



**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL**

**CORE STRATEGY LOCAL PLAN**

**PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT**

**INITIAL PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS**

**JULY 2013**

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## **Background**

- 2.3 The land area extends to 60 square miles and contains one of the largest metropolitan areas in England, which is home to 319,800 people including 190,900 people of working age and over 8,000 businesses providing employment for 105,800 people. The population grew by 2.4 per cent and by 7,300 households between 2001 and 2011.

## Spatial Vision

By April 2028, Wirral will continue to offer a high quality of life, as an attractive place to live an active, sustainable, productive, safe and healthy lifestyle, to complement the attractiveness of and make a significant contribution to the economic competitiveness of the Liverpool City Region.

The focus of new development and investment will be on improving and regenerating the Borough's existing urban areas. Significant emphasis will be placed on tackling social, health, economic and environmental disparity; re-using existing buildings and previously developed land; and on strengthening and enhancing the distinctive assets of the Borough, including the quality and value of the Borough's historic, built and natural environment; supported by a tight Green Belt to focus development into the existing built-up area and achieve a sustainable pattern of development.

The housing market within the older urban areas in east Wirral, previously designated as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder, will be transformed, competing on a more equal footing with outlying residential areas and large areas of older stock, particularly in Birkenhead, Seacombe and Tranmere, will have been improved and replaced.

A new city neighbourhood will be being established within the Birkenhead Dock Estate to create a sustainable, mixed-use waterside community, where new homes and a wide range of employment, education, retail, leisure, community and cultural uses will create a new impetus for economic growth and regeneration at the heart of the older urban area.

The density of jobs and businesses and rates of economic activity will be moving toward regional average levels and vacant employment land will be being brought back into productive economic use. Sustainable economic regeneration will be being driven by the major economic hubs of Birkenhead, Bromborough and the Ports, with strong transport links to Liverpool, Chester and North Wales, supported by a thriving network of town, district and local centres providing retail, office, leisure, service, cultural, community and visitor facilities to meet the everyday needs of local communities.

A growth in sustainable tourism will be focused on the quality of the Borough's natural environment; built heritage; country parks; and coastline, with appropriate visitor facilities at Birkenhead, New Brighton, Leasowe, Hoylake, West Kirby, Thurstaston and along the Mersey coast, managed to avoid harm to European Sites, their supporting habitats and other biodiversity assets.

Wirral's rural areas will be providing for an efficient and productive agricultural economy, making full and effective use of the Borough's best and most versatile agricultural land, promoting local production and food security, while protecting and enhancing heritage, biodiversity and the quality of the natural and semi-natural environment.

Development and investment will have supported and encouraged a more sustainable pattern of development and travel that will have reduced emissions; improved air quality; increased the use of public transport and sustainable freight transport; and made greater use of alternative forms of transport such as walking and cycling; and there will be a greater emphasis, across all sectors, on securing sustainable approaches to design and construction; green infrastructure; energy; water; flood risk, waste management; carbon impact; local employment and production; and mitigation, adaption and resilience to climate change. Significant progress will have been made in the transition to a low carbon Borough.

**Strategic Objective 1 - Economic Revitalisation**

To support economic growth and a higher density of jobs and businesses particularly within the existing employment areas in east and central Wirral and the Borough's existing town, district and local centres.

**Strategic Objective 3 - Transport Accessibility**

To promote sustainable travel and direct new development to locations which will provide easiest access to existing centres, high-frequency public transport corridors, pedestrian and cycle routes.

- 4.9 The intention of Strategic Objective 3 is to ensure that new development is located with easy access to designated town, district and local centres and regular and frequent public transport; to support the vitality of existing centres; provide a realistic choice of means of transport to jobs, leisure, retail and services; reduce emissions; minimise journey lengths; and reduce the need to travel.

**Strategic Objective 4 – Neighbourhood Services**

To support the provision of shops, services, cultural, health and community facilities within easy reach of local communities.

- 4.12 The intention of Strategic Objective 4 is to strengthen and retain a thriving network of town, district and local centres, with a diverse range of shops, services and community facilities; in locations that are easily accessible by a choice of means of transport; minimise journey lengths; reduce the need to travel; and enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

### **Policy CS2 - Broad Spatial Strategy**

The Local Planning Authority will pursue a strategy of urban regeneration, economic growth and environmental enhancement, to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within the urban areas; neglected, unused or derelict land or buildings are brought into use; the need for new services is minimised by promoting the use of spare capacity in existing services; and new development provides positive benefits for local communities and the environment.

The priority will be to focus job, housing and population growth to areas of greatest need of physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration, particularly within the older urban areas of east Wirral, previously designated as part of the NewHeartlands Pathfinder. Medium to higher density development will normally be permitted within these areas and will be expected to make a positive contribution to local character, environment and amenity; make the most efficient and viable use of land, infrastructure and services; support a greater pace of regeneration, if the market can support it; and deliver the scale of transformation necessary to support a self-sustaining programme of regeneration.

Medium to higher density housing development will also be permitted on urban sites within an easy walking distance of an existing town, district or local centre or a high-frequency public transport corridor and will be expected to make a positive contribution to local character, environment and amenity; to support local centres and neighbourhood services; reduce the need to travel; provide local housing and/or employment to meet identified needs; and promote a sustainable pattern of development.

Outside areas of greatest need and areas within an easy walking distance of an existing town, district or local centre or a high-frequency public transport corridor, only smaller scale, lower-density development will normally be permitted, to maintain and enhance local character; to ensure that a sustainable pattern of development continues to be promoted and that a higher level of housing and employment growth continues to be supported in the most accessible locations and within areas of greatest need.

The primary focus for new jobs to drive forward the economic transformation of the Borough and support the economic competitiveness of the Liverpool City Region will be Wirral Waters, the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone and its surrounding industrial and commercial hinterland; Birkenhead Town Centre, including Hamilton Square and Woodside; the industrial and commercial areas along the A41 Corridor in Tranmere; Wirral International Business Park and the Unilever factory and research complex at Port Sunlight; and the existing employment areas at Moreton, Upton and Prenton; where jobs will be accessible by a choice of means of transport to the greatest number of residents.

Port and marine-related facilities will continue to be promoted at Twelve Quays, West Float, Cammell Lairds and at the Eastham Dock Estate, to reflect their continued strategic importance for marine engineering, cargo handling and freight movements; and the opportunity to maximise the potential for off-road transport by rail and water and contribute towards a sub-regional SuperPort.

Borough-wide facilities and services will first be directed to the most accessible locations in and around Birkenhead Town Centre. Secondary and district-level facilities and services operating over a more local catchment will first be directed to the town and district centres of Bromborough Village, Heswall, Hoylake, Liscard, Moreton, Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and West Kirby and then to other accessible sites that will be well-served by public transport.

[continued...]

Tourism investment will be targeted to support regeneration in Birkenhead; provide improvements within the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby and along the Mersey coastline; to enable the provision of appropriate visitor facilities; and to improve public access to the coast and countryside subject to the protection of European Sites, their supporting habitats and other biodiversity assets.

The focus within rural areas will be on strengthening and diversifying the agricultural economy; re-using existing buildings and previously developed land providing rural services within established settlements; supporting the beneficial use of best and most versatile agricultural land; providing for local food production and food security; and outdoor sport and recreation; subject to national Green Belt controls and Policy CS3.

Development in line with these priorities should, wherever possible and relevant, contribute to addressing identified physical, social, economic or environmental problems; promote the re-use of buildings of local quality and previously developed land; improve housing and living conditions; promote environmental improvements; preserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness, including visual amenity, biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape and heritage; protect and/or contribute to a linked network of green infrastructure and an appropriate level of provision for indoor and outdoor sport and recreation; reduce emissions; meet an identified local need; and promote sustainable design and construction, subject to the local priorities set out in Policies CS4 to CS11.

