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## **Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey**

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# Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policy for Wallasey

## 1 Settlement Area Policy

### Policy CSx.x - Priorities for Wallasey

The overall strategy for Settlement Area 1 will be to:

1. Maintain attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the M53 Motorway
2. Support integration with the New City Neighbourhood at East Float 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
5. Safeguard and enhance Liscard as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area
6. Safeguard and enhance the role 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
8. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency and manage the impact of noise from road transport along routes to New Brighton, Liscard and Wallasey Village
9. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Magazines and Wellington Road and the setting of other designated heritage assets including Fort Perch Rock and Lighthouse
10. Maintain the national and international importance of the inter-tidal foreshores; the open aspect of the coastline; and the facilities and open spaces associated with the coastal promenades between Seacombe Ferry and North Wirral Coastal Park
11. Maintain and improve open space, to increase the number and quality of sports pitches and natural and semi-natural greenspace with biodiversity value, without compromising other open space functions
12. Minimise 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/or disposal of wastewater
13. Maintain the physical separation and distinctiveness of Wallasey and Leasowe

## 2 Vision Statement

### Vision Statement

By the end of the plan period, Wallasey will continue to be a highly accessible residential area, with strong links to a revived Liscard Town centre, revitalised coastal promenades and coastal resort at New Brighton and the emerging New City Neighbourhood at East Float. Opportunities for strengthening the area's green infrastructure, heritage and environmental assets will be being maximised.

## 3 Reasoned Justification

**3.1** Settlement Area 1 is a densely developed commuter settlement with strong transport links to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the M53 Motorway. The Area includes the urban coastal resort of New Brighton and the public coastal promenades between Seacombe Ferry and the North Wirral Coastal Park, which are of Borough wide significance and provide part of National Cycle Route 56. The cliff-top villas at Wellington Road and the group of buildings at Magazine Promenade, are designated Conservation Areas.

**3.2** The Area was home to 58,200 people in mid-2010, of which 37,100 or 64% were of working age, with a higher than average proportion of young adults and a lower than average proportion of retired people. The population has increased from 58,100 in mid-2008<sup>(1)</sup> but longer term trends could see the population reduce to 57,600 by 2027<sup>(2)</sup>.

**3.3** Approximately 40% of the population lives within an area of greatest need, in Seacombe, Egremont, Liscard and at New Brighton, where worklessness is also over 25%. There are areas of higher value housing at Wallasey Village<sup>(3)</sup>.

**3.4** 495 new homes were built within the Area between April 2003 and April 2011, with a further 187 dwellings provided through conversions and changes of use. 202 properties had been demolished. Social Housing accounts for just over 11% of homes. Just over 4% or 1,180 residential properties were registered as vacant in April 2011<sup>(4)</sup> and 43 sites (9.59 hectares) as vacant previously developed land<sup>(5)</sup>.

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 and DWP Working Age Client Group (May 2010)

4 Wirral Council Tax Register April 2011- Total Housing Stock 28,600

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

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**3.5** The Area could accommodate between 1,035<sup>(6)</sup> and 1,165 new homes. Underlying long-term changes in population and households mean that both figures could lead to a further loss of between 700 and 1,000 people by 2027. The main opportunities to provide new housing are vacant, previously developed sites in Seacombe and Liscard. Achieving the higher level would involve the provision of housing on greenfield sites throughout the Area and on employment sites<sup>(7)</sup>.

**3.6** The Area currently provides approximately 13,100 jobs<sup>(8)</sup>. Almost two thirds of Wallasey residents who worked outside the Borough travelled to Liverpool<sup>(9)</sup>.

**3.7** Outside the major commercial and industrial areas to the immediate south, the main employment areas are the district and local centres at Liscard, New Brighton, Seacombe and Wallasey Village; the small industrial area at Alexandra Road (1.3 hectares), adjacent to New Brighton Railway Station; and Cross Lane Industrial Estate (7 hectares), where the remaining vacant land should be adequate to meet past rates of development throughout the plan period, without the need for any additional infrastructure<sup>(10)</sup>.

