



**Wirral Waters**

Strategic Regeneration Framework

# Guiding Principles: 11. Housing

11 December 2009

# Contents

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH  
OF WIRRAL  
DEPT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

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1	INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY	1
2	ISSUES AND OPTIONS	5
3	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	15
4	RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS	19
5	MONITORING AND REVIEW	20

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## Introduction and Summary

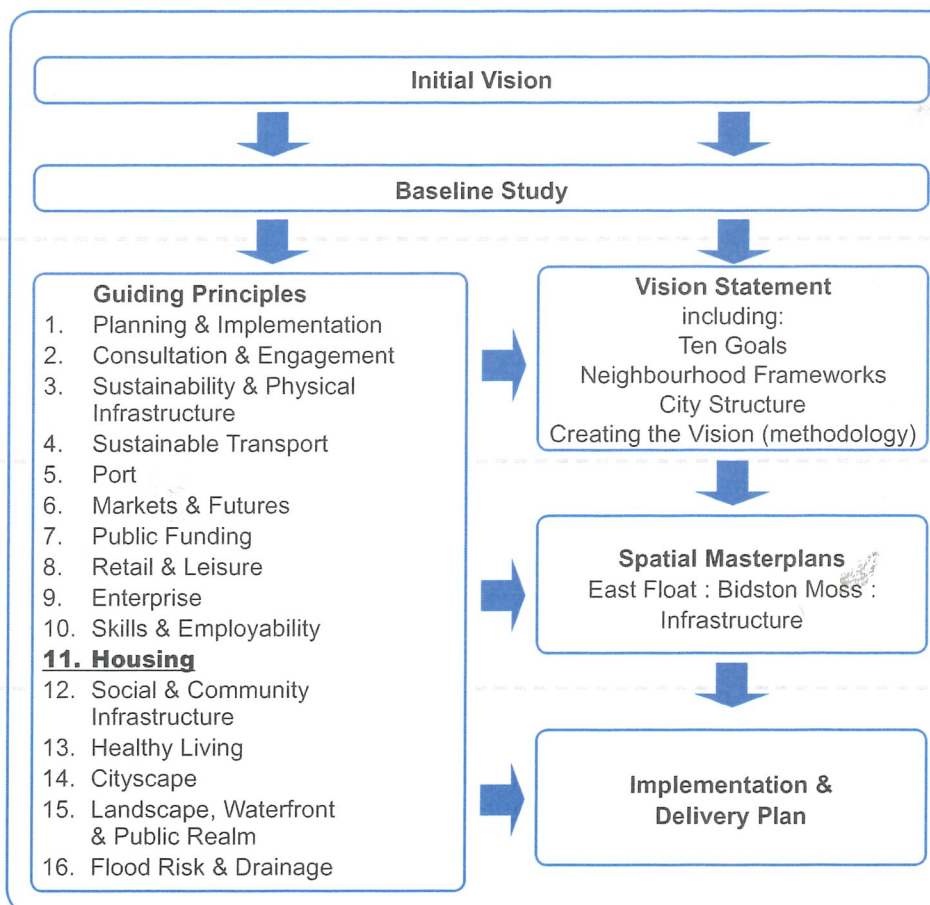
### Strategic Regeneration Framework

- 1.1 The vision for Wirral Waters is to create a new city waterfront focussing upon the transformation of Birkenhead and Wallasey Docks and their surrounding neighbourhoods. East Float is to be the principle focus for significant investment, delivering a new residential, commercial, cultural and leisure destination. Delivery of the vision starts immediately and will be continued over a 30+ year timescale.
- 1.2 Wirral Waters is being brought forward through a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF). This includes five key stages. Following the Initial Vision (Stage 1) and Baseline Study (Stage 2), a Vision Statement has been produced for Stage 3, which refreshes and expands the Initial Vision through the production of Ten Goals and a series of Spatial Frameworks across 15 neighbourhoods.
- 1.3 The Vision Statement demonstrates how Wirral Waters will act as a catalyst to the sustainable regeneration and growth of Inner Wirral and the wider City Region. It will guide and inform the future evolution of spatial masterplans and the project implementation process.

### KEY STAGES

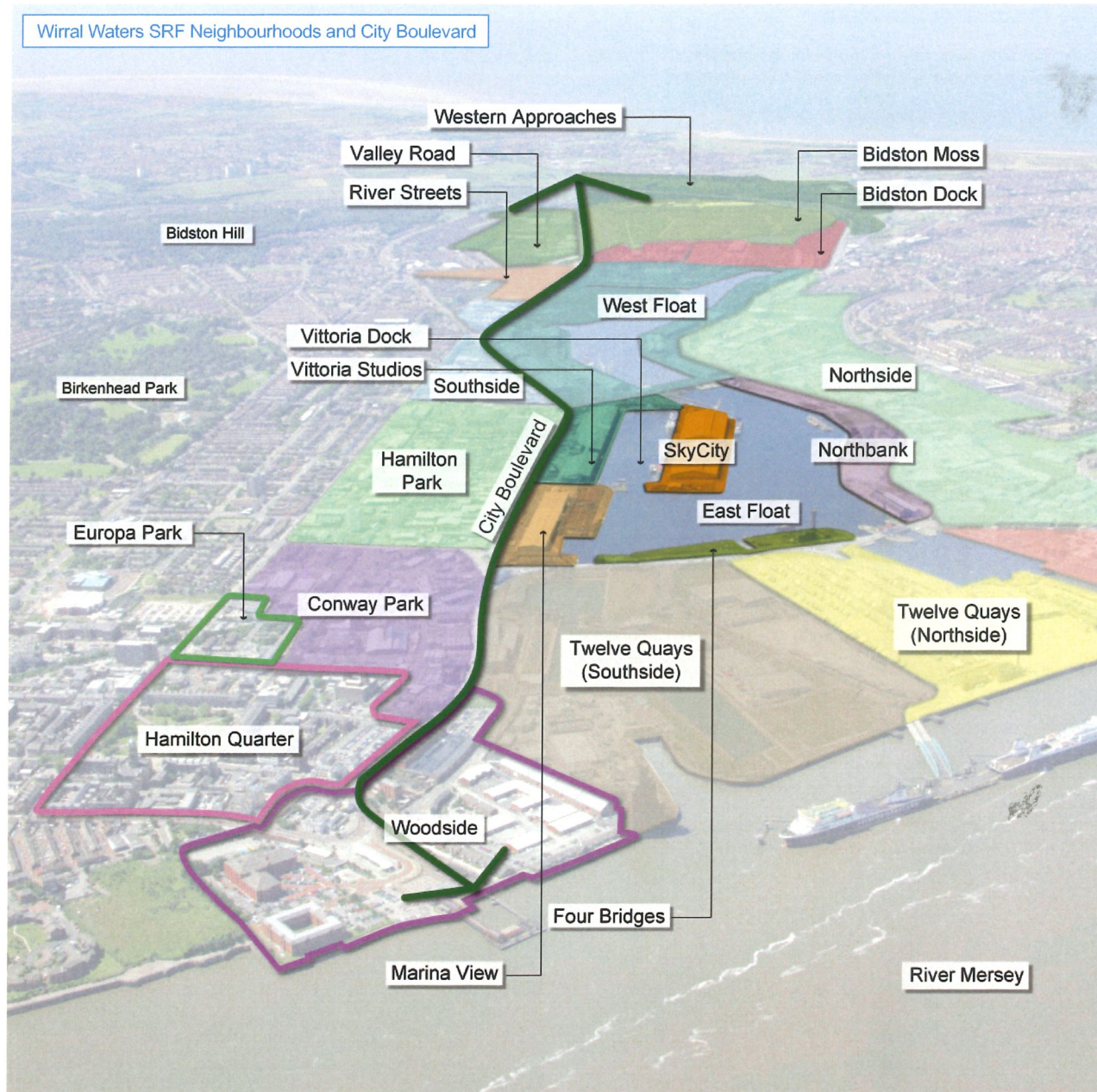
1. Initial Vision
2. Baseline Study
3. Refreshed & Expanded version
4. Masterplanning
5. Implementation & Delivery

### STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE



## Guiding Principles

- 1.4 Alongside the Vision Statement, a number of documents have been produced that set out the 'Guiding Principles' of the project. These are the working embodiment of how Wirral Waters will deliver the Vision. Each Guiding Principles Document is owned by one of the Working Groups established between partners to inform, guide, shape and crucially, realise, the project.
- 1.5 It is intended that each Guiding Principles document can be read and understood in isolation. Further information relating to Wirral Waters can be ascertained by reference to the Vision Statement or other Guiding Principles documents, or indeed other aspects of the SRF such as the Baseline Study or individual project proposals. All such information is available on the Wirral Waters website:  
<http://www.peelwaters.co.uk/wirralwaters.html>
- 1.6 Each Guiding Principles document is a snapshot in time and whilst they are intended to be timeless, the implementation process will evolve and be shaped by them. Wirral Waters will also be shaped by and need to respond to external factors, such as economic conditions and climate change, so it is important that the Guiding Principles are maintained and reviewed as and when necessary.
- 1.7 Each Guiding Principles document will be taken forward and delivered through individual masterplans and proposals brought forward within the SRF area, and through partnership working between Peel Holdings, Wirral Council and other key stakeholders such as the Homes and Communities Agency, the North West Regional Development Agency, Merseytravel and a range of other local, regional and national groups.