Mitigation for recreational disturbance to Natura 2000 sites, which may involve a mix of access management, habitat management and provision of alternative recreational space, will be provided through a Mitigation Strategy. Provision of alternative recreational space will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan, in consultation with relevant partners.

- 6.9 The Broad Spatial Strategy will principally be delivered through the policies for development management in Section 26 and by the each of the other policies of the Core Strategy. Access and habitat management and monitoring required as part of a Mitigation Strategy, for impacts on European Sites will be funded through the mechanisms identified in Policy CS45 – Developer Contributions and guided, where appropriate, by a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

**Policy CS3 - Green Belt**

A Green Belt will be maintained in Wirral to keep land permanently open in order to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land; prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; prevent urban sprawl; and safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

Inappropriate development, as defined in national policy, will only be approved in very special circumstances, where the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Appropriate uses that will enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including agriculture and opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, will be permitted where they will retain the openness of the Green Belt, retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity and meet the priorities set out in Policy CS11 and the requirements of Policy CS42.

### Key Diagram

**Legend**

-  Sub Regional Centre
-  Town Centre
-  District Centre
-  Major Employment Centre
-  Hospital
-  Minerals Safeguarding Area
-  Strategic Port Facility
-  Countryside Recreation
-  Tourism Focus
-  New City Neighbourhood
-  Motorway
-  Main Routes
-  Urban Areas
-  Green Belt
-  Areas of Greatest Need
-  Rail Line
-  Liverpool Strategic Investment Sites

**Policy CS4 - Priorities for Wallasey**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 1 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the M53 Motorway;
2. Support integration with the new city neighbourhoods at Wirral Waters, while maintaining a clear interface between the residential suburbs and the commercial areas to the south in Settlement Area 2;
3. Maintain and enhance the facilities provided by the urban coastal resort of New Brighton;
4. Support market renewal to reduce the number of vacant properties and previously developed sites in and around Liscard, Seacombe, Egremont and New Brighton and tackle worklessness and low incomes;
5. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Liscard as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area;
6. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the local centres at New Brighton (Victoria Road and Seabank Road), Seacombe (Poulton Road) and Wallasey Village as the focus for neighbourhood level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs;
7. Maintain the industrial areas at Alexandra Road and Cross Lane for small and medium scale industrial and commercial activities to provide additional local employment, subject to controlling the impact of flood risk at Cross Lane;
8. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency; promote sustainable transport; signed cycle routes including links to National Cycle Route 56; and manage the impact of noise from road transport along routes to New Brighton, Liscard, Wallasey Village and the Kingsway Tunnel;
9. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Magazines and Wellington Road and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets, including the Listed Buildings at Fort Perch Rock and Lighthouse;
10. Maintain and enhance the open aspect of the coastline; the national and international importance of the inter-tidal foreshores, part of which is in unfavourable recovering condition; and the facilities and open spaces associated with the coastal promenades between Seacombe Ferry and North Wirral Coastal Park;
11. Maintain and improve the provision of open space, to increase the number of allotments, and natural and semi-natural greenspace with biodiversity value, and strengthen the provision of green infrastructure, without compromising other open space functions;
12. Reduce flood risks along the coast; from the Birket and its tributaries; and from surface water; and address any local limitations in the supply of water; and
13. Maintain the physical separation and distinctiveness of Wallasey and Leasowe.

### Settlement Area 2 - Vision Statement

By the end of the plan period, the Commercial Core will be in the process of being transformed driven by a major, mixed-use development at Wirral Waters. A thriving maritime, renewable energy and engineering sector will be centred on Cammell Lairds, alongside ongoing investment in a sustainable port economy at Twelve Quays, West Float and the International Trade Centre. Birkenhead Town Centre will have an enhanced retail offer, with a strengthened commercial hinterland centred on the outstanding heritage value of Hamilton Square, the re-development of Woodside and an extension of the Town Centre towards Hind Street. The scale of new development will be being used to establish a network of strategic renewable energy infrastructure to contribute to the transition towards a low carbon economy. A framework of blue and green infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements will be being established to integrate with the surrounding Areas and protect and enhance the natural environment in proximity to the Commercial Core.

### Policy CS5 - Priorities for the Commercial Core of Birkenhead

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 2 will be to:

1. Establish a series of new city neighbourhoods at Wirral Waters and around Birkenhead Town Centre, to deliver major economic growth, jobs and training alongside investment in significant levels of new high quality housing and employment and the provision of supporting leisure, retail, community, health and education uses in line with Policy CS12;
2. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Birkenhead Town Centre as the Borough's principal focus for retail, office and town centre uses, including services for leisure, entertainment, culture, health and education and other uses of Borough-wide significance that attract large numbers of people;
3. Support a mixed use scheme at Woodside to enhance the economic role and commercial offer of Birkenhead Town Centre;
4. Maintain and enhance specialist port-related employment and activities, alongside support for the manufacturing, logistics, maritime, offshore renewable energy and heavy engineering sectors, at Cammell Lairds, Twelve Quays and West Float, as part of a wider sub-regional SuperPort;
5. Support the delivery of the International Trade Centre at West Float;
6. Promote the physical enhancement and economic regeneration of the surrounding commercial hinterlands in Seacombe, Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry for small and medium scale industrial and commercial activities and services;
7. Support integration with Wirral Waters and access to employment and training from within the surrounding areas in Bidston, Birkenhead, Leasowe, Liscard, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Tranmere;
8. Focus regeneration to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area at Hamilton Square, to secure a long-term mixed-use commercial future for the designated Area; and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets, including the Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monument at Birkenhead Priory;
9. Use the scale of new development within the Area to significantly reduce the amount of vacant and under-used previously developed land and support the delivery of strategic renewable energy infrastructure including district heating;
10. Establish a transport strategy to monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency and promote sustainable transport throughout the Area; manage the impact of transport noise; and address air quality issues at Tranmere;

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11. Maintain strong transport links and freight connections from the industrial areas and docklands to the M53 Motorway and promote the greater use of rail and water for freight movements to further support national and international trade;
12. Strengthen the provision of public transport to serve the new city neighbourhood and the provision of signed cycle routes within the Area; to link East Float to Leasowe and Wallasey, improve cycle access to Birkenhead and provide safe cycle links across the docks and to National Cycle Route 56;
13. Establish a linked framework of green and blue infrastructure throughout the Area; including a new public realm within the dockland waterways at East Float; with enhanced access to Hamilton Square Conservation Area, Bidston Moss and open space in adjoining Areas; and along the coast between Seacombe Promenade, Twelve Quays, Woodside and Tranmere, with open views of the Liverpool waterfront; and
14. Address the need for flood resilient design; reduce tidal, river and other flood risks.

