



Devonshire Park Residents Association and Neighbourhood Planning Forum
"Preserving the character & balance of our unique neighbourhood"

Devonshire Park Neighbourhood Plan

Document 3: Consultation Statement (Revised)

- 1 Devonshire Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum has been designated by Wirral Council as the Neighbourhood Forum for the Plan Area.
- 2 Regular, timely and effective consultation with local residents and other stakeholders is central to the activity of the Forum and has properly informed the formulation, development and refinement of the plan that is now offered for submission.
- 3 The Forum has, since 2006¹, engaged with stakeholders through a regular public meetings, monthly newsletters and social media activity. Throughout that time, residents have actively campaigned on local planning issues to express their concern to maintain a more balanced mix of housing stock in order to promote a more sustainable community.
- 4 The Devonshire Park Residents Association was designated by the Government as a first wave neighbourhood planning 'Front Runner' in April 2011.
- 5 As a 'Front Runner' the Residents Association carried out a thorough neighbourhood planning consultation, which included a series of 8 public meetings and, in partnership with Wirral Council, a questionnaire survey between August and September 2011, which generated 118 recorded responses (Appendix 3.1 (iii) and Appendix 3.2 (iii) below refer).
- 6 Consultation on a draft plan followed in February 2012², which generated eight comments and responses from the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage and National Grid (Appendix 3.1 (viii) and (ix) to (xii) below refer). The main comments related to the lack of previous control over development; support for the protection of gardens and nesting sites; whether the designation of a conservation area would be a more appropriate response; the limitations of planning policies and the need for wider neighbourhood management; the ability to enhance and repair past mistakes;

¹ Prior to designation, Forum activity was carried out by Devonshire Park Residents Association.

² Between 8 February and 23 March 2012 under Regulation 25 of the former Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004

the need to avoid social engineering, particularly with respect to intolerant comments submitted in response to previous consultation; the impact of the Government's social housing reforms; the potential impact on surrounding areas; the need for a stand-alone objective to promote the conservation and enhancement of the area; and the need for a more nuanced, character and quality based approach to the control of flats and bedsits.

- 7 To comply with the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the Residents Association then applied and was formally designated as the Neighbourhood Forum for the Plan Area in April 2013 (Wirral Council, 30 April 2013, Minute 147 refers).
- 8 The results of the pre-designation 'Front Runner' consultation were used to prepare an updated Neighbourhood Plan, on which the new Forum consulted from 31 May 2013 to 26 July 2013 – initially 31 May 2013 to 12 July 2013 - which was extended by 2 weeks in response to feedback from some respondents that they had had difficulty accessing the consultation documents online.
- 9 The main changes to the updated Neighbourhood Plan included adding a new objective 6 - 'to conserve and enhance the fabric and architectural features that combine to provide Devonshire Park with its unique aesthetic and social character' and a further explanation of 'front runners' in section 2; updating the national and local context in sections 4, 5 and 6; including data from the 2011 Census in section 7; re-focusing Policy 1 to more specifically encourage family housing and Policy 2 to include more detail on the restrictions to be applied to flats, apartments and houses in multiple occupation and to reflect the impact of the high proportion of flats and bedsit conversions in the reasoned justification; and to add a conclusion in a new section 9.
- 10 The consultation was carried out by The Forum to comply with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the new Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (2012 SI No. 637).
- 11 Copies of the consultation pack, which included the Neighbourhood Plan and Appendices provided at Appendix 3.2 (i) to (vi), were published online for viewing and downloading at <http://devonshirepark.wordpress.com>. Paper copies were made available for public inspection at Birkenhead Library; Borough Road, Birkenhead CH41 2XB; Birkenhead One-Stop Shop, Conway Centre, Conway Street; at the public counter of the Wirral Council, Regeneration and Planning Service, North Annexe, Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey CH44 8ED; and at St Joseph's Parish Centre in Greenbank Road, Tranmere CH42 7JS, during their normal opening hours. Electronic copies were provided by email on request to evans.lynn1@googlemail.com