## Document Structure

- 1.8 For simplicity, each of the Guiding Principles documents is structured in a similar manner, as follows:
- Section 1 introduces the document;
  - Section 2 outlines the key issues and, where applicable, the options and opportunities available for addressing the issues;
  - Section 3 sets out the overall Guiding Principles;
  - Section 4 provides recommendations and next steps;
  - Section 5 establishes requirements for monitoring and review.

## Consultation

- 1.9 This document has been published in advance of the submission of the East Float planning application. The Wirral Waters proposals have been the subject of considerable consultation since 2006 to date, as set out within Guiding Principles (2) Consultation and Engagement. It is therefore hoped that these Guiding Principles reflect the aspirations of a wide range of consultees, both community groups and other interested stakeholders, locally, regionally and nationally.
- 1.10 Comments are nonetheless welcomed and can be made in a number of different ways:
- By email to [enquiries@wirralwaters.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wirralwaters.co.uk)
  - By completing the form on the website <http://www.peelwaters.co.uk/wirralwaters.html>
  - By letter to Peel Holdings, Peel Dome, The Trafford Centre, Manchester, M17 8PL

## OUR TEN GOALS

<b>1</b>	<b>Celebrating the past, shaping places for the future</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revealing the contrasting identities of the 'Wallasey Pools', and the northern and southern riverbanks</li> <li>2. 'Completing' and responding to the Laird Town gridiron</li> <li>3. Restoring the Great Floats as a 'seam' of waterside activity</li> <li>4. Creating a City Boulevard</li> </ol>
<b>2</b>	<b>Creating an internationally recognisable city waterfront</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating signature skylines, buildings and structures</li> <li>2. Creating city approaches and arrival points</li> <li>3. Creating a world class waters edge</li> <li>4. Responding to cultural and environmental assets</li> </ol>
<b>3</b>	<b>Creating places of distinction, destinations and market concepts for the 21st century</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating a critical mass of investment centred upon East Float and Bidston Dock capable of triggering the wider regeneration of the adjacent 'partnership' neighbourhoods and beyond</li> <li>2. Defining East Float as a new city waterfront</li> <li>3. Defining Bidston Dock as a new destination in the heart of the Wirral Peninsula</li> <li>4. Creating opportunities for new ways of living, working, learning and playing within a lush parkland and waterside setting – all right in the heart of the City Region</li> </ol>
<b>4</b>	<b>Creating a dynamic, prosperous Inner Wirral at the heart of the City Region</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shaping clear roles for 'partnership' neighbourhoods joining 'catalysts' neighbourhoods to Wallasey, Birkenhead and the River Mersey waterfront</li> <li>2. Supporting adjacent regeneration proposals and initiatives through partnership working, joined up thinking and actions</li> <li>3. Defining West Float and 12 Quays as long term operation port facilities</li> <li>4. Working in partnership with skills and training agencies</li> </ol>
<b>5</b>	<b>Creating world class connections, and access for all</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with partners to promote and deliver a 21st century international, national and regional rail, port, and public transport system</li> <li>2. Placing people at the heart of high density walkable neighbourhoods with a choice of public transport connections</li> <li>3. Creating a legible 'City Structure' with safe, easily understood, attractive and animated streets, city parks and public realm</li> </ol>
<b>6</b>	<b>Sharing prosperity, health and well-being</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting existing and creating new community 'hubs' and networks</li> <li>2. Defining City Boulevard as a neighbourhood 'seam', a structural community, landscape, wildlife and recreational resource</li> <li>3. Encourage healthy living and active lifestyles</li> </ol>
<b>7</b>	<b>Creating an exemplar regional environmental resource</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Defining Bidston as a pivotal destination at the heart of a Wirral 'Windows on the Waterfront' parkland</li> <li>2. Placing Bidston and East Float at the heart of a 21st Century waste, water and energy infrastructure network</li> <li>3. Bringing about transformational change in environmental quality by working with partners in 'greening the city' through long term investment in green and blue infrastructure</li> </ol>
<b>8</b>	<b>Securing long term success, starting today</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bringing forward 'Early Win' projects and events</li> <li>2. Creating a critical mass of projects to build confidence</li> <li>3. Raising the quality and profile of developments to set high quality benchmarks for others to follow</li> </ol>
<b>9</b>	<b>Engage &amp; inspire</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating an international profile for Wirral Waters to attract new markets and growth sectors</li> <li>2. Engaging with local communities and interest groups to explore how Wirral Waters may influence established projects and networks</li> <li>3. Building confidence and leading by example through our long term vision and investments</li> </ol>
<b>10</b>	<b>A robust delivery framework</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Setting in place a shared programme of action that allows all partners and communities to play a role in realising the Vision</li> <li>2. Ensure that the benefits and critical mass of the 'catalysts' neighbourhoods trigger and shape change across the 'partnership' neighbourhoods and Liverpool City Region</li> </ol>

## RELEVANCE OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE

medium
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## Summary: Guiding Principles for Housing

- 1.11 This document sets out the Guiding Principles for Housing at Wirral Waters. It considers issues relating to how a new, mixed, sustainable community can be created within the wider vision for sustainable economic growth. It is set against the backdrop of:
- A policy agenda for growth, regeneration, good design, affordability and the development of sustainable communities; and
  - The housing market, nationally and locally, and the associated delivery challenges, particularly in the context of the current global recession and the need to potentially 'think differently'.
- 1.12 The document explains how Wirral Waters can utilise its scale of opportunity and locational advantage at the core of the Liverpool City Region. The aim is for Wirral Waters to become a 21st century exemplar of achieving sustainable communities through major mixed-use regeneration that creates a series of complementary medium and high density city neighbourhoods.
- 1.13 The building blocks can be found within the following sections of the Wirral Waters Baseline Study of July 2008:
- Section 1 – Introduction and Approach
  - Section 6 – Socio-Economics; and
  - Section 8 – Development Markets
- 1.14 The Wirral Waters Baseline Study analysed the strategic and local policy context for Wirral Waters; the socio-economic factors affecting the area and impacting, in particular, on the housing market; and the potential market for the development.
- 1.15 Since the completion of the Baseline Study, there has been considerable progress in terms of the housing aspiration for Wirral Waters. This includes confirmation of a 'Partnership for Growth' area with Central Government through the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point initiative which will assist in the delivery of new communities at Wirral Waters.
- 1.16 Implementation of the Guiding Principles requires a partnership approach and rests with the Housing and Communities Working Group.
- 1.17 The key points are that:
- Wirral Waters represents a locally, regionally and nationally important opportunity to achieve sustainable housing growth and regeneration through a private sector led initiative;
  - There is a need to think holistically about the 'place' and how different catalyst and partnership areas can play different roles in creating a new, mixed, sustainable community;
  - The aim is to re-populate an area that has suffered major population loss, through attracting a range of different types of people;
  - There is a need for all partners to work together towards achieving a shared vision for sustainable communities in Inner Wirral.