**Policy CS6 - Priorities for Suburban Birkenhead**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 3 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the M53 Motorway;
2. Support market renewal to reduce the number of vacant properties and previously developed sites in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry and focus additional local improvements to tackle worklessness and low incomes in areas of greatest need in Beechwood, Bidston, Claughton, Noctorum, Oxton and Prenton;
3. Support integration with the new city neighbourhoods at Wirral Waters, while maintaining a clear interface between the residential suburbs and the commercial areas to the north and east in Settlement Area 2;
4. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Prenton (Woodchurch Road) as the main focus for district-level shops, offices, services and community facilities;
5. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the local centres at Claughton Village, Laird Street, Oxton Village, Borough Road (Prenton Park), Tranmere Urban Village and Dacre Hill, as the focus for neighbourhood level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs;
6. Maintain North Cheshire Trading Estate for small and medium scale industrial and commercial activities to provide additional local employment;
7. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens at Bidston Village; Birkenhead Park; Flaybrick Cemetery; Oxton Village; Clifton Park; Rock Park and Mountwood and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets;
8. Maintain and enhance the quality and character of the other older residential areas, particularly along the Noctorum Ridge, including the landscape character of Bidston Hill and the Wirral Ladies Golf Course;
9. Maintain and enhance the national and international importance of the intertidal foreshore at Rock Park;
10. Maintain and improve open space, to strengthen the provision of green infrastructure and to increase the amount of recreational open space and natural and semi-natural greenspace with biodiversity value;
11. Reduce flood risk along the coast at Rock Park, along the Fender Valley and from surface water;
12. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency; promote sustainable transport; signed cycle routes including links to National Cycle Route 56; and manage the impact of traffic noise along the A552 Woodchurch Road;
13. Support greater use of the Bidston-Wrexham 'Borderlands' railway line; and
14. Maintain the physical separation from the Mid-Wirral settlements of Moreton, Upton and Woodchurch.

**Policy CS7 - Priorities for Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 4 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Ellesmere Port, Chester and the M53 Motorway;
2. Maximise the economic contribution of Wirral International Business Park at Bromborough and the Unilever Complex at Port Sunlight for large and medium scale business, manufacturing, digital, bio-medical, advanced technology, research and development and storage and distribution; and the Eastham Dock Estate as a low carbon inland transport corridor, for port-related storage, processing and distribution uses, waterborne freight and rail transport;
3. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Bromborough Village as the main focus for district-level shops, offices, services and community facilities;
4. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the local centres at New Ferry, Lower Bebington and Eastham (Mill Park Drive) for neighbourhood level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs;
5. Focus local improvements and tackle worklessness and low incomes within the residential estates at New Ferry, Mill Park and Bromborough Rake;
6. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Port Sunlight, Bromborough Pool, Bromborough Village and Eastham Village and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets, including the need to safeguard against the gradual erosion of the outstanding quality of the character and setting of Port Sunlight Conservation Area;
7. Protect the provision of high quality open space and playing fields; and facilities that can provide for needs from within adjoining Areas; while addressing the need for additional facilities for children and young people;
8. Maintain and enhance a network of linked biodiversity assets, the national and international importance of the intertidal foreshores and the wooded, natural and semi-natural character and biodiversity value of the western and southern fringes of the Settlement Area;
9. Secure improved pedestrian and cycle access from the residential and industrial areas, to the north and to and along the Mersey coastline, subject to the impact on coastal nature conservation;
10. Reduce the risk of flooding associated with the Mersey coast, Bromborough Pool, the Dibbinsdale Brook and its tributaries, and surface water; and from coastal erosion at New Ferry;
11. [deleted]
12. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency along the A41 and on routes to the M53 Motorway; promote sustainable transport; manage the impact of transport noise along the A41; address the impact of HGVs on Eastham Village; and address air quality issues at Eastham;
13. Take account of the flight paths associated with Liverpool John Lennon Airport; and
14. Maintain the physical separation and local distinctiveness of Eastham Village and Storeton; and the physical separation with the urban areas in Ellesmere Port.

**Policy CS8 - Priorities for Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Greasby and Woodchurch**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 5 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the M53 Motorway;
2. Maximise the economic contribution of the industrial complexes at Leasowe, Moreton and Upton for food, bio-medical, research and development, advanced manufacturing and small and medium scale business activities, to maintain accessible local employment opportunities;
3. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Moreton Town Centre as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area;
4. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the local centres at Upton and Greasby, as the focus for neighbourhood level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs;
5. Focus local improvements in areas of greatest need in Leasowe, Moreton, Upton and Woodchurch to tackle worklessness and low incomes;
6. Maintain and enhance public access for pedestrians and cyclists to and along the river corridors associated with the Birket, Fender and Arrowe Brook; the woodland setting of Upton; and access to North Wirral Coastal Park subject to Policy CS11;
7. Increase the local provision of allotments and natural and semi-natural greenspace to increase local biodiversity; improve the unfavourable condition of Meols Meadows SSSI; and protect facilities that can provide for needs from within adjoining Areas;
8. Reduce tidal, river and other flood risks associated with the low-lying north Wirral coastal plain; the Birket and Fender valleys; Arrowe Brook; Greasby Brook; and surface water; and maintain existing flood defences;
9. Maintain and enhance biodiversity assets, the national and international nature conservation value of the intertidal foreshore to the north of the Area and its supporting habitats;
10. [deleted]
11. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency on routes to and through Moreton Town Centre, along Saughall Massie Road and at Arrowe Park; promote sustainable transport; signed cycle routes including links to National Cycle Route 56; address traffic noise at Moreton and along the M53 Motorway; and the impact of traffic on the level crossing at Leasowe Station; and
12. Maintain the physical separation between Leasowe and Wallasey; Moreton, Upton and Woodchurch and Birkenhead; Moreton and Hoylake; Greasby, West Kirby and Irby; and the distinctiveness of the remaining rural villages at Frankby, Saughall Massie and Landican.

**Policy CS9 - Priorities for Hoylake and West Kirby**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 6 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and Chester;
2. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of West Kirby as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area;
3. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Hoylake as the focus for district-level shops, offices, services and community facilities;
4. Maintain Carr Lane Industrial Estate for small and medium scale industrial and commercial activities to provide additional local employment;
5. Maintain and enhance facilities for visitors, including provision for leisure, tourism, golf, coastal recreation and water sports and the open spaces associated with the coastal promenades and North Wirral Coastal Park, while maintaining and enhancing biodiversity assets, the national and international nature conservation value of the intertidal foreshores and their supporting habitats, the Hilbre Islands and the Victorian and Edwardian heritage of the coastal resorts;
6. Tackle worklessness and low incomes at Greenbank Road, West Kirby;
7. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Hoylake, Caldy and West Kirby and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets; the woodland setting of Caldy and Newton; the visual and biodiversity importance of the natural open coastline; and open (including hilltop) views across the Dee Estuary to North Wales;
8. Reduce tidal, river and other flood risks associated with the coastal waterfronts, the low-lying north Wirral coastal plain and surface water;
9. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency on routes to Hoylake and West Kirby; promote sustainable transport; and avoid adverse impacts from pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the rail crossings at Carr Lane and between Meols and Hoylake;
10. Improve cycle links between West Kirby and Greasby and between West Kirby and Meols to Three Lanes End;
11. Address any local limitations on the disposal of surface water; and
12. Maintain the physical separation between Newton and Greasby; Meols and Moreton; and the distinctiveness of Frankby Village, Hoylake and West Kirby.

**Policy CS10 - Priorities for Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 7 will be to:

1. Maintain and provide attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Chester and North Wales;
2. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Heswall as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area;
3. Safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Irby Village as the focus for neighbourhood level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs;
4. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Heswall Lower Village and Gayton and the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets;
5. Maintain and enhance access to the coast and to the major natural and semi-natural open spaces at Heswall Dales, Thurstaston Common, Arrove Country Park and the Wirral Way and other open space, while maintaining and enhancing the national and international importance of the foreshore and their value for landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity;
6. Increase the provision of allotments and facilities for children and young people and outdoor sports, to meet local needs;
7. Reduce the risk of flooding from the Arrove Brook in Irby and surface water;
8. Monitor and manage traffic flows to promote sustainable transport; and maximise highway efficiency on routes through Heswall Town Centre and towards Birkenhead and the M53 Motorway;
9. Support greater use of the Bidston-Wrexham 'Borderlands' railway line; and
10. Maintain the physical separation and local distinctiveness of Irby, Barnston, Thurstaston and Landican.

