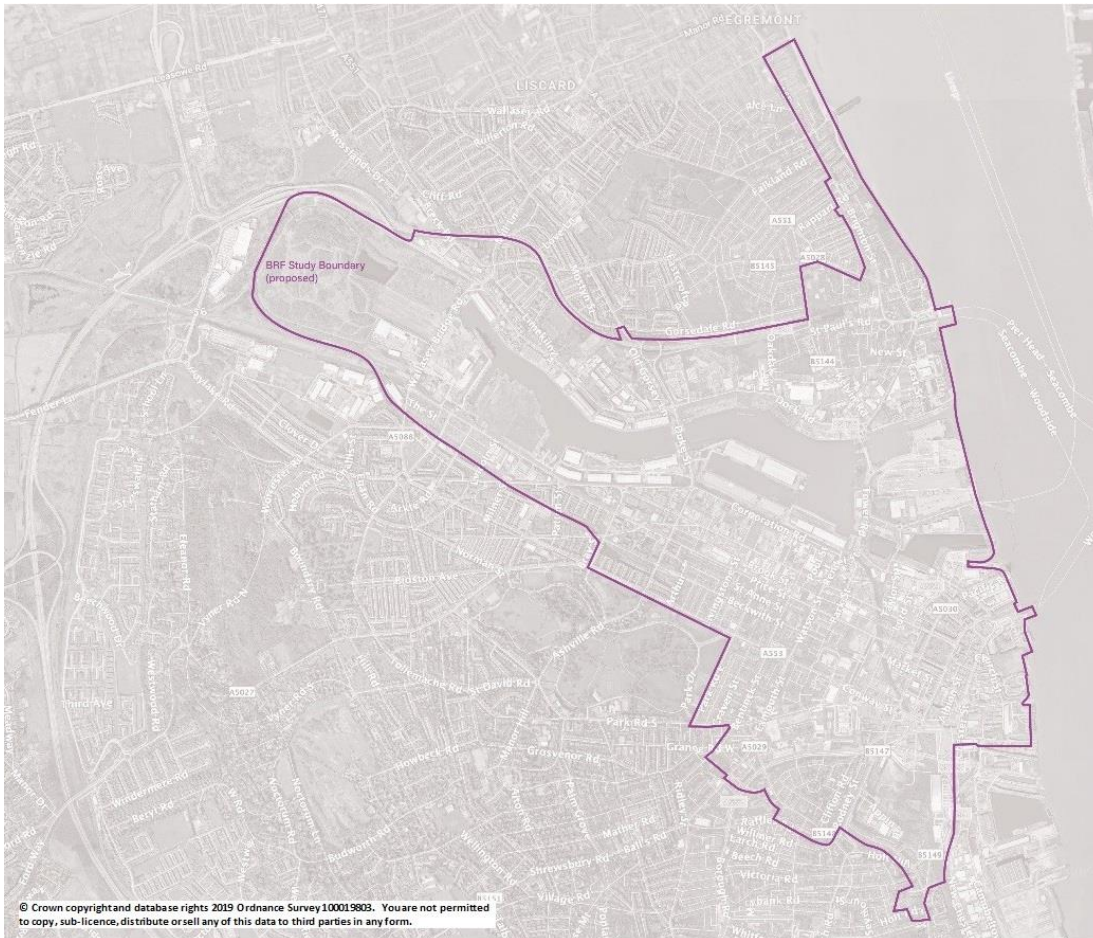
The Green Corridor proposes to improve and bring back into use a former railway alignment that served Birkenhead Docks. The corridor, which runs from Rock Ferry, through the centre of Birkenhead town centre, to Wirral Waters, has become overgrown due to years of disuse. Through this scheme, the aim is to remove the severance by bringing it up to grade and bring the corridor back into useful service as a corridor for walking, cycling and ultimately public transport.

The Birkenhead Central Enhancements scheme is focused around Birkenhead Central Station and the adjacent Hind Street mixed use development, which at present is complicated, unwelcoming and difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to move through. Removal of the large flyovers and replacement of them with an at-grade highway solution forms a primary element of the scheme to reduce severance. The aim of the scheme is to improve the public realm, create a stronger bus-rail interchange facility, and simplify routes between Birkenhead Central station and the town centre to make for a more attractive pedestrian environment.

5.10.2 Birkenhead Regeneration Framework

Mott MacDonald is currently working with Avison Young and Open to develop a regeneration framework for the town, accompanied by Delivery Action Plans to guide the regeneration of the Central Birkenhead area covering from the North of Birkenhead, through Wirral Waters, Hind Street area and the Docks to the Waterfront. The project is at an early stage at present. A specific movement framework and parking strategy to assess the critical connectivity matters and identify potential solutions is to be developed. The study area is shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22 – BRF Study Area



The movement strategy is considering all modes of transport, including the provision of car parking in the town centre and how that can be consolidated.

Wirral are applying to the Future High Street Fund for funding to support the BRF. The Future High Street Fund is a Central Government fund to help revitalise their high streets. Birkenhead was successful in being shortlisted in the initial stage of application, and the Council have been invited to further develop their initial proposal.

6 Next Steps

As this report has demonstrated, a wealth of information has been produced to date to inform the development of the Local Plan and inform development of options for consideration through the consultation process.

The evidence base and feedback from Regulation 18 consultation will be used to inform the identification of the proposed sites for allocation. More detailed transport assessments will be undertaken to assess the individual and cumulative impacts of the proposed sites and to identify appropriate enabling/ mitigation schemes and the potential developer contribution required to fund these to support delivery. This assessment will consider borough-wide impacts for both individual sites as well as clusters of sites/local areas.

The emerging preferred site allocations will be presented at the Regulation 19 consultation, scheduled for summer 2020, together with strengthened evidence and assessments on their suitability from a transport and accessibility perspective. These assessments, together with feedback from the consultation process will inform the determination of the final site allocations to be included in the Local Plan.

For the Regulation 19 consultation, this document will be updated with any further work undertaken to become a topic paper for transport.