### Housing in Context

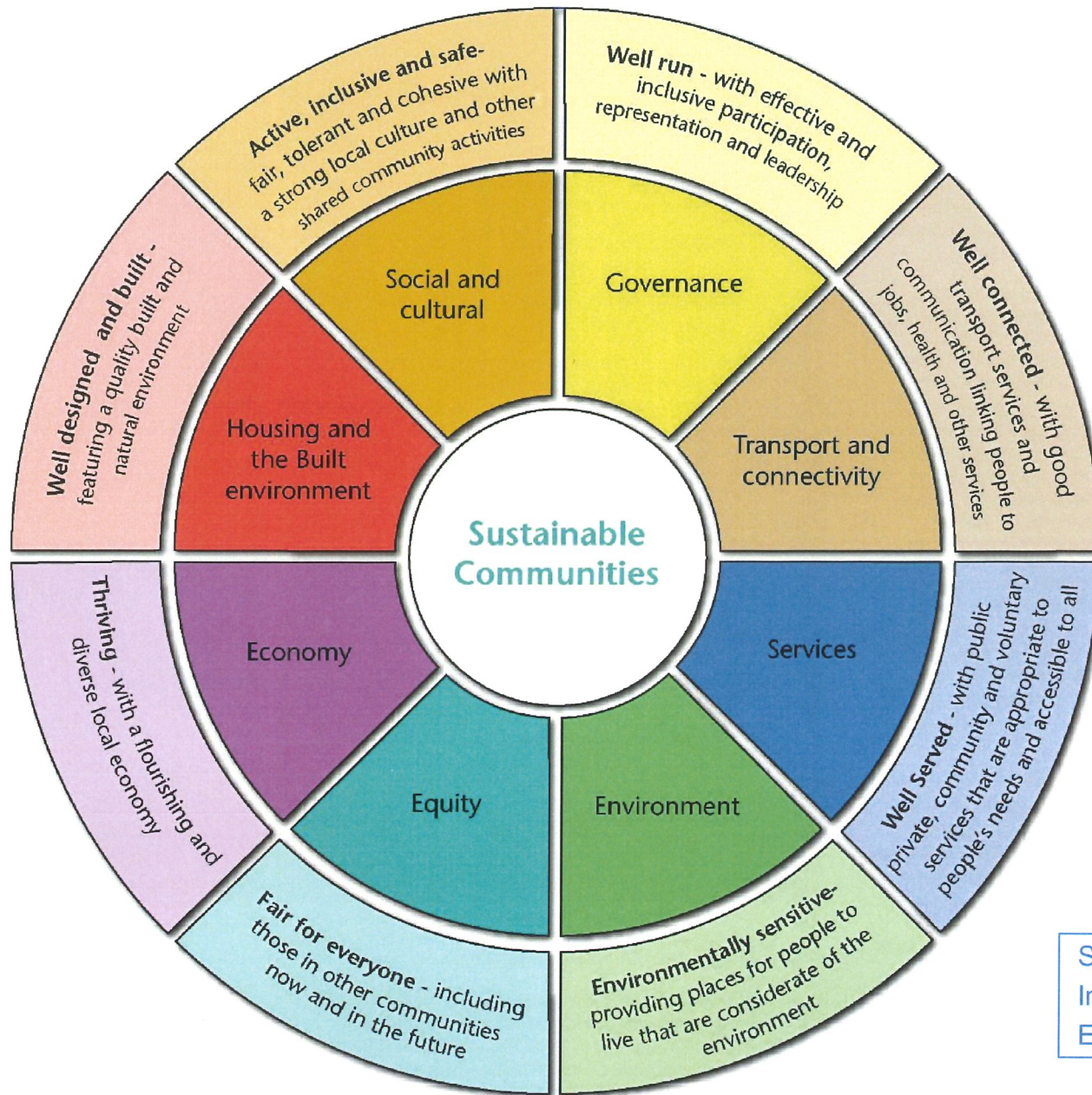
- 2.1 Wirral Waters is first and foremost a transformational economic development opportunity. Its scale is such that a truly mixed-use approach is appropriate with places to work, live and play complementing each other, both in terms of triggering new development and sustaining successful places in the long term.
- 2.2 The delivery of new housing at Wirral Waters must therefore be considered in the context of it being one vital component of the creation of a new destination.
- 2.3 The housing issues at Wirral Waters need to be considered as part of a wider set of key priorities that emerge through the SRF. In order of importance to the delivery of the project, the priorities are considered to be:
1. Changing the perceptions of the area through partnership working and achieving 'buy-in' of local, regional and national stakeholders, local communities and the wider business community;
  2. Transforming the physical environment through place-making and high quality built development, which will attract and sustain high value economic activity and employment;
  3. Addressing local deprivation and ensuring that local communities have access to new economic opportunities, though integrated working with partners in relation to skills and employability;
  4. Safeguarding the port sector and maritime SMEs through relocations and ongoing investment in the port;

5. Providing the right physical infrastructure to support economic activity – including transport, energy, waste and water – to ensure that Wirral Waters can become an exemplar sustainable development;
  6. Creating a new housing market that is viable and supports economic growth, including a variety of tenure offers and mixture of typologies; and
  7. Delivering the right type of social infrastructure to support existing communities, including health, education and other facilities, to ensure that Wirral Waters becomes a whole, sustainable community.
- 2.4 With those broad principles and priorities in mind, the key housing issues are explored below.

### The Sustainable Communities Agenda

- 2.5 A good definition of mixed and sustainable communities is set out in CLG Guidance: "A Decent Home". It includes a number of elements that are presently lacking in the local area, including:
- A strong local economy;
  - Households with a range of incomes;
  - Balanced housing market across the area; and
  - Good quality housing with a range of types catering for the needs of the community.

- 2.6 Wirral Waters has an important role to play in growing a more balanced and sustainable community in inner Wirral by introducing more economically active people into the area and creating a better balance of housing types. It can also serve to provide the range of ingredients required for a successful, sustainable community. It is vital that Wirral Waters grows and sustains a housing and community offer that people want to live in and that works and integrates with existing communities. This will be just as much about attracting the right type of economic activity, enhancing public realm, addressing perceptions, creating community infrastructure and other challenges, as it will be about providing well designed housing products
- 2.7 The diagram opposite encapsulates the key ingredients of a sustainable community.



Source:  
Inspire East  
Excellence Framework



## Strategic Policies for Housing Growth

- 2.8 The Wirral Waters Baseline Study establishes the overall strategic policy fit for housing growth at Wirral Waters. In broad terms, the strategic (national, regional and sub-regional) policy fit is already in place and identifies Wirral Waters as a priority area for housing regeneration and growth.
- 2.9 PPS3 lends support to delivering housing growth on previously developed land in sustainable locations that are well located and supported by urban infrastructure and services.
- 2.10 The North West RSS gives the 'inner area' of the Liverpool City Region the highest priority for a significant increase in housing. The aim is to reverse decades of declining population and the 'hollowing out' of the inner urban area of the City Region. Most of the neighbourhoods of the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) area are within the broad definition of the 'inner area' contained within RSS; this also equates to the HMRI area which includes the majority of Wirral Waters.
- 2.11 The annual housing requirement for the borough, as established by RSS, has been progressively and significantly increased. The previous RSS (RPG13) required 160 dwellings per annum (dpa) whilst the first draft RSS13 proposed 250 dpa. Following representations by Wirral Council and Peel Holdings, the final version of RSS responded to the ability to secure an increased delivery rate directly through Wirral Waters, by confirming that 500 dpa should be provided.
- 2.12 Furthermore, Wirral and Liverpool councils, alongside Peel Holdings, have entered into a partnership with Government to deliver additional levels of housing growth from 2008/09 to 2016/17. Known as 'The Mersey Heartlands New Growth Point' initiative it includes a further increase in Wirral's strategic housing requirement to 600 dpa with Wirral Waters again making a major contribution to the Borough's housing trajectory to meet this enhanced target.
- 2.13 The Mersey Heartlands New Growth Point also includes funding for infrastructure to support housing growth.