- 15.1 Settlement Area 7 comprises the commuter settlements of Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall, Gayton and the urban parts of Barnston. Areas that pre-dated the suburban expansion of Heswall, including the Lower Village and the small township based around the manorial estate of Gayton Hall, are designated as Conservation Areas and parts of the Area are subject to density and design guidelines, to preserve the character of large family houses set in extensive, well-treed grounds.

**Policy CS11 - Priorities for the Rural Areas**

The overall strategy to promote sustainable development in Settlement Area 8 will be to:

1. Preserve and enhance the openness and rural character of the Area and the separation and distinctiveness of the urban and rural settlements;
2. Safeguard the beneficial and productive use of best and most versatile agricultural land for food production, subject to the impact on landscape, heritage and biodiversity;
3. Maintain the social and economic contribution of existing key facilities such as hospitals, schools, village shops and public houses, including the potential for new employment in medical services and bio-sciences including research, education and manufacturing, support for families and carers and other uses which support health care at Clatterbridge Hospital;
4. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Barnston, Eastham Village, Frankby, Gayton, Saughall Massie, Thornton Hough and Thurstaston; the setting of other designated and un-designated heritage assets; and the rural character of the smaller settlements at Brimstage, Raby and Storeton;
5. Conserve, enhance and restore the natural beauty, visual amenity and landscape character of the Area in line with the findings of the Wirral Landscape Character Assessment and Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Study and restore the historic park and garden at Thornton Manor;
6. Maintain and enhance the natural and semi-natural character of the undeveloped coastline; the national and international importance of the inter-tidal foreshores and their supporting habitats; and the value of a linked network of biodiversity and geodiversity assets and wildlife corridors, including any linkages with the surrounding urban areas;
7. Support improved woodland management, woodland creation and, where feasible, the production of biomass to support the production of renewable energy;
8. Minimise the visual and operational impact of essential infrastructure on local character, landscape and biodiversity;
9. Maintain and enhance access from the adjoining Settlement Areas to the major open spaces and country parks at Arrowse Country Park, Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve, Eastham Country Park, North Wirral Coastal Park, Royden Park, Thurstaston Common and Wirral Country Park for leisure, recreation and tourism, subject to the impact on landscape, heritage and biodiversity;
10. Monitor and manage traffic flows to promote sustainable transport; signed cycle routes including links to National Cycle Route 56; maximise highway efficiency on routes to Birkenhead and the M53 Motorway, at Arrowse Park, Barnston Village and Clatterbridge; and minimise the impact on the natural environment;
11. Support greater use of the Bidston-Wrexham 'Borderlands' railway line including provision for park and ride at Bidston;
12. Address the impact of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the rail crossings between Moreton and Meols and at Storeton;
13. Reduce tidal, river and other flood risks associated with river corridors and the low-lying North Wirral coastal plain.
14. [deleted]

## Policy CS12 - Wirral Waters

The Council will support the delivery of large-scale, high-density, mixed-use, commercial-led development within the Birkenhead Dock Estate at East Float, West Float and Bidston Dock, to support the economic growth and regeneration of the wider sub-region.

Development at East Float will provide for the following overall amount of mixed-use development:

- up to 15,193 dwellings
- up to 428,794 square metres for offices including research and development, subject to measures to reduce the impact on Liverpool City Centre
- up to 140,534 square metres for cultural, leisure, education, hotel and conferencing, community and amenity facilities and up to 66,349 square metres for retail uses, subject to the delivery of additional homes and jobs to prevent harm to existing centres

Development at West Float will primarily provide for industrial, employment and port-related activities, including the delivery of an International Trade Centre which will provide up to 228,300 square metres of floorspace comprising trade showrooms, storage, distribution and product assembly space, exhibition space, ancillary food and drink facilities, ancillary office and management accommodation, security facilities and associated car parking. Up to 116,529 square metres of the overall floorspace will be permitted for general distribution and industrial use.

Bidston Dock will provide for development that will further support economic revitalisation without causing harm to existing centres or facilities.

The precise timetable for delivery is yet to be determined but is expected to extend beyond the period of this Core Strategy.

Detailed planning applications for each element of proposed development at East Float, West Float and Bidston Dock will be required to:

1. amend and/or update the wider master plan for the area;
2. where relevant, contribute to the provision of affordable housing in line with Policy CS22;
3. develop, update and implement a green infrastructure strategy for the area and secure appropriate provision within and around the site;
4. develop, update and implement a strategy to address flood risk, wastewater network and water supply constraints and secure measures to minimise water demand;
5. incorporate low carbon initiatives to minimise energy demand and maximise the use of low carbon and/or renewable energy where viable;
6. identify and secure appropriate facilities for waste management including waste minimisation and recycling, to serve the development proposed;
7. develop, update and implement the public transport and access strategy for the area and include measures that will ensure full integration with the surrounding areas, including the historic grid-iron street layout and Hamilton Square Conservation Area;
8. ensure that the impact of any tall buildings will not cause unacceptable harm to the setting or views from Hamilton Square Conservation Area;
9. address the need to secure appropriate access to social infrastructure for health, education, recreation and enhanced employment and training opportunities for existing local residents;
10. amend and update the cumulative transport assessment for existing and proposed development within the area;
11. update the environmental information baseline to enable the Council to complete an updated Habitats Regulations Assessment Report;
12. monitor and maintain the structural condition of the dock walls and lock gates; and
13. meet the requirements of Policy CS42.

**Policy CS13 - Employment Land Requirement**

A minimum of 200 hectares of land will be required to accommodate new employment development for B1, B2, B8 and other similar employment uses between 2012 and 2028.

Deliverable sites to meet these requirements will be allocated in a site-specific Local Plan. Priority will be given to sites that are 'market ready' for development, able to accommodate the priority sectors identified in Policy CS14 and provide employment and training for people in areas of greatest need, in line with the strategic priorities identified in the Broad Spatial Strategy (Policy CS2).

19.2 The Council's Enterprise Strategy originally estimated that raising the Borough's economic activity and business stock towards the regional average would require an additional 55 hectares of land to be developed by 2016. The latest calculation indicates that this figure should now be approximately 36 hectares.

19.8 [delete paragraph]

**Policy CS14 – Priority Sectors**

The Council will, in particular, support development that will provide for:

- higher quality, large, medium and small scale office space in Birkenhead;
- the regeneration of traditional employment areas to offer premises that modern companies need, particularly in the hinterland surrounding Wirral Waters;
- greener growth, including construction and supply chain facilities for offshore wind and the low carbon economy;
- high quality premises for key employment sectors including food; research and development; advanced technology and manufacturing; life sciences and biomedical facilities; creative and digital industries; and financial and professional services;
- digital infrastructure to support economic development;
- port-centric, distribution, logistics, maritime and heavy-engineering sectors;
- flexible managed and non-managed business space to meet the diverse needs of start-up, micro, small and medium size enterprises; and
- the provision of additional employment in accessible locations in west Wirral.

Sites to meet these and any other identified requirements will be allocated in a site-specific Local Plan.

19.9 The Wirral Investment Strategy sets out how the Council will work with partners to drive economic growth and increase investment. The Investment Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on key growth sectors to build on existing local specialisms and opportunities presented by Wirral's geography, including port uses, research and development, low carbon, offshore energy, biomedical and advanced technology and manufacturing. This sectoral focus is supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership Economic Strategy and national guidance which advocates identifying and planning for new or emerging sectors as well as supporting a low carbon future.