- 12 The Press Notice was published in the Wirral News³ on 29 May 2013. Copies were also placed in Birkenhead Library, Birkenhead One Stop Shop, Wirral Council's North Annexe at Wallasey Town Hall, St Joseph's Parish Centre and local shops. The Notice placed in Birkenhead Library, Birkenhead One Stop Shop, Wirral Council's North Annexe at Wallasey Town Hall, St Joseph's Parish Centre and local shops was updated to show the extended deadline for response (referred to under point 7 above).
- 13 A consultation letter notifying of the opportunity to comment on the proposed plan was sent to 302 stakeholders on a database held by Wirral Council. Recipients included the bodies listed in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations specifically including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Homes and Communities Agency and English Heritage. A copy of the consultation letter, which was dated 29 May 2013 and a list of the stakeholders consulted is provided at Appendix 3.2 (vii) and (viii).
- 14 The consultation letter was appended to a special edition of the Devonshire Park newsletter, delivered to all dwellings in the area. The newsletter also asked tenants to ensure that the letter was brought to the attention of their landlord.
- 15 Residents and other stakeholders have been kept informed of developments through the regular public meetings; held monthly since 2012 (a schedule of dates can be provided on request).
- 16 The Forum also wrote to the local MP Frank Field and all Ward Councillors to formally notify them of the consultation and of the opportunity for residents and stakeholders to comment on the draft plan (a copy of the correspondence can be provided on request).
- 17 Responses to the post-designation consultation were collated by the Forum and used to prepare the current version of the Plan which is provided here for submission. A full copy of the responses received is provided at Appendix 3.3 and are summarised alongside the subsequent responses of the Forum in Appendix 3.4.
- 18 The changes made in response to the post-designation consultation are included in the revised Draft Neighbourhood Plan now submitted to the Council for publication and examination.
- 19 The Plan now submitted to the Council also includes changes made in response to a pre-submission 'health check' of the plan, undertaken by Andrew Ashcroft, an Accredited Neighbourhood Plans Independent Examiner, in September 2014.

³ A local free-press newspaper with significant weekly distribution across Wirral including the neighbourhood plan area; part of the Trinity Mirror Group

Schedule of Appendices

3.1 Pre-Designation Consultation

- i) Devonshire Park Neighbourhood Plan (February 2012)
- ii) Appendix 1 - Statement of Public Consultation (September 2011)
- iii) Appendix 2 - First Stage Questionnaire Responses (September 2011)
- iv) Appendix 3 - Existing Development Plan Policy Context (February 2012)
- v) Press Notice (15 February 2012)
- vi) Consultation Letter (8 February 2012)
- vii) List of Stakeholders Consulted (February 2012)
- viii) Copy of Limehouse Consultation Responses (March 2012)
- ix) Consultation Response from English Heritage
- x) Consultation Response from Natural England
- xi) Consultation Response from Environment Agency
- xii) Consultation Response from National Grid

3.2 Pre-Submission Consultation (May 2013)

- i) Devonshire Park Neighbourhood Plan (May 2013)
- ii) Appendix 1 - Statement of Public Consultation (September 2011)
- iii) Appendix 2 - First Stage Questionnaire Responses (September 2011)
- iv) Appendix 3 - Existing Development Plan Policy Context (May 2013)
- v) Appendix 4 - Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987
- vi) Appendix 5 - Press Notice (29 May 2013)
- vii) Consultation Letter (29 May 2013)
- viii) List of Stakeholders Consulted (May 2013)

3.3 Copy of Responses to Pre-Submission Consultation

- i) English Heritage
- ii) Wirral Wildlife
- iii) Health and Safety Executive
- iv) National Trust
- v) Highways Agency
- vi) Environment Agency
- vii) National Museums Liverpool
- viii) Co-operative Estates
- ix) Natural England
- x) Berkley Partnership
- xi) Wirral Society
- xii) United Utilities
- xiii) Landor Associates

3.4 Report of Responses to Pre-Submission Consultation (November 2014)