## Regeneration Objectives

- 2.14 Wirral Waters is wholly contained within the New Heartlands Housing Market and Renewal Initiative (HMRI) (Pathfinder) area which is characterised by low cost/value small terraced housing in Council Tax Bands A and B. Key priorities of the HMRI include:
- improving the economic performance of the area and increasing local incomes;
  - widening housing choice;
  - reducing the proportion of properties in the lower Council Tax Bands (A and B) and increasing that in Tax Bands C & D; and
  - reducing the level and proportion of social and private rented accommodation, and promoting greater owner occupation under different tenure models and housing types.
- 2.15 These objectives are entirely consistent with Wirral Waters, which can complement and facilitate the activities of the HMRI. The need for investment in deprived communities is clear and there are mutually beneficial interests for public and private partners alike to secure new investment, which will help to improve viability and sustainability in such areas.
- 2.16 The majority of funding that Wirral Council has received under the Pathfinder, has been directed to schemes in Tranmere and Rock Ferry. Whilst there has been some funding allocated for projects in the North Birkenhead and Seacombe/Poulton/Egremont areas adjacent to Wirral Waters, the scale of intervention has been relatively limited thus far.
- 2.17 Given the limitations on funding, a low intervention pattern of investment in the HMRI area is predicted to continue in the short-medium term. In terms of meeting the scale of the challenge, it is clear that major additional public and private finance will be needed to secure the changes aspired to by the HMRI Pathfinder and the Council, as set out in the 'HMRI Strategy for Inner Wirral' of 2004.
- 2.18 In the longer term, there is increasing uncertainty in the HMRI programme, particularly if there is a change in national Government in 2010. This could have a significant bearing on how regeneration activity progresses in the partnership areas adjacent to Wirral Waters.

## The Housing Market Context

- 2.19 The housing market in the local area is fragile, is strongly influenced by local demographics and socio-economic considerations including poor economic opportunities, high levels of worklessness and low incomes. This is reflected in the HMRI status of the area as highlighted above.
- 2.20 Wirral Waters will provide for a range of housing products, prices, types and tenures. The principal catalyst neighbourhood of East Float (including family housing) has been identified as appropriate for high density mixed-use waterfront development, including innovative housing and apartment types with open space and supporting physical and community infrastructure.
- 2.21 Across the SRF area and beyond, it is clear that Wirral Waters offers the potential to be catalytic in facilitating not only a significant growth in new housing but also a diversification of housing types and tenures that will provide for a long term mixed, sustainable community.
- 2.22 It is acknowledged that the housing market is particularly complex both at a national level but also locally. There will therefore need to be a requirement for ongoing assessment, analysis and monitoring of housing delivery.

## The Affordability Challenge

### National Policy

- 2.23 Housing affordability is a national priority. The Government's planning policy for housing, PPS3, requires that local authorities should set overall targets for the provision of affordable housing through the planning system, including social rented and intermediate housing. Such targets should reflect an assessment of economic viability, having regard to the impact on overall levels of housing delivery, and the need to develop and grow mixed communities. Local authorities should also identify different proportions of affordable housing and site thresholds over the plan area. (PPS3, paragraph 29).
- 2.24 National affordable housing policy does however need to be considered in the context of local/regional circumstances. The strategies and associated research of the HMRI seek to reduce social rented housing stock,



whilst improving the quality and quantity of private stock, allied to a heavy focus on employment and skills/ education (as explained above). This suggests that high quality private housing should be the focus for the area, with a targeted approach to helping local communities with their affordability challenges.

- 2.25 The consideration of how affordability issues can be tackled through economic regeneration (ability to afford) is particularly relevant to Wirral Waters, which tackles affordability through economic regeneration at the root cause of the issue as it exists in Wirral i.e. low incomes.

#### Sub-Regional position

- 2.26 The prevailing affordable housing targets across the sub-region are complex and in some ways present a conflicting picture:
- The stated target for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Area (in Wirral this is the HMR1 'inner area') is 25% affordable housing;
  - The indicative requirement set out in the Liverpool City Region North Housing Market Assessment (by GVA Grimley) is 24%;
  - The Northwest Regional Housing Strategy suggests that the target for the 'Liverpool City Region North' Housing Market Area should be 8-10%. This is the most recent of the targets, and is the only one that claims to have been informed by viability analysis as well as need; and
  - The Council has an interim policy target of 40% which is currently being reviewed through evidence and policies of the Core Strategy, taking account of viability in accordance with the recent case law (Blythe Valley). Importantly the 40% target is not yet in accordance with PPS3 given that viability has not informed the target. This is explained further below.

#### Wirral position

- 2.27 Wirral has significant affordability issues, although there is a polarisation between the affluent west and the deprived inner areas in the east of the Borough. The former has high house/rental prices and an economically active, well paid population, whilst the latter has low house/rental prices and an economically inactive, lower paid population. Both areas suffer

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1. Chips, New Islington, Manchester
2. Glasgow Harbour
3. Abode, Harlow

affordability issues, but in different ways. The issue in west Wirral is one of overheating in high value areas, whilst, in inner Wirral, it stems from a poor economic base and social profile that result in low pay and an inability to afford property that is in practice low value relative to national/regional averages.

2.28 Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) are required as a key part of the evidence for affordable housing policies. In Wirral, a SHMA was prepared by Fordham Research in 2007. The Study was endorsed by the Council in February 2008. The SHMA finds that, overall, Wirral has less of a need for affordable housing than England as a whole, but a higher need than the northern average.

2.29 The Birkenhead and Tranmere ward, located adjoining and around Wirral Waters, shows the most acute deprivation and also the greatest need for support with housing provision. This is mainly due to worklessness, low incomes and other measures of deprivation. Coupled with the HMRI strategy of reducing the amount of social rented housing this raises complex and significant local affordability issues. The key to resolving them rests in a range of measures, including:

- Achieving sustainable, economic activity through investment in catalyst and partnership neighbourhoods, skills and training; including bringing significant levels of high value economic activity to the area;
- Using this economic activity to address low income issues and to enable local people to afford modestly priced property;
- Improving the quality and 'liveability' of low value housing and its local environment, particularly in the more stressed areas identified by the HMRI neighbourhood action plans;
- Providing the right amounts, type and mix of different housing products, both to provide the quality and type of housing to support catalyst economic investment, and to complement evolving regeneration needs; and
- Making best use of available funds, including the National Affordable Housing Programme, to provide the right housing where it is required.

2.30 In terms of the contribution that should be made by development projects, the recommendation of the 2007/08 SHMA for Wirral was that 40% affordable housing should be negotiated on all relevant sites. The study recommended that this target should be adopted by the LPA for use in negotiations under the current UDP affordable housing policy. In reporting the Fordham Study to the Cabinet the Director of Regeneration noted:

*"... the 40% target is negotiable and will need to be placed in the context of land availability, supply and financial viability of the development proposal to deliver the affordable housing element".*

2.31 This is the Council's interim policy approach pending the matter being reconsidered through the LDF. The target has not yet been informed by a viability analysis required by PPS3. The SHMA is now being reviewed and expanded following changes in circumstance, including the vision for Wirral Waters, Growth Point status and the Blyth Valley case law arising through the PPS3 requirement for viability testing. The revised SHMA is anticipated later in 2009.

2.32 The revised Fordham Study (SHMA) will have regard to the following:

- The significant opportunities presented by Wirral Waters for housing growth and market restructuring;
- The priority focus of Wirral Waters on 'economic investment' and job creation thus tackling affordability at the cause;
- The increased strategic housing requirement for Wirral of 600pa which arises from the New Growth Point status;
- Recognition of the significant differences in the housing market across the borough;
- Tackling and recovering from the global recession and house price deflation;
- Economic viability as required by paragraph 29 of PPS3;
- HMRI objectives for balancing the current housing mix i.e. increasing both the number and proportion of properties in the higher Council Tax bands, and reducing social rented stock;
- The NW Regional SHMA, which includes a viability

assessment, identifies an affordable housing requirement for Wirral, as part of the Liverpool North City Region, of less than 10%; and

- The Growth Point target of 25% affordable housing in the HMRI inner area, which includes Wirral Waters.

## Affordability at Wirral Waters

2.33 The housing development industry in the UK has undergone major economic trauma in the past two years and the ability of developers to absorb the costs of affordable housing provision on projects has been severely constrained in all parts of the UK. Land and sales values have plummeted through 2008 and 2009 to the extent that many developments are no longer financially viable even with a zero requirement for affordable housing. This has been recognised by Government (The Credit Crunch and Regeneration: Impact and Implications, CLG / Parkinson M, 2009) and many planning authorities are being asked to reconsider proposed developments with reduced obligations for affordable housing.

