

Contents

Settlement Area 7 - Heswall

1 Settlement Area Policy	2
2 Vision Statement	2
3 Reasoned Justification	3

Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policy for Heswall

1 Settlement Area Policy

Policy CSx.x - Priorities for Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton

The overall strategy for Settlement Area 7 will be to:

1. Maintain attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Chester and North Wales
2. Safeguard and enhance the role of Heswall as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area
3. Safeguard and enhance the role 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 heritage assets
5. Maintain access to the coast and natural and semi-natural open space at Heswall Dales, Thurstaston Common, Arrowe Country Park and Wirral Way, while maintaining their value for landscape, biodiversity and earth science and the international importance of the foreshore
6. Increase the local provision of allotments and facilities for children and young people and outdoor sports, including playing fields, to meet local needs
7. Minimise risk of flooding from the Arrowe Brook in Irby and surface water and address local limitations on the disposal of wastewater
8. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency
9. Support greater use of the Bidston-Wrexham 'Borderlands' railway line
10. Maintain the physical separation and local distinctiveness of Irby, Barnston, Thurstaston and Landican

2 Vision Statement

Vision Statement

By the end of the plan period, Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton will continue to provide a high quality residential area, with Heswall town centre as the main focus for retail and service uses. Heritage and green infrastructure assets will have been maintained and enhanced, supported by improved provision for sustainable transport.

3 Reasoned Justification

3.1 Settlement Area 7 comprises the commuter settlements of Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton. 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.

3.2 The Area was home to 28,100 people in mid-2010, of which 16,100 or 57% were of working age. The population has an older age-profile, with the lowest proportion of younger adults and highest proportion of people of retirement age or above in the Borough. The population has declined from 28,400 in mid-2008⁽¹⁾ and longer term trends could see the population reduce further, to 27,900 by 2027⁽²⁾.

3.3 The majority of the Area is relatively wealthy, with over half the population living in areas of higher value housing at Heswall and Gayton⁽³⁾, parts of which are subject to density and design guidelines, to preserve the character of large family houses set in extensive, well-treed grounds. Social Housing accounts for just under 6% of the homes within the Area. Just under 2% or 243 residential properties and two previously developed sites (0.43 hectares) were registered as vacant in April 2011⁽⁴⁾.

3.4 250 new homes were built within the Area between April 2003 and April 2011, with a further 12 dwellings provided through conversions and changes of use. 59 properties had been demolished.

3.5 The Area could accommodate between 142⁽⁵⁾ and 214 new homes. Underlying long-term changes in population and households mean that both figures could lead to a further loss of population of between 800 and 1,000 people by 2027⁽⁶⁾. The main opportunities to provide new housing are related to infill plots within the curtilage of existing properties. Achieving the higher level would involve the provision of housing on greenfield sites and on sites designated as urban greenspace.

3.6 The Area currently provides approximately 4,400 jobs⁽⁷⁾ and has one of the highest proportions of residents with jobs outside the Borough, of which over half travelled to Liverpool and a over third to Cheshire West and Chester⁽⁸⁾.

1 based on ONS Mid-Year Estimates

2 based on the national 2008-based population projections

3 ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation for England 2010

4 Wirral Council Tax Register April 2011 - Total Housing Stock 13,000; and National Land Use Database April 2010, to be updated to April 2011

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

6 these figures, based on SHLAA 2008, will be updated to April 2011

7 Business Register Employment Survey 2010

8 ONS Commute-APS and Census 2001

Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policy for Heswall

3.7 Heswall town centre is the main convenience, comparison and service centre, with a significant evening economy. The re-development of the former Kwik Save premises for town centre uses is a priority. Irby Village is the main local retail and service centre for the north of the Area, although additional local services are also provided by a number of smaller shopping parades along Pensby Road. Very little land is available for commercial and industrial uses but small, locally based office and service activities will continue to be supported in these centres, to provide local employment opportunities⁽⁹⁾.

3.8 The local shortage of urban amenity greenspace is offset by access to the Dee coastline and surrounding natural and semi natural open space, much of which is of high value for nature conservation. There is, however, a shortage of allotments, provision for children and young people and outdoor sports facilities and a number of football teams travel to sites outside the Area for home fixtures⁽¹⁰⁾. The landscape at Heswall Dales requires conservation and enhancement⁽¹¹⁾.

3.9 The Arrowe Brook provides a local flood risk in Irby⁽¹²⁾. The local sewer network is limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and impacts on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. Attenuation may be needed for surface water but infiltration systems may be limited by Environment Agency Source Protection Zones. Irby and the western parts of Pensby are also subject to the limitations associated with the North Wirral Wastewater Treatment Works at Meols. Developers will need to seek clarification from the utilities provider to ensure that appropriate capacity is available⁽¹³⁾.

3.10 [This list of transport corridors will be replaced by a map in the finalised Publication Draft] The main transport corridors include passenger rail services to North Wales and Liverpool (via Bidston) at Heswall; the A540 from Hoylake to Chester, North Wales and the M56 Motorway; A5137 from Heswall to Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway; A551 to Birkenhead; and B5138 Pensby Road to Heswall. Other main public transport routes include Thingwall Road, Irby Road and Quarry Road East.

3.11 Department for Transport Traffic Master Data highlights existing traffic congestion on the A551 at Thingwall Corner and through Heswall Town Centre⁽¹⁴⁾. 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 between Heswall and Birkenhead are also being considered to help reduce congestion.

9 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study 2009; Town District and Local Centre Study and Delivery Framework 2011; and Employment Land and Premises Study 2009

10 Wirral Open Space Assessment 2011 (forthcoming)

11 Wirral Landscape Character Assessment 2009

12 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009

13 Wirral Water Cycle Study 2011 (forthcoming)

14 Travel in Merseyside 2010

3.12 The Area is linked to Woodchurch, Greasby and Upton by off-road cycle routes through Arrowe Park and along the Arrowe Brook; the marked lanes along Arrowe Park Road; to National Cycle Route 56 from Thingwall Corner; and to Thurstaston, from Oldfield Drive along Telegraph Road. The Wirral Way runs off-road along the western edge of the Area through Lower Heswall, between West Kirby and Hooton and on to Eastham via the Wirral Circular Trail.

3.13 Merseytravel have identified the need for rail station improvements at Heswall Hills rail station and service enhancements and/or electrification for the Borderlands rail line. Full details of the infrastructure requirements for Settlement Area 7 can be found in Appendix X.