**3.8** Liscard is the main shopping centre for the Area. The retail offer appears to have continued to decline, despite a substantial catchment population and good access by public transport. The main opportunities for new development include the long-standing proposals to extend the Cherry Tree Centre and the former Capitol cinema complex. The Central Liscard Area Residents Association are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Central Liscard.

**3.9** Re-configuration may be needed in local centres to address the two "halves" of Wallasey Village; the western end of Poulton Road; and a minor boundary change at Seabank Road. No further changes are envisaged at Victoria Road, where the objective will be to ensure continued vitality and viability alongside the re-development of the waterfront resort<sup>(11)</sup>. The Council has also completed a strategy for the King Street/Brighton Street corridor in Egremont which encourages a focus away from retail uses.

**3.10** The whole of the intertidal foreshore to the north and east of the Area is of international importance for nature conservation. There is currently little land of nature conservation value away from the coast and opportunities to enhance inland biodiversity should be maximised<sup>(12)</sup>.

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 Employment Land and Premises Study 2009

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

12 Wirral Biodiversity Audit 2009

**3.11** Open space is, however, limited and the majority is already intensively used. There is a shortage of allotments, natural and semi-natural greenspace and outdoor sports facilities. The availability of playing fields is significantly constrained and almost a third of football teams and a number of cricket teams travel outside the Area for home fixtures<sup>(13)</sup>.

**3.12** The North Wirral Coast is at risk of tidal flooding<sup>(14)</sup>. There are records of surface water and sewer flooding in the lower-lying peripheral areas of the Settlement Area and potential for flooding from the Birket and its tributaries in the Cross Lane area. Separate assessments, to consider all sources of flooding, will need to be carried out on a site-specific basis before planning permission will be granted<sup>(15)</sup>. A number of locations have water pressure and connectivity issues, with reinforcement required. The sewer network is also limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. Developers will need to seek clarification from the utilities provider to ensure that appropriate capacity is available<sup>(16)</sup>.

**3.13** [This list of transport corridors will be replaced by a map in the finalised Publication Draft] The main transport corridors include passenger rail services from Liverpool to New Brighton via Wallasey Village; the A554 from Birkenhead to New Brighton and Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; A551 from Seacombe to Leasowe; A5027 Duke Street to Liscard and the Kingsway Road Tunnel; A5088 Wallasey Bridge Road to Liscard and the Docks Link Road; and B5143 Liscard to New Brighton. Other main public transport routes include the Mersey Ferries at Seacombe; B5142 Manor Road; and B5145 Seacombe to Wallasey Village (Poulton Road/Breck Road); Seaview Road, Mount Pleasant Road and Torrington Road.

**3.14** Department for Transport Traffic Master Data highlights existing traffic congestion through Wallasey Village and on routes to Liscard and the Kingsway Tunnel<sup>(17)</sup>. 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.

**3.15** Traffic noise has also been identified as a problem on routes between Seacombe and New Brighton and on routes to Liscard and Wallasey Village<sup>(18)</sup>.

**3.16** National Cycle Network Route 56, which links Liverpool to Chester, runs off-road along the coastal promenades from Seacombe Ferry to Wallasey Embankment (forming part of the Wirral Circular Trail) and inland through Cross Lane

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13 Wirral Open Space Assessment 2011 (forthcoming)

14 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009

15 Wirral Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011

16 Wirral Water Cycle Study 2011 (forthcoming)

17 Travel in Merseyside 2010

18 DEFRA Noise Action Plan (March 2010)

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Community Woodland, towards Bidston, Beechwood and Woodchurch in Settlement Areas 2, 3 and 5. The development of a network of mainly on-road cycle routes is being progressed throughout the Area.

**3.17** Other infrastructure needs are expected to arise from the need to integrate the New City Neighbourhood in Settlement Area 2 to secure sustainable transport, social, community and green infrastructure. Merseytravel have identified the need for improvements to Liscard Bus Station and other interchange facilities. Further details of the infrastructure requirements for Settlement Area 1 can be found in Appendix X.