2.34 In Inner Wirral the challenge of delivering affordable housing provision on the back of private sector development is magnified because, even before the global economic downturn, the values achievable in the local housing market would not support such provision. Hence any debate with regard to the provision of new affordable housing over the short to medium term needs to have regard to these major national and local challenges with regard to viability.

2.35 The desirability of delivering new affordable housing in Inner Wirral also needs to be considered in the context of the many other regeneration needs, including: the desperate need to create new economic and employment opportunities so that local people have access to more sustained and better paid employment, the need to restore investor/purchaser confidence in a local housing market that had collapsed many years before the global downturn, and the need to broaden the socio economic mix of the local communities through the higher levels of provision of new housing in the higher council tax bands.

2.36 In such a fragile local economy, directing investment away from the promotion of economic activity, jobs and infrastructure, towards the subsidy of social housing,

will inevitably lead to a reinforcement of the cycle of low economic activity and social dependency on the state. To help the area regenerate itself, Wirral Waters aims to stimulate new economic activity by creating the environment to attract economic drivers from outside the area and to provide local people with opportunities to train, 'up-skill' and gain employment. The ability to access a home that can be afforded by local people is a result of this regeneration process. The provision of the supply of a balanced housing stock helps to avoid over-supply of low tax band property and social rented stock.

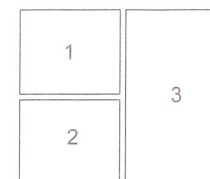
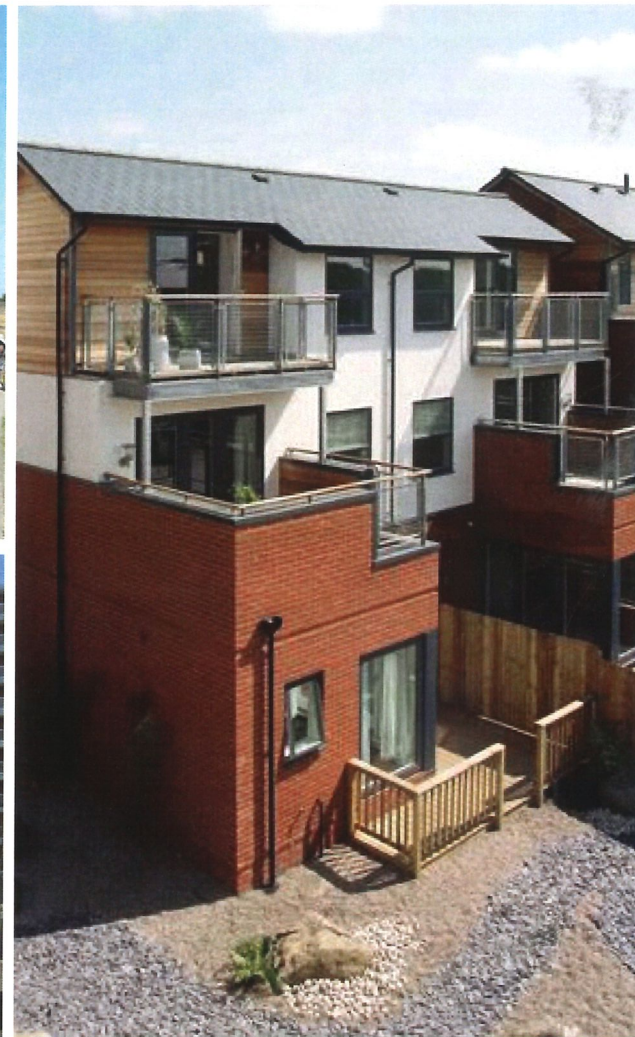
2.37 Over time, following the achievement of economic investment, housing delivery and physical change in the area, it is likely that the market values of the project will sustain contributions to affordable housing. Thus a legal and policy framework will need to be established to facilitate this.

### Affordability at other transformational projects

2.38 It is difficult to find examples of major housing/ regeneration projects in the north where affordable housing has been delivered.

2.39 At Salford Quays, considerable public support, equivalent to circa £200m has been provided over a period of 20+ years including monies from Derelict Land Grant, Urban Programme, Enterprise Zone status and Salford City Council underwriting early projects and infrastructure. Nonetheless, despite the success of Salford Quays, development to date has included minimal provision for affordable housing.

2.40 More recently, in most of the major housing schemes in the Liverpool and Manchester/Salford HMRI Pathfinders, affordable housing has either not been required, or requirements have been waived or limited, to give priority to other strategic objectives. Common objectives are public realm, infrastructure, or simply a widening of housing choice to ensure that the viability of early phases is not prejudiced through low values and returns in an emerging market area. Many authorities have set affordable housing targets but have not been able to meet them on major regeneration projects. Wirral Waters does however offer the potential to tread new ground and explore new innovations



- 1. Adelaide Wharf
- 2. Timber Wharf, Manchester
- 3. Didsbury Point, Manchester

in the housing market, which may directly and/or indirectly assist meeting the affordability challenge.

## The Housing Delivery Challenge for Wirral Waters

### Responding to a unique challenge

- 2.41 Achieving the long term economic and transformational benefits of Wirral Waters requires first that the area establishes itself as a commercial and residential location that businesses and households aspire to be a part of. As with other comparator projects, the first important step in this process is to attract new businesses and residents to the area whose presence can change the image of Inner Wirral from a deprived residential area with limited housing choice and a depressed local economy, to one which is associated with economic opportunity and 'aspirational living' in a high quality city environment.
- 2.42 Growing a housing market that appeals to professional and managerial households is an essential first step in this process. This, in turn, will have spin-off benefits in helping to attract new commercial activity, development and investment with links and benefits to the wider HMRI area and partnership neighbourhoods.
- 2.43 The scale of Wirral Waters, at an estimated 15,000 plus units, is larger than most major housing projects in the UK. The most comparable projects, in terms of scale of housing, are schemes in London, such as Greenwich Peninsula and Barking Riverside. However, these projects, and virtually all other precedents, have an estimated construction and build out period of less than 20 years, whereas Wirral Waters is likely to take longer. This is partly a reflection of the 'standing start' from which Wirral Waters will emerge and partly due to the fact that most comparable projects are in locations which have a stronger underlying market that has either been assisted through heavy public subsidy or exists due to a stronger strategic, locational advantage.
- 2.44 It is difficult to predict precisely what the delivery period will be, as it will be influenced by factors beyond Peel's control, in particular the dynamics of prevailing market conditions. However, the fact remains that 30+ years is a very long period of time to consider and it is

anticipated that during the delivery of Wirral Waters there would be a number of recessions.

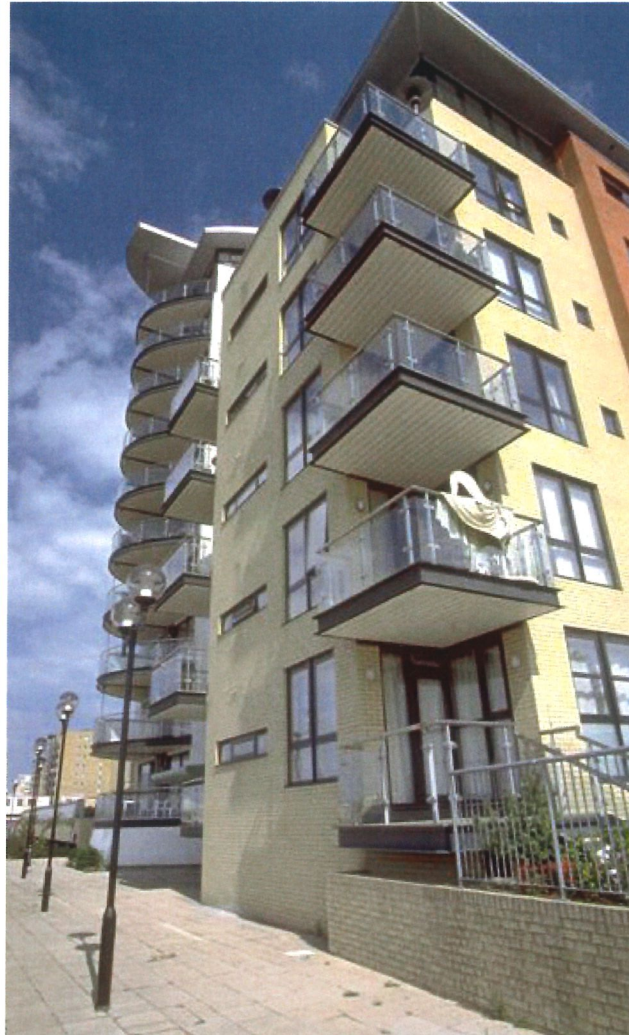
- 2.45 There will be major cultural, economic and environmental changes over the lifetime of the project which are likely to have a significant bearing on the communities and markets that work and live at Wirral Waters, whilst technological advancements may make what seems impossible today, possible. Climate change, associated legislation and technologies will inevitably have a profound bearing on all aspects of the project. The need for flexibility and adaptability are therefore paramount. The ability and willingness to anticipate and embrace change will be needed. New unforeseen economic sectors and niches will also undoubtedly emerge.
- 2.46 Wirral Waters is a unique challenge due to its scale, breadth of vision and stated time horizons. But it is the genuinely mixed use nature of the proposals and the context within which they are being brought forward that has the most significant bearing on housing and the question of how a new community can be developed and grown. To inform the statement of Guiding Principles Strategy which follow in Section 3, the strengths and opportunities, target markets and key challenges are outlined below.