**Policy CS15 - Criteria for Employment Development**

New employment development to provide new or additional floorspace for B1, B2, B8 and other similar employment uses, including conversions and changes of use, will be permitted where proposals can be demonstrated to:

1. make effective use of existing infrastructure and contribute to the enhancement of an existing employment area; and/or
2. provide for priority sectors or activities identified in Policy CS14; and/or
3. assist in enhancing access to jobs and training for local residents, particularly within areas of greatest need; and
4. minimise the impact on surrounding uses and protect residential amenity, in terms of light, noise, dust, odour, traffic and other disturbance; and
5. meet the requirements of Policy CS42.

Visually intrusive activities or those involving the handling of wind-blown materials will, in the absence of other more effective control measures, normally be required to carry out all operations, including loading, within a building to minimise the impact on neighbouring uses and the environment.

New office development should first be directed towards existing centres in accordance with Policy CS29 and then to existing employment areas and other locations with easy access to high-frequency public transport corridors, unless a proven need to co-locate with an existing facility can be demonstrated.

- 19.14 The Council will take a flexible approach to new high quality employment development for B1, B2, B8 and other similar employment uses, such as industrial or construction training facilities; vehicle hire, sales and repair businesses; builders merchants; and taxi businesses. in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and in the interests of maintaining and increasing levels of employment and developing a sustainable local economy.

**Policy CS16 – Criteria for Port-Related Development**

Port and marine-related development requiring planning permission will be permitted within the existing Dock Estates at Birkenhead and Eastham; at Twelve Quays; along the Tranmere waterfront at Cammell Lairds; and along the Bromborough Coast; where the proposals will:

1. be well-related to the Strategic Freight Network;
2. make effective use of existing infrastructure;
3. contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, through the more efficient use of rail and water transport;
4. minimise the environmental impact on residential areas, including routing protocols for traffic to and from the development;
5. have no unacceptable adverse impact on water quality or adverse effect on designated European Sites or their supporting habitats;
6. assist in enhancing access to jobs for local residents, particularly within areas of greatest need; and
7. meet the requirements of Policy CS42.

Sites for new port-related development will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan.

- 19.8 The Mersey Ports Master Plan produced by the port operator anticipates a continued demand to serve a growth in port traffic, port-centric distribution and other complementary sectors. Most port-related development for storage and distribution within the existing boundaries of the Dock Estates is permitted development but some projects will require planning permission and/or other regulatory consents, including the regulatory requirements of the Marine Management Organisation. A small amount of additional wharfage is also located along the Bromborough coast which could accommodate general cargo and other port and marine related uses.

**Policy CS17 - Protection of Employment Land**

Land will be safeguarded within designated employment areas to maintain and create local employment and provide a range and choice of sites and premises in terms of quality, accessibility, type and size to meet the priorities identified in Policy CS2 and Policies CS4 to CS11.

Alternative uses will only be acceptable on land designated for B1, B2, B8 or other similar employment uses where:

1. the site would not be suitable for the priority sectors identified in Policy CS14; and
2. the site has been continuously marketed for employment uses at realistic prices for a period of at least 12 months and there is no reasonable prospect of the site being re-used for employment uses;
3. an ongoing supply of available, suitable, developable land, sufficient to meet the needs identified in Policy CS13 would still be retained; and
4. the uses proposed are compatible with the character of the surrounding area, would not restrict the operation of existing employment uses, would contribute toward establishing a more sustainable pattern of development and would meet the requirements of Policy CS42; and
5. in the case of residential development, that additional housing is needed to demonstrate an ongoing 5-year housing land supply, in line with Policy CS19; and
6. in the case of main town centre uses, that the proposal has been subject to an impact and sequential test under national policy and meets the requirements of Policy CS29; or
7. the development is necessary to secure additional employment development that would not otherwise be viable to provide and criteria 4, 5 and/or 6 (above) would also be met.

Priority will be given to the protection of sites that score highly against the criteria set out in the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study and are able to provide employment and training for people in areas of greatest need.

### Policy CS20 - Housing Contingencies

If alternative sites sufficient to provide an ongoing five-year supply to 2023 have not obtained planning permission by 2018, the Council will undertake a review of the Borough's ongoing housing land supply to seek additional developable sites within the existing urban area and then, if sufficient developable sites cannot be identified within the existing urban area, by considering the need to identify sites for housing development within the Green Belt sufficient to maintain an ongoing five year supply of deliverable housing land over the remainder of the plan period to 2028. Following this review, sites in the Green Belt will only be considered in a site-specific Local Plan where:

- they are required to maintain an ongoing five year supply of deliverable housing land;
- the site is considered to be the most suitable, taking account of the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt in the National Planning Policy Framework;
- the site would follow clearly defined boundaries, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, without compromising the integrity of the surrounding landscape;
- the site would be well-related to an existing Settlement Area in terms of setting, visual impact, infrastructure, access to services and a choice of means of transport;
- the development would not compromise the local priorities set out in Policies CS4 to CS11; and
- the development would be consistent with wider sub-regional priorities for continued regeneration at the core of the Liverpool City Region.

Development proposals will be expected to comply with the requirements of Policy CS42.

20.23 The principal areas of uncertainty identified through public consultation relate to the scale and timing of future development and the ability to continue to deliver housing within the previous regeneration priority areas associated with the Newheartlands Pathfinder. The impact of these and other changes over time will be subject to continued annual monitoring but provision must be made if the level of development anticipated at these sites can no longer be achieved.

20.25 The purpose of the Green Belt in national policy is to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. The consideration of individual sites will, wherever possible, be undertaken as part of a wider sub-regional review of Green Belt boundaries, to provide a co-ordinated approach based on joint working across the sub-region and with adjoining authorities. Any future review of sites suitable for housing will also be combined with a review of requirements for employment, retail and open space.

**Policy CS23 - Criteria for Specialist Housing**

Proposals for the development of specialist housing will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would:

1. meet the requirements of Policy CS21;
2. be easily accessible in terms of distance and gradient by people of different ages and abilities by foot and/or wheelchair to local shops, accessible public open space and public transport in line with the expected needs of the prospective residents;
3. secure adequate private amenity space within the curtilage of the development;
4. not result in an over-concentration of sheltered or supported housing that would have a detrimental cumulative impact on the character of the surrounding area or lead to individual family homes being surrounded by specialist housing;
5. access to appropriate specialist support services will be available within the Locality; and
6. meet an identified need for community housing arrangements, leavers of institutional care and the elderly

Sites considered to be appropriate for specialist housing may be included in a future site-specific Local Plan.

## Policy CS25 - Hierarchy of Retail Centres

The following network of centres will be used to guide the distribution of main town centre uses and other uses that are likely to attract a significant number of people for day-to-day activities, subject to Policies CS26 to CS29:

### 1. Sub-Regional Centre

*Birkenhead Town Centre (including Grange Road West, Oxton Road, Europa Boulevard, Argyle Street, Market Street and Hamilton Street)*

The Borough's main comparison shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, cultural and tourist development and facilities and other main town centre uses of Borough wide significance. Use Class A1 retail floorspace guideline - suitable for retailing up to sub-regional scale.

### 2. Town Centres

*Heswall  
Moreton*

*Liscard  
West Kirby*

The main focus for development and investment in shops, services and leisure and community uses outside Birkenhead. Use Class A1 retail floorspace guideline - suitable for units up to 2,500 square metres (net).

