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## **Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham**

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# Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policy for Bromborough and Eastham

## 1 Settlement Area Policy

### Policy CSx.x - Priorities for Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham

The overall strategy for Settlement Area 4 will be to:

1. Maintain 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 Levers Complex at Port Sunlight for business, manufacturing and research and development; and the dock estate and Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham for port-related uses, waterborne freight and rail transport
3. Safeguard and enhance the role of Bromborough Village as the main focus for district-level shops, offices, services and community facilities
4. Safeguard and enhance the role 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 in 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 heritage assets
7. Maintain the national and international importance of the intertidal foreshores
8. Protect the provision of 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
9. Maintain the wooded, natural and semi-natural character and biodiversity value of the western and southern fringes of the Settlement Area
10. Secure increased access from the residential areas to and along the Mersey coastline
11. Minimise risks from tidal, river and other flood risks associated with the Mersey coast, the Dibbinsdale Brook and its tributaries and surface water; and from coastal erosion at New Ferry; and address local limitations in the supply of water to Spital, Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool and/or the disposal of wastewater
12. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency; address the impact of HGVs on Eastham Village; manage the impact of transport noise; and address air quality issues at Eastham
13. Maintain the physical separation and local distinctiveness of Eastham Village and Storeton and the physical separation between Eastham and Ellesmere Port

## 2 Vision Statement

### Vision Statement

By the end of the plan period, Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham will continue to provide key employment and residential areas for Wirral and the sub-region, linked by high quality sustainable transport. The potential of the coast and other green infrastructure as accessible and rich environmental assets will be being realised. The diverse range of built heritage assets will be a focus for leisure and tourism and for prosperous sustainable communities.

## 3 Reasoned Justification

**3.1** Settlement Area 4 includes the commuter settlements of Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham, with strong links to Liverpool, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port, Chester and the M53 Motorway and provides the largest concentration of employment opportunities outside Birkenhead, amounting to almost 20% of the Borough's employment. The early workers settlements at Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool and the older settlements at Eastham and Bromborough are designated as Conservation Areas.

**3.2** The Area was home to 54,500 people in mid-2010, of which 33,200 or 61% were of working age. The population has a slightly older than average age-profile, with a slightly lower proportion of children and young adults and a slightly higher proportion of people of retirement age. The population has increased from 54,400 in mid-2008<sup>(1)</sup> but longer term trends could see the population reduce to 53,700 by 2027<sup>(2)</sup>.

**3.3** Almost 40% of the population live in areas of higher value housing around the western fringes of Area 4 and just over 10% live within areas of need at New Ferry; Bromborough Rake; or Mill Park, Eastham, where worklessness is also over 25%<sup>(3)</sup>.

**3.4** 508 new homes were built within the Area between April 2003 and April 2011, with a further 54 dwellings provided through conversions and changes of use. Only 23 properties were demolished. Social Housing accounts for just over 11% of homes and just over 2% or 565 residential properties were registered as vacant in April 2011<sup>(4)</sup>. Vacant land was mainly concentrated within the industrial areas (35 sites, 105.15 hectares)<sup>(5)</sup>.

1 Based on ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates

2 based on the national 2008-based population projections

3 ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation for England 2010 and DWP Working Age Client Group (May 2010)

4 Wirral Council Tax Register April 2011 - Total Housing Stock 24,900

5 National Land Use Database April 2010 to be updated to April 2011

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**3.5** The Area could accommodate between 913<sup>(6)</sup> and 2,593 new homes. Underlying long-term changes in population and households mean that the lower figure could lead to a further loss of about 900 people, while the higher figure could lead to a gain of up to 2,700 people by 2027. Opportunities to provide new housing are mainly associated with infill sites within the curtilage of existing properties. Achieving the higher level would require a significant restructuring of the existing employment areas<sup>(7)</sup>.

**3.6** The Area currently provides approximately 18,000 jobs<sup>(8)</sup>. Almost a third of the local residents in employment, one of the highest proportions in the Borough, nevertheless, work outside the Borough, with over half working in Cheshire West and Chester and the majority of the rest working in Liverpool<sup>(9)</sup>.

**3.7** Bromborough Village is the main district-level retail and service centre for the Area. The local centre at New Ferry requires further regeneration, which could include contraction, diversification and stronger links with Port Sunlight Village. The priority at Lower Bebington and Eastham (Mill Park Drive/New Chester Road) will be to safeguard their role as key local convenience retail and service centres. The retail and leisure uses at the Croft Retail and Leisure Park and the adjacent Asda superstore are significant out-of-centre facilities. Any development proposals at these locations will need to be assessed against Policy CSx.x (Criteria for out-of-centre retail development)<sup>(10)</sup>.

**3.8** Over 271 hectares, to the east of the A41, between the River Dibbin and Eastham Country Park, has recently been transformed into the highly successful Wirral International Business Park, to offer one of the highest concentrations of larger, fully serviced employment development sites in the Borough. The priority will be to complete employment development on the remaining 64 hectares of available land, which should be sufficient for at least 14 years based on past rates of development, to maximise the use of publicly funded transport, drainage and power infrastructure.