### Strengths and Opportunities

- 2.47 The components of the 'strategic fit' that Wirral Waters has in its favour are many, and should not be underestimated. These are in essence a marriage of "need" and "opportunity". The following points set out how this marriage relates to the growth of a new residential community at Wirral Waters:
- There is a strategic fit with the long term policy agenda of public sector partners to achieve urban regeneration and (housing and economic) growth through capitalising on the availability of large areas of surplus and under-used brownfield land in the inner areas of the City Region. Political control and policy nuances will change, but the priority emphasis on regenerating deprived areas in accessible urban areas is a timeless principle;
  - Allied to that agenda, there is a strong political and community support expressed at all levels to translate the vision for Wirral Waters into a reality.

This is evidenced through recent policy decisions, including Growth Point status, Strategic Regional Site designation, the support of Wirral Council and the overwhelming support of the local community (as explained in the Guiding Principles for Consultation and Engagement);

- The scale of Wirral Waters, which will make things possible that might otherwise not occur with a smaller scale project or a project brought forward in a piecemeal manner;
- The spin-off regeneration benefits that can be gained through facilitating economic investment in this area, including new employment and skills/training opportunities;
- The strong emphasis on partnership working, to ensure that Wirral Waters becomes embedded in the plans, strategies and programmes of a range of delivery agencies, including housing/community providers and others;
- The single ownership of Wirral Waters and the absence of any need for lengthy and costly land acquisition/assembly, together with immediately available sites and a relocation/decant strategy which can be implemented whilst protecting and enhancing the port economy;
- The strategic approach being taken to the project by Peel Holdings, and the comprehensive nature of the Strategic Regeneration Framework, which provides the market and delivery partners with a clear vision and framework for implementing holistic urban design and place-shaping principles;
- The strength and track record of Peel Holdings as a major development, transport and energy company, with experience of delivering major urban regeneration projects;
- The broadly underutilised urban infrastructure, particularly transport connectivity, which already exists;
- The relatively unconstrained nature of the Birkenhead and Wallasey Dock system that can accommodate the scale and nature of development proposed;
- The mixed-use nature of the opportunity, whereby housing and economic growth can be brought



forward to complement each other with a genuinely unique offer of lifestyle and place;

- The potential to deliver an exemplar in sustainable waterfront development which follows worldwide best practice and capitalises upon the striking scale, setting and views into/out of the docklands; and
- The quality of place and lifestyle offer of the Wirral peninsula.

- 2.48 The combination of these factors places Wirral Waters in a very strong strategic position for growing a housing market. The quality of life, the linking of assets and place-making aspects stand to become Wirral Waters' unique selling point as the new location for a new community, to grow and cement its market position over time.
- 2.49 Areas promoting similar concepts, both elsewhere in the North West and across the UK, cannot compete with Wirral's locally accessible environmental assets such as country and town parks, beaches and golf courses. Along with proximity and transport connections to employment opportunities and markets and educational and cultural provision, these assets can be key drivers for housing choice. Strong transport connections to regional assets, including Liverpool city centre, Chester, Manchester and North Wales will help complement and complete the picture.
- 2.50 These factors explain why West Wirral is a highly successful, affluent area. They also explain why, in turn, the SRF is seeking to exploit the best of these assets in a sustainable manner, through bringing the best of West Wirral into Wirral Waters, to create a high quality 'eco-city' development and a platform for economic growth.
- 2.51 Achieving both housing and economic growth at Wirral Waters, through capitalising upon the strengths of West Wirral, will assist in achieving more sustainable commuting patterns. The significant out-commuting of high-value residents, who live but do not work in Wirral, could become more sustainably balanced over time, as high value employment opportunities arise within Wirral Waters. Thus, Wirral Waters could also improve the sustainability of existing housing areas in West Wirral as well as helping to stem and possibly reverse the existing substantial leakage of retail and leisure expenditure.

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1. Scharnhauser Park, Ostfildern
2. Accordia, Cambridge
3. Ocean Wharf, London

2.52 Wirral plays an important role in supporting the economic strength of the City Region, particularly its “engine room” in Liverpool city centre. However, the scope to achieve more balanced and sustainable travel to work patterns, through the mixture of uses at Wirral Waters as part of a wider strategy for the economic growth of the City Region, is clear. This is reflected in the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Transport.

### The target market

2.53 When successfully delivered, the scheme will create a new high quality living and working community that will assist in meeting the housing demands and needs of a wide and varied range of groups and typologies. All groups are likely to benefit from the comprehensive nature of the project and the supporting physical and community infrastructure inherent in the vision, but the following main groups may be attracted for different reasons:

- Young adults, seeking an offer with good access to the transport network, employment opportunities potentially on-site, and a range of on-site amenities and services. Young upwardly mobile adults from the local area who wish to stay in Wirral and benefit from its environmental asset, but do not desire or cannot access a property in the rural West, will be attracted to the development. Historically, those people aspiring to higher quality ‘urban living’ accommodation at a reasonable market price would have had to move out of the borough.
- Older people, who wish to be located in a secure and managed environment with a range of on-site facilities and services. The development could provide a sensible downsizing option without compromising on quality of life. It could be particularly attractive for local people from Wirral, and in-coming residents, who do not have access to, or a desire to live in the west of Wirral;
- Families, who may wish to live in a safe, convenient, well managed environment, close to amenities/ services, education and employment. The need to provide for outdoor amenity space, the conditions for thriving communities, adaptability and the right conditions to raise children will be central to

achieving this. Lessons on how such markets can be delivered in high density waterfront settings are being drawn from European, North American and Asian cities;

- Downsizeers, who may be older people but not exclusively so. Mentally or physically disabled groups may fall into this category also. Downsizeer groups may be seeking a more manageable lifestyle within apartments in a sustainable community;
- Students, attending educational establishments in Wirral or Liverpool. This would be a particular target group if ambitions for an education campus are realised, in which case it may be appropriate to consider identifying a specific area of the one or more of the quarters for related accommodation;
- Key-workers, employed within the development or elsewhere in the City Region, employed in key public services and their supply chains. This group may be particularly willing to invest in a new community if new services, support and infrastructure are present. There will also be those employed in essential services within the development, for example workers in health, education, crime prevention or other facilities;
- Relocators, who come from elsewhere to follow employment opportunities, such as corporate or public sector relocations from the south of England or elsewhere;
- Pioneers, looking for innovative 21st century housing supported by community infrastructure. These groups will dominate the early residents of Wirral Waters;
- Professionals, already living elsewhere in Wirral or looking to move into the area because of the new economic opportunities which will be opened up;
- Returners, who have moved away from the area due to a lack of economic opportunity, quality housing and educational offer in desirable locations, but who may have strong connections with the area and would return if the lifestyle offer was suited to their aspirations;
- Construction workers, who are likely to spend many years working at Wirral Waters. The amount of

construction that will take place will inevitably require a mix of both local workers (through training and skills commitments and programmes) and workers from elsewhere. With a 30+ year build out, the project may provide housing for construction workers and their families. In-migrating construction workers who may then choose to settle permanently, raise children and retire in the area.