### 3. District Centres

*Bromborough Village*

*Hoylake*

*Woodchurch Road (Prenton)*

The focus for district level shops, services and community facilities at a level above local centres. Use Class A1 retail floorspace guideline - suitable for units up to 1,500 square metres (net).

### 4. Local Centres

*Borough Road (Prenton Park)  
Dacre Hill  
Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane)  
Laird Street  
New Ferry  
Seacombe (Poulton Road)  
Tranmere Urban Village  
New Brighton (Victoria Road)*

*Cloughton Village  
Eastham (Mill Park Drive/New Chester Road)  
Irby Village  
Lower Bebington  
Oxton Village  
New Brighton (Seabank Road)  
Upton Village  
Wallasey Village*

The focus for neighbourhood level shops and services to serve everyday needs. Use Class A1 retail floorspace guideline - suitable for units up to 280 square metres (net).

The boundary to each of these centres, including sites for new development and primary and secondary frontages, will be defined in a site-specific Local Plan.

- 21.3 Three levels of centre have been defined below Birkenhead, based on evidence of surveys, floorspace and spending patterns provided in the Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study. Further proposals for more local improvements are identified in the Town, District and Local Centres Study and Delivery Framework and will be included in a series of more detailed Town Centre Action Plans

**Policy CS29 - Criteria for Edge-of-Centre and Out-of-Centre Facilities**

New floorspace for Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1, D2 and other main town centre uses outside the centres listed in Policy CS25, including changes of use, extensions to existing floorspace and proposals to vary or remove conditions in respect of the range of goods sold and Use Class restrictions, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. no alternative, suitable sites are available, first within, and then at the edge of a centre listed in Policy CS25; and
2. the site is easily accessible by a choice of means of transport and preference has been given to sites which are or will be well-connected to a town, district or local centre; and
3. the facilities would enhance and complement the range and quality of facilities provided in existing centres; and
4. an impact assessment submitted in accordance with Policy CS28 demonstrates that the new floorspace or variation of condition would not have a significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of a centre listed in Policy CS25 or designated in the adopted Local Plan of an adjacent authority, or on any existing, committed or planned public or private investment within them; and
5. the proposal will enhance access to jobs and training for local residents, particularly within areas of greatest need; and
6. the proposal meets the requirements of Policy CS42.

Edge-of-centre proposals must be of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre and its role in the hierarchy identified in Policy CS25 and must demonstrate how the proposal will be connected to the centre, encourage linked trips and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

Where appropriate, planning conditions will be used to control the type, mix and quantum of gross and net retail floorspace; the range of goods sold; size of units; and number of operators per unit; to ensure that the impact on existing centres is minimised.

- 21.30 The Council's preference is for new floorspace to first be directed to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Policy CS25 and then, if a need is identified, to have regard to the need for regeneration, considerations of scale and impact on existing centres and support for the objectives of the Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study.

### **Policy CS30 - Requirements for Green Infrastructure**

New development will be required to contribute towards the provision, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, to reflect the physical characteristics of the site; the type and function of the development proposed; and the character of the surrounding area, to secure multi-functional benefits which will, where relevant:

1. provide for landscaping and amenity and maintain and enhance existing landscape features, such as trees, woodlands and hedges;
2. protect and enhance public rights of way, green networks and access to local facilities such as shops, schools, open space and public transport;
3. protect and provide land for recreation in line with Policy CS31 and Policy CS32;
4. contribute towards net gains for nature and the enhancement of ecological networks and preserve and enhance the setting of any biodiversity and geodiversity assets in line with Policy CS33, including the use of native species where this is possible and feasible;
5. protect, conserve and wherever possible enhance landscape character, consistent with the landscape guidelines contained within the Wirral Landscape Character Assessment and the local priorities identified in Policies CS4 to CS11;
6. provide for the sustainable management of surface water and the maintenance of effective flood defences, land drainage infrastructure and river corridors in line with Policy CS34 and Policy CS35, including improvements to water quality and watercourse hydromorphology, including the removal of redundant features and watercourse restoration, where relevant;
7. assist in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change on people and the environment, including urban cooling and carbon storage; and
8. support health and wellbeing and provide for a sustainable pattern of development, particularly within areas of greatest need.

- 22.3 In implementing Policy CS30, emphasis will be placed on securing a resilient, coherent network of interconnected landscape, wildlife and ecosystem services in line with the recommendations in the Lawton Report and the aims of the Government's Biodiversity Strategy. This will include the protection and enhancement of existing environmental assets and the creation of corridors and stepping stones to assist species movement and enable colonisation and adaptation to climate change.

### **Policy CS31 - Recreational Land and Buildings**

The Council will regulate the provision of recreational open space on the basis of the following minimum standards:

- publicly accessible open space - 2.40 hectares for every thousand people
- public and private sports pitches and playing fields (including artificial turf pitches) - 1.00 hectare for every thousand people
- other public and private outdoor sports facilities (excluding golf courses) - 0.10 hectares for every thousand people
- public and private allotments - 0.22 hectares for every thousand people

No residential household should be further than 400 metres walking distance from a larger publicly accessible open space of 1.5 hectares or above. Smaller publicly accessible open spaces will be retained to serve areas falling outside the catchment of a larger publicly accessible open space, to ensure that no residential household is further than 200 metres walking distance from a publicly accessible open space.

Land and buildings used for sport and recreation will be protected from incompatible development unless it can be demonstrated that:

1. the site is genuinely surplus and is not required for any other recreational purpose; and
2. the site has been continuously marketed for recreational uses at realistic prices for a period of at least 12 months and there is no reasonable prospect that the site will be re-used for recreational use; and
3. the site does not need to be retained undeveloped for any other intrinsic or designated value, including landscape character, heritage, biodiversity, drainage requirements or flood defence; or
4. the facility will be replaced with an equivalent or better facility, capable of serving the same local community and criterion 3 above would also be met.

Replacement facilities will be secured by an appropriate planning condition and/or legal agreement, including provision for ongoing maintenance.

Sites for specific protection will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan.

- 22.10 Policy CS31 continues to apply the standards set out in the existing Unitary Development Plan for Wirral, which were adopted in February 2000, pending further research on local standards to be undertaken as part of an ongoing review of the Council's Parks and Countryside service. A formal update of the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy and a revised Built Facilities Strategy will be completed before a site-specific Local Plan is prepared. Policy CS31 therefore provides for the continued protection of recreational land and buildings, subject to the latest evidence of need.

### **Policy CS33 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

The Council will seek to protect and enhance the natural environmental assets of the Borough, including designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets; priority habitats and species; ancient woodland; and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland; and wherever possible provide net gains in biodiversity and retain and enhance coherent ecological networks.

Applications for development likely to affect a biodiversity or geodiversity asset should be accompanied by an ecological assessment that will:

- competently evaluate the value and extent of the assets on or within the vicinity of the development site including their position in the hierarchy of international, national and local sites;
- assess the likely expected impact of the development on the features of biodiversity or geodiversity identified; and
- evaluate the options and opportunities available to enhance the value of the assets and contribute towards wider ecological networks.

Development that could have an individual or in combination effect on a European Site or its supporting habitat, within or outside of the Borough, must provide sufficient information to enable compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

Development will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:

1. there will be no adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest or on the integrity of a European Site; and
2. the identified assets can be incorporated and enhanced within the layout of the development without any harm or net loss to biodiversity or geodiversity; or
3. where criterion 2 cannot be satisfied, adequate on-site or off-site mitigation can be provided that will secure a net gain to biodiversity or geodiversity; and
4. adequate provision has been secured for appropriate ongoing maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity or geodiversity interests; and
5. the most appropriate options and opportunities available to enhance the value of the assets and contribute towards the wider ecological networks evaluated are taken forward as part of the application.