**3.9** The Levers Complex, to the west of the A41 (65 hectares), is also one of the Borough's most important employment areas for research and development, advanced technology and manufacturing. Up to 22 hectares is vacant on the main site, with a further 4 hectares to the rear of the research laboratory at Bromborough Road.

6 sites with planning permission and previously developed sites with no conflicting designation

7 based on SHLAA 2008, which will be updated to April 2011

8 Business Register Employment Survey 2010

9 ONS Commute-APS and 2001 Census

10 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study 2009 and Town District and Local Centre Study and Delivery Framework 2011

**3.10** The priority in both of these areas will be to secure large and medium scale industrial and campus-style office developments, to support further investment in research and development, low carbon, advanced technology and manufacturing and biomedical sectors, with smaller, more locally based office and service activities directed to other local and district centres.

**3.11** The Area also includes the dock estate associated with the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham, which benefits from port-related permitted development rights and provides storage, refinery and distribution activities with direct access to Junction 6 of the M53 Motorway (133 hectares). Over 15 hectares of land is currently available and a further 15 hectares is likely to become available for re-development within the plan period. The Port Master Plan shows the potential to facilitate the re-development of neighbouring waterfront in Ellesmere Port; the ability to improve access to the dock and canal system through the provision of new lock gates at the mouth to the River; and the potential to increase waterborne and rail-based freight traffic. The need to reduce the impact of HGV traffic on Eastham Village is also recognised<sup>(11)</sup>.

**3.12** The Area is generally well-provided with open space and outdoor sports facilities, including facilities of Borough-wide importance such as the Bebington Oval Recreation Centre and the Leverhulme Sports Ground, some of which are used to address shortages in Areas further north, along the A41 corridor. While the local shortage of parks and gardens is largely offset by access to large natural and semi-natural sites including Storeton Woods, Eastham Country Park, Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve and the proposed reclamation of the former Bromborough landfill (as part of the Mersey Coastal Park project), there is a shortage of provision for children and young people<sup>(12)</sup>.

**3.13** The whole of the coastline is of national and/or international importance for nature conservation, which means that new industrial and port-related development may require appropriate assessment and mitigation in construction, design and management. Remnant woodlands and the river valleys associated with the urban edge and the wider Dibbin Valley also have significant value for wildlife and form an important part of the landscape character and setting of the Area<sup>(13)</sup>.

**3.14** Parts of the Area are at risk from tidal, river and/or surface water flooding<sup>(14)</sup>. A short stretch of undeveloped coast at New Ferry and the rocky foreshore at Eastham is still subject to natural erosion<sup>(15)</sup>. The sewer network is limited by pumping stations,

11 Mersey Ports Master Plan (Peel Ports, June 2011)

12 Wirral Open Space Assessment 2011 (forthcoming)

13 Wirral Biodiversity Audit 2009 and Landscape Character Assessment 2009

14 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 and Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011

15 North West and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (February 2011)

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storage tanks and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. Network reinforcement is required to address low water resource availability at Spital, Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool<sup>(16)</sup>.

**3.15** [This list of transport corridors will be replaced by a map in the finalised Publication Draft] The main transport corridors include the passenger rail services between Liverpool and Chester; the A41 between Birkenhead and Chester and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway; B5137 from A41 to Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway; and the link road to the Eastham Dock Estate from Junction 6 of the M53 Motorway (most of which is in adjoining Cheshire West and Chester). Other main public transport routes include B5136 New Chester Road; B5149 from Birkenhead to Poulton-Spital; Allport Lane, Allport Road, Brookhurst Avenue, Eastham Rake, Mill Park Drive, Bridle Road, Heygarth Road and Raeburn Avenue in Eastham.

**3.16** Department for Transport Traffic Master Data highlights existing traffic congestion along Spital Road and the A41<sup>(17)</sup>. Traffic noise has also been identified as a problem along the A41<sup>(18)</sup> and air quality is being closely monitored at Eastham. There is little scope to implement major highway infrastructure improvements, so the focus will be on monitoring traffic levels, traffic management measures and minor highway improvements, with enhanced provision for public transport, walking and cycling. Opportunities to improve bus services along the A41 are also being considered to help reduce congestion.

**3.17** An off-road cycle route follows the former railway line from Port Sunlight to Wirral International Business Park and along the riverfront to Eastham Country Park. Further routes, with both signed and off-road sections, link the Country Park with the rail stations at Eastham Rake and Bromborough Rake; and Port Sunlight with Clatterbridge Hospital. Increasing pedestrian and cycle access to and along the coast from the residential areas to the east of the A41 is a long term objective.

**3.18** Some of the public infrastructure needs associated with the Wirral International Business Park and the majority of the infrastructure needs at Croft Retail and Leisure Park have already been addressed. Merseytravel have identified the need for park and ride improvements at Bebington and Spital rail stations. Full details of the infrastructure requirements for Settlement Area 4 can be found in Appendix X.

16 Wirral Water Cycle Study 2011 (forthcoming)

17 Travel in Merseyside 2010

18 DEFRA Noise Action Plan (March 2010)