2.54 Although it is likely that Wirral Waters will initially rely on the increasingly local market, the scale of the development will give it an evolving regional and national profile to support increased housing development. Over time it will be able to compete successfully with other UK and worldwide cities for businesses and their workers. It will ultimately be the national and international profile and success of the project that will allow Wirral Waters to fulfil its potential to create a new community. Securing an early major office occupier would inevitably strengthen Wirral Waters’ credentials in the delivery as a housing area of choice. Peel Holdings’ example of Salford Quays and MediaCityUK is a comparable case of the effect that major office occupiers can have in bringing forward new housing in a northern dockland setting.

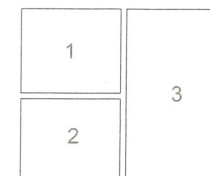
2.55 As noted under the ‘Regeneration Objectives’ section above, there is a need to carefully balance the provision of new high quality housing at Wirral Waters with ongoing regeneration initiatives, particularly the HMRI. The risks and issues associated with displacement need to be considered and monitored as the project is delivered.

### What housing options have been considered?

2.56 There are a number of potentially different strategies for taking forward the housing element of Wirral Waters. These are explored below:

- No or little housing – a heavy focus on employment development in the docklands, with no or little housing, is not considered appropriate given the strategic policy focus for housing provision in the Inner Area and the opportunity to create a new community. The delivery of no housing would have a major adverse impact on Wirral’s spatial planning strategy, as development would be required in other less sustainable or accessible locations.

- Housing-led – there is the potential to focus Wirral Waters as a housing-led development rather than an economic-led project with significant new housing. It is however necessary to secure significant economic development to address regeneration challenges arising from the long term and multi-faceted deprivation in the area and to create housing demand. A solely housing-led approach is therefore considered inappropriate.
- Commercial, Housing and Place Making led – this is the approach adopted, supported by a significant cultural and educational emphasis.
- Prioritisation of affordable housing – there are different options for the degree of priority given to affordable housing objectives. The immediate prioritisation of affordable housing, at the cost of other objectives, is considered unnecessary and likely to significantly undermine both the wider economic and regeneration benefits of Wirral Waters, and the efforts to tackle the affordability challenge at the source of the problem as it currently exists in inner Wirral.
- Housing density and type options – across the SRF area there will be a range of densities and typologies of housing, including lower-medium and high density neighbourhoods. This range, which will include family orientated accommodation, will provide for a multi-faceted repopulation of the area. Some neighbourhoods will focus on renewal and regeneration of existing housing areas, whilst others will undergo more transformational change, most notably at East Float where there is a particular need for the masterplanning process to demonstrate and set the principles and parameters for how ‘super high density’ living will be made to work. This will include testing masterplan options for high density and diverse typologies and the trying out of new approaches to urban living.
- Housing tenure options – a number of different options, exist for housing tenure. This is a rapidly changing area of the market and it is explained in Section 3 below that a range of different tenures are likely to emerge and that no form of tenure can or should be ruled in or out at this stage of the process.



1. Hammarby
2. Tübingen, Germany
3. Putney



- 3.1 Wirral Waters aims to achieve a sustainable community with new housing linked to economic growth focussed upon the transformation of the Birkenhead docklands area.

### Creating Sustainable Communities

- 3.2 The Vision statement sets out the framework and spatial approach, whilst the Guiding Principles and other Stage 3 documents, outline how it is intended to create a new sustainable community. The holistic approach to the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) and the topic areas it covers is a reflection and embodiment of the 'sustainable communities agenda'.
- 3.3 Alongside the SRF, there is a need for continued policy alignment, particularly through the Wirral Core Strategy and other aspects of the Local Development Framework which affect Wirral Waters. Specifically in relation to housing, the points made in Section 2 in relation to the Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), will need to be progressed to inform the debate on housing and shape the proposals.

### Achieving Integrated Regeneration

- 3.4 To complement regeneration activity, increased economic investment will provide local employment and training/up-skilling opportunities to assist existing deprived communities to become more viable and self sustaining. The housing offer of Wirral Waters will be complementary to the HMRI by providing high quality homes for an economically active and skilled population, thus increasing the range and choice of housing in the local area to meet the needs and demands of a more economically active and aspirational population.

- 3.5 The balance and relationship between growth and regeneration is an important one that the Pathfinder and the Council will need to ensure progresses in an integrated and facilitative manner. Issues such as displacement and gentrification need to be carefully handled, to ensure that the positive benefits of attracting economic activity are secured for the wider community, whilst potential pitfalls, such as polarisation, are minimised or avoided. This will require strong leadership and a clear public sector led strategy.

- 3.6 New housing development at Wirral Waters will complement the existing local regeneration strategies and masterplans that are guiding activity and HMRI intervention in nearby areas. The scale of Wirral Waters will clearly have significant implications for those areas, both in terms of accelerating the pace of change and introducing new issues which may not have been foreseen at the outset of those strategies. Cognisant of this issue, the Peel team has set out a vision for how those areas might be shaped by, and linked to, Wirral Waters, through a spatial planning led, neighbourhood approach to the SRF. Wirral Council will themselves also be refreshing its strategy for the wider area through the 'Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study' which is due for completion in 2010.

- 3.7 The key to maximising regenerative effects will be effective partnership working between the public sector; Wirral Council, New Heartlands and the Homes and Communities Agency as well as delivery partners including Peel Holdings and other private development companies, housing associations and infrastructure providers.

### Growing the Housing Market

- 3.8 The scale and quality of new housing that is projected for Wirral Waters is significant, particularly in the context of the depressed inner Wirral housing market; however it is anticipated to be delivered over a 30+ year period. The area is presently a largely unproven and secondary location of low market values. However, the scale and longevity of the Wirral Waters project, its comprehensive place-making approach, the potential for major economic catalysts, and the support of public and private partners, present a genuine opportunity to transform the local housing market.
- 3.9 Beyond East Float and other high density neighbourhoods that will emerge over the life of Wirral Waters, such as Woodside, there are a number of other neighbourhoods where housing may be a key component. These include Hamilton Park, Conway Park, River Streets, Valley Road and Bidston Dock. It is envisaged that a combination of 'live-work' units and medium density, family orientated development can be brought forward within these areas.
- 3.10 In terms of ongoing work to inform the delivery process, it is envisaged that information will continue to be gathered and assessed in relation to the following:
- The evolving nature of the housing market for Wirral Waters, and how that might change over the proposed timeframe of the development;
  - Who the potential occupiers of the development will be – which social groups, age cohorts, what size of households and so on – and in particular,



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- 1. Hafencity, Hamburg
- 2. Hafencity, Hamburg
- 3. Media City, Dusseldorf
- 4. Hertfordshire Innovation Campus

how higher earning, economically active and aspirational workers and their families will be attracted to the area;

- The potential rates of delivery and what types of housing are likely to be delivered at different times within the project lifetime;
  - The extent to which Wirral Waters will grow its own market to reflect changing population profiles and expectations of higher density living;
  - Building upon the Social and Community Infrastructure Audit to identify what community facilities are required to make Wirral Waters an attractive and successful residential location;
  - How the development can meet local needs for market and special types of housing; and
  - Following some degree of maturity, measures for long term monitoring and review of affordable and special needs housing requirements on the site.
- 3.11 Such issues will be considered through detailed and regular assessments undertaken by both the public sector, such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other aspects of the LDF, and also by Peel Holdings through supporting information accompanying future detailed planning applications.
- 3.12 Future assessment work is also likely to include information on development viability and the circumstances that affect the range and type of housing and economic development and project infrastructure that can be successfully delivered at particular stages. This will be particularly relevant during the early phases of the development as the economy recovers from recession and the local market is shaped and strengthened by Wirral Waters. It will also have a bearing on the need and provision of Affordable Housing.