Sites identified for specific protection, including any necessary mitigation for the impact on European Sites and their supporting habitats, will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan.

22.16 The Council has a general statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity and a more specific duty to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. Policy CS33 will, therefore, be taken to apply to all planning applications likely to affect a designated biodiversity or geodiversity asset; a priority habitat or priority species; legally protected species; ancient woodland; and aged or veteran trees.

- 22.18 Local designations for sites of biological and earth science importance are already shown on the existing Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The Council has reviewed these sites in association with the Local Wildlife Partnership and Cheshire RIGS Group and has agreed amended lists of locally important wildlife and geological sites. Site boundaries and the reasons for their designation can be viewed on the Council's website. The Local Wildlife Partnership is currently reviewing the selection criteria for wildlife sites, in accordance with national guidance, prior to the Council agreeing a revised list of Local Wildlife Sites for inclusion in a site-specific Local Plan, which will be kept under regular review.
- 22.19 Ecological assessments required under Policy CS33 must be undertaken by suitably qualified people, using current best practice, at an appropriate time of year, in suitable weather conditions to maximise the robustness of their findings. Further guidance on the required content of an ecological assessment may be set out in the Council's Local Validation Checklist and in a relevant Supplementary Planning Document.
- 22.20 Where it is not possible to locate a proposal on an alternative site with less harmful impacts and mitigation (or as a last resort, compensatory provision) is required, this will normally be secured through controls over design and layout, including planning conditions and, where necessary, legal agreements, subject to consultation with appropriate wildlife professionals, before planning permission will be granted. Mitigation on European Sites may include additional off site areas, management of international sites and the monitoring of such measures.
- 22.22 Natural England's website provides guidance on protected species and priority habitats and priority species. The impact of invasive species is considered in Policy CS37 below. Plans to deal with invasive species will be required as part of planning applications, where such species are present.

### **Policy CS34 - Flood Risk and Coast Protection**

The Council will follow a risk-based approach to the location of new development, both in terms of the allocation of sites in a site-specific Local Plan and the consideration of planning applications. In determining planning applications and allocating land for development the Council will apply the national sequential approach drawing on the latest available Environment Agency mapping data, strategic and site-specific flood risk assessments and other local strategies and advice from the Environment Agency. Development will not be permitted or land allocated where it would:

1. be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding, which will be assessed having regard to the impact of climate change and:

- the likely frequency of a flood event;
- the likely depth and velocity of any flood waters;
- the vulnerability of the use;
- the potential impacts on any users of the development, including any
- vulnerable users or occupiers; and
- the potential impacts on any buildings and other structures.

2. increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;

3. result in an unacceptable maintenance liability in terms of dealing with flood-related issues or obstruct land adjacent to water courses or flood defences required for access and/or maintenance purposes; or

4. require unduly complicated or burdensome emergency planning procedures.

Applicants should provide schemes to reduce flood risk on individual sites through flood resilient design and on site flood risk management measures. Structures and other features that help to reduce the risk of flooding or mitigate its impacts will be protected. Their loss, alteration or replacement will only be permitted where there would be no increase in flood risk.

Where the national exception test is to be applied, the consideration of wider sustainability benefits will include the extent to which development contributes to the Broad Spatial Strategy (Policy CS2). A site specific flood risk assessment will need to demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduces overall flood risk.

Proposals for new coastal protection and sea defence works will be permitted where they are in line with the recommendations of the adopted Shoreline Management Plan and emerging Wirral Coastal Strategy and where sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on coastal processes or designated biodiversity or geodiversity assets.

Areas identified for specific protection for flood defence or coast protection will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan.

- 23.7 A review of the North Wales and North West England Shoreline Management Plan, completed in 2011, divides the coastline into fourteen units, based on land use and coastal processes. Ten of the units have a policy of hold-the-line, where coastal defences shall be maintained and upgraded as necessary over the next 20 years. The remaining four units, which include the coast from Gayton to Thurstaston Cliffs, between West Kirby and Hoylake and at Eastham, have a policy of no active intervention, which will involve no investment in coastal defences or operations. The Shoreline Management Plan does, however, allow for some existing defences to be retained in these areas where

economically justifiable and environmentally acceptable. Proposals for coastal defence works must therefore be supported by sufficient evidence to determine their wider impact on the coastline and on designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets.

### **Policy CS35 – Drainage Management**

The availability of drainage infrastructure of adequate capacity must be considered by all applicants, to ensure that the following sustainable water management objectives are met:

1. to reduce surface water flooding;
2. to manage surface water in a sustainable, effective and appropriate way; and
3. to incorporate measures that will prevent a detrimental impact on the water environment through changes in water chemistry or resource.

Development proposals must consider the availability of any necessary surface water drainage, foul drainage and sewage treatment capacity or where capacity will be provided in time to serve any additional phase of the development, without unacceptably reducing the level of service to existing users or causing harm to the environment based on the advice from the appropriate utilities provider.

Development proposals must discharge surface water in one or more of the following ways, listed in order of priority:

1. continue and/or mimic the site's current natural discharge process;
2. store for later use;
3. discharge into infiltration systems located in porous sub soils;
4. attenuate flows into green engineering solutions such as ponds, swales or other open water features for gradual release to a watercourse and/or porous sub soils;
5. attenuate by storing in tanks or seals systems for gradual release to a watercourse;
6. direct discharge to a watercourse;
- 7 direct discharge to a surface water sewer; or
8. controlled discharge into the combined sewerage network, only if it can be demonstrated that there are no other viable options.

The discharge of surface water to combined drainage systems will be regulated in accordance with requirements set out in the adopted Surface Water Management Plan for the area or required by the utility provider.

The Council will support the provision of new, improved or expanded infrastructure that is required to meet the needs of the Broad Spatial Strategy, subject to Policy CS42.

- 23.11 New development should therefore manage surface water at source in a sustainable, effective and appropriate way. Development proposals must demonstrate no additional run-off from Greenfield sites and a 30 percent reduction from previously developed sites, with a 50 percent reduction from sites in critical drainage areas identified in Surface Water Management Plans. Applicants will be required to demonstrate, with evidence, how they have applied the drainage hierarchy set out in Building Regulations 2010 H3 Rainwater Drainage, which requires applicants to discharge surface water in order of priority, starting with an adequate soakaway, followed by a watercourse, with a sewer as the last resort. If it is demonstrated that it is necessary to discharge to a watercourse or public sewer, then any discharge must be at an attenuated discharge rate.

**Policy CS37 - Contamination and Instability**

Development proposals likely to affect land known or suspected to be unstable or contaminated including by invasive species must be supported by an appropriate contamination or ground stability assessment that identifies;

- the nature, level and extent of contamination or instability;
- the implications of contamination or instability for the development of the site and risk to human health, the natural environment, buildings and other property, including water bodies and water courses;
- where a significant risk exists, a viable method of remediation which will safeguard users or occupiers of the proposed development, neighbouring land uses and the environment and will make the land suitable for the use proposed.

Planning conditions or legal agreement will be used to secure and implement a suitable remediation strategy prior to development or as part of an agreed, phased programme.

Development proposals within areas likely to be affected by coastal erosion will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that erosion or landslip are not likely to occur during the lifetime of the development.

**Policy CS38 – Minerals**

Facilities for the exploration, extraction, storage, processing and distribution of minerals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. there is a demonstrable need and market demand for the mineral;
2. the proposal would not undermine the greater use of alternative, secondary or recycled materials;
3. the operations permitted will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural, water or historic environment, amenity or on human health;
4. adequate provision for the mitigation of any negative impacts will be secured during operations and periods when the site is not being worked;
5. sensitive environmental restoration and aftercare of sites will be secured at the earliest opportunity, to a standard and manner consistent with the character, setting and landscape of the surrounding area; and
6. the proposals will comply with the requirements of Policy CS42.

Facilities for the landing, storage, processing and distribution of minerals, including marine-won sand and gravel, will be directed towards existing facilities and to land within the port estates to maximise the use of sustainable transport by rail and water.

Land that should be safeguarded around mineral resources and facilities that are considered to be of economic importance will be included in a site-specific Local Plan. Mineral resources and facilities within safeguarded areas will be protected against unnecessary sterilisation by other development.

- 24.1 Minerals are an important economic asset but the exploration, working, storage, processing and distribution of minerals can have harmful effects on the environment. In line with national policy, applicants will need to demonstrate that mineral sites can be sensitively designed and operated in a way to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment or human health, which should be linked to a long-term management plan and landscape strategy during the life of the scheme. The land should be restored at the earliest opportunity in accordance with an aftercare scheme and a budget that makes provision for high quality restoration, aftercare, after-use and a final landform consistent with landscape character of the surrounding area.
- 24.4 Marine-won sand and gravel from Liverpool Bay has previously been landed at port facilities at Birkenhead and Eastham and is currently landed at a purpose-built facility on the Bromborough coast. Annual landings have been as high as 124,000 tonnes but over recent years have reduced to just over 92,000 tonnes, on average representing up to 30 percent of total landings in the North West. A more up-to-date Local Aggregates Assessment is currently being jointly prepared by the Merseyside and Greater Manchester authorities, to agree the local apportionment of minerals requirements.

### **Policy CS42 – Development Management**

New development including extensions, conversions and changes of use will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposals will, where relevant:

1. support the delivery of the Spatial Vision, Strategic Objectives and Broad Spatial Strategy (Policy CS2);
2. address the priorities for individual Settlement Areas contained within Policies CS4 to CS11;
3. protect biodiversity and geodiversity and contribute towards the provision of appropriate green infrastructure and the protection of land needed for recreation subject to Policies CS30 to CS33;
4. meet the requirements for design, heritage and amenity set out within Policy CS43;
5. minimise flood risk from all sources and manage drainage, subject to Policy CS34 and Policy CS35;
6. take full account of the need to reduce the risk of major accidents and minimise pollution subject to Policy CS36;
7. provide for the proper consideration of potential contamination and instability, subject to Policy CS37;
8. make appropriate provision for on-site waste management subject to Policy CS39;
9. secure appropriate provision for transport and accessibility in accordance with Policy CS40;
10. provide appropriate developer contributions in accordance with Policy CS45;
11. not have an unacceptable impact on the operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Hawarden Aerodrome and the Wallasey Beacon, or the safe and uninterrupted operation of utilities, electricity transmission networks, pipelines, important electrical equipment or instrumentation or their safeguarding zones;
12. have no significant adverse impact on health and wellbeing;
13. comply with the legal requirements associated with the protection of European Sites and their supporting habitat, together with the provision of any relevant on-site or off-site mitigation; and
14. be adequately served by essential local infrastructure in accordance with Policy CS44.

Further advice and guidance on measures that can be taken to secure compliance with Policy CS42 will be set out in relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.

- 26.1 Policy CS42 brings together all the main requirements of the Core Strategy for determining planning applications and making other decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts within the Borough and should be read alongside national policy and other relevant Development Plan policies, including policies in this Core Strategy, other adopted Development Plan documents, national best practice and guidance in locally adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

### **Policy CS43 - Design, Heritage and Amenity**

All new development will be expected to enhance the character, quality and distinctiveness of the area in which it is located and relate well to surrounding property and land uses and the natural and historic environment. Design solutions will be permitted that will, where relevant:

1. preserve existing buildings of local character;
2. address the need for appropriate green infrastructure in line with Policy CS30;
3. preserve and enhance the character, integrity and setting of identified heritage and biodiversity assets and safeguard the future of heritage at risk;
4. take full account of any formally adopted area-specific design or density controls, master plans, character appraisals or area-specific management plans;
5. protect and provide unifying features of design such as gate piers, landscaping, walls, boundary fences and the nature, quality and type of materials;
6. prevent over-development and ensure that the density, height, scale, massing, siting and visual impact of any buildings or structures and the provision of landscaping and private amenity open space will be appropriate to the character, grain and layout of the surrounding area;
7. preserve important views into and out of the area;
8. maintain and enhance the architectural detailing and elevational treatment of main frontages and prominent elevations and align entrances to buildings with active frontages in the public realm;
9. preserve the outlook, privacy, light and amenity of existing and future occupiers by preventing overlooking or overshadowing and by maintaining an appropriate separation between habitable rooms and between habitable rooms and blank elevations;
10. minimise the opportunity for noise and other disturbance to future occupiers and adjoining uses;
11. secure an appropriate boundary between public and private areas, increase natural surveillance and reduce or prevent the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour;
12. provide for lifetime needs by allowing people of different ages and abilities to move around without difficulty;
13. orientate development to maximise passive solar gain, natural ventilation and facilitate the micro-generation of renewable energy, where the energy generated can be used at source;
14. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and a fabric first approach to support mitigation and adaption to climate change; energy and water conservation; and provision for low carbon energy and heat;
15. improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings;
16. ensure that extensions to existing property will match or complement the design and materials of the existing buildings and avoid a terracing effect between separate buildings; and
17. provide underground service ducts to enable future connections for cable, broadband and electronic communications and district heating networks where available and minimise the visual impact of any external apparatus.

Temporary buildings or structures, where justified, will only be permitted in unobtrusive locations and for a period not exceeding three years.

Applications for radio and telecommunications development must also demonstrate that the apparatus proposed cannot be located on an existing building or that an existing mast cannot be shared; that the proposal is the minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network; and is designed and located to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding area based on the best environmental and design solution. Telecommunications operators must also demonstrate that the apparatus proposed will not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation of national interest and that cumulative exposure to telecommunications development would not exceed the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection Guidelines.

26.6 The national commitment to zero carbon development means that all carbon emissions covered by the Building Regulations, such as from heating, lighting, hot water and other fixed building services will need to be increasingly abated. Experience has, however, shown that low carbon development can most easily be secured by taking advantage of site-specific factors and including sustainable design and construction measures within the original design and layout of the building on the basis of a fabric-first approach rather than applying bolt-on additions to standard design solutions. In complying with Policy CS43, developers will, therefore, be encouraged to take account of current best practice set out in guidance such as BREEAM, the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Lifetime Homes Standard, National Affordable Homes Agency Housing Quality Indicators and their equivalents, at the conception stage in the design process and to justify why any appropriate measures have not been included. Least cost interventions consistent with securing the objectives intended, will be supported.

**Policy CS44 – Phasing and Infrastructure**

26.11 Mitigation measures may require the implementation of development proposals to be phased in order to prevent significant harm to the environment or other interests of acknowledged importance. In most cases, this will mean phasing the timing of new development to take account of development or improvement programmes that will need to be completed before the development can be properly accommodated. This includes provision for highway works, drainage, water supply and treatment infrastructure and the provision of mitigation for the impact on European Sites and their supporting habitats and other biodiversity assets.

26.12 [delete paragraph]

**Policy CS45 – Developer Contributions**

- 27.2 Planning obligations will be required where they are necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Requirements will also have regard for viability and be flexible to safeguard against substantial or unexpected changes in market conditions.