### The Challenge of Turning Aspirations into Reality

- 3.13 Section 2 sets out the wider sustainability benefits that arise from bringing the quality of place and lifestyle offer of West Wirral to Wirral Waters. The development can also be marketed as a differentiated market offer that is neither suburban nor inner city/city centre, but a new 21st century exemplar offer. Through the full package

of supporting community infrastructure and facets of a sustainable community, as presented across the Guiding Principles documents, it is intended that investors and residents will commit to Wirral Waters as a lifestyle choice. It will develop a unique, niche community, and eventually a national and international profile.

- 3.14 Although the sustainability benefits and the identified strengths and opportunities place Wirral Waters in a strong, long term, strategic position, the market challenge was evident from the start. The initial launch took place in 2006, but Wirral Waters remains at the start of a very long process of delivery. Most comparable examples spend several years in the planning, design and branding phases before any significant change is delivered on the ground. Gathering sufficient momentum to achieve critical mass of development is essential.
- 3.15 It is also acknowledged that the housing market in the area is presently limited. Indeed, the very existence of the HMRI reflects this fact. It is an unproven location for high quality new housing and the market will need to be created slowly over time.
- 3.16 Notwithstanding the challenges identified, Wirral Waters presents an opportunity to provide for a range of housing market needs and demands. Using its scale/mass, design quality/place-making and the creation of new sustainable quarters, it can provide for low, mid and upper market lifestyles and housing products to a range of demographic audiences. This can be achieved in an accessible location close to Wirral's considerable environmental assets as well as the main employment, amenities and services and opportunities available in the core of the City Region and those that will be provided within the project.
- 3.17 The design and place-making opportunities of Wirral Waters will need to be maximised to make it truly distinct. Utilising 'best in class' architects and urban designers, this can be achieved in an accessible location, at a site with the assets of the dock system and those of the City Region and broader Wirral peninsula. Creating the environment to attract large, economic drivers whilst also tapping into the main employment, amenity and service provision for the city centre and surrounding core of the City Region, is essential to create a new, sustainable residential market.

### The Importance of Early Phases

- 3.18 The residential conversion of the Grain Warehouses demonstrates both the potential and some of the challenges to introducing new residential development into the area. Although the scheme has been successfully completed to date, the values that have been achieved by that development, relative to other inner urban regeneration projects in the North West (even prior to the recession), have been modest, reflecting the general position of the local inner Wirral market. It is clear that project viability will be a significant challenge for early phases of development at Wirral Waters whilst the market is grown. This was recognised by Peel at the inception of the project.
- 3.19 It is likely that when it is viable to progress with the first phases of residential development at Northbank East, the housing offer will be efficiently designed and low cost, yet comparatively high in quality.
- 3.20 Although employment, services and other facilities are available in the wider City Region, the success of the housing development at Wirral Waters will be dependent upon the provision of supporting infrastructure and the complementary facilities.
- 3.21 Early stages are likely to focus on 'urban pioneers'. These groups traditionally comprise mainly footloose singles and couples, particularly young professionals working in or around city centres. However, there will need to be a focus on achieving as broad a demographic profile as possible through the pioneering residents to ensure that the project is seen as an emerging mixed community to attract other groups such as families and older people.
- 3.22 The initial proposals for Northbank East, the first residential project of Wirral Waters, are innovative in design and include a number of units suitable for occupation by families and will be targeted as such. The proposals also include private outdoor amenity space. To achieve the aim for a mixed community, there will be a need to maintain the focus on place-making and partnership working. There will also need to be a significant marketing exercise to help communicate the vision to the potential market and address the cultural mindset and perceived barriers to family living in high-density, accommodation.

## Quality, Diversity, Types and Tenures – getting the blend right

- 3.23 As the housing offer at Wirral Waters evolves and grows over time, it will provide a greater diversity of housing types/formats, tenures and specifications. All of this activity will assist in creating a 'place of many places' and opportunities for all. The need to provide for different groups, and in particular to create an environment and product suitable for families and older people, will be embedded within the design process.
- 3.24 Standards will be adopted through masterplanning to ensure that high quality, sustainable places to live will be created. This will include design guidance/coding and commitment to accepted standards such as the "Code for Sustainable Homes" and "Building for Life" criteria. Flexibility to changing market and demographic demands will need to be built into the residential space and supporting infrastructure, such that Wirral Waters can adapt with the changing demands and needs of society over its lifetime.
- 3.25 It is appropriate that a rational approach is taken to affordable housing for Wirral Waters. The creation of a successful mixed community within the docklands will need to benefit surrounding areas through both economic regeneration 'spin-off' effects, such as improving the ability to access jobs and quality housing, and also stimulating local housing market to deliver increased levels of different types of housing. Over time this will help provide for the needs of those on low incomes, and those requiring other special forms of housing.
- 3.26 The balancing of competing priorities is appropriately managed through the planning system. It is intended that the mechanics of different housing types and tenures will be developed through the evidence base and policies of the Wirral Core Strategy and through partnership working between the public sector; particularly Wirral Council, Wirral Partnership Homes, New Heartlands and the Homes and Communities Agency; the local community; and those delivering new private and social housing. This will include Peel Holdings, Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and others.
- 3.27 At present, the market and policy context remain too uncertain to stipulate what might be achieved and when.
- Peel Holdings is in the long term committed to improving affordability through Wirral Waters, with an initial priority emphasis on economic activity. The project will seek to maximise funding opportunities (with public partners and RSL's) and ensure that the right decisions and interventions are made at the right time to best meet local needs.
- 3.28 Given the lengthy timescale of the project, the nature of the affordability challenge will evolve greatly over the lifetime of Wirral Waters. It will, therefore, be appropriate to establish a legal framework for the affordability issues to be properly dealt with at apparent milestones as the project unfolds. This will seek to establish principles for future partnership working, and the detailed assessment of the need, viability and deliverability of affordable housing at Wirral Waters, as phases are built out over the coming years/decades.
- 3.29 As the project progresses, the attraction of major economic investment will allow the quality of the housing offer created at Wirral Waters to increase and diversify, to meet new and evolving demands.
- 3.30 It will also be important to get the blend of economic development and housing right. High value business activity demands a quality of place and lifestyle offer. The provision of high quality residential space, with supporting infrastructure, will reinforce Wirral Waters as a business destination. Precedents confirm that it should be possible to deliver mixed-use buildings and urban blocks incorporating both high value business and residential space, alongside ground floor 'active' uses such as shops and community facilities. Guidance from Design for London in Recommendations for Living at Superdensities (June 2007) provides a useful basis for future masterplanning to achieve this aspiration.
- 3.31 Precedents for the successful delivery of social housing models as part of successful and high quality business locations are rare. This is largely due to business demands for high profile, prestigious and attractive accommodation that generally do not sit easily with traditional models of social housing. This may have particular implications for the location of affordable (social rented or other tenures) housing within the Wirral Waters SRF and further work will be required to investigate the most appropriate and effective means of integrating such housing.
- 3.32 Peel will work with partners, through the design and delivery process, to explore how different types of business and residential space can be made to work together at different spatial scales. This will range from co-location within buildings where there is design, market and operational synergy between uses such as Vittoria Studios; to complementary adjacency within urban blocks and city quarters. In this regard, it is particularly important to recognise that Wirral Waters is more than a waterfront mixed-use development; it comprises the sustainable regeneration of series of diverse neighbourhoods which present different challenges that work to create a functioning and diverse housing market for the delivery of a variety of housing types and tenures.
- 3.33 Different delivery models will also be explored through Wirral Waters. Analysts predict that the housing market will emerge from the recession in a different guise to how it evolved in the period preceding the downturn. There is the opportunity to test other housing models not yet developed to any degree in the UK. An increased emphasis on delivery, through partnership working, is likely to generate previously unthought-of models and solutions. No tenure model or design possibility should be ruled in or out at this stage.
- 3.34 It will be for partnership working and the detailed masterplanning of 'quarters' to determine the range of possibilities, as well as the key principles and the development parameters for the delivery of new housing within a clear and regulated delivery framework.
- 3.35 Wirral Waters offers the opportunity to create interconnected neighbourhoods that provide housing and employment opportunities across a range of innovative models, types and densities, to cater for a broad range of economic and social needs.
- 3.36 The Housing and Communities Working Group will lead the delivery of the housing strategy, led by Peel Holdings and Wirral Council, in partnership with the HCA, HMRI, RSLs and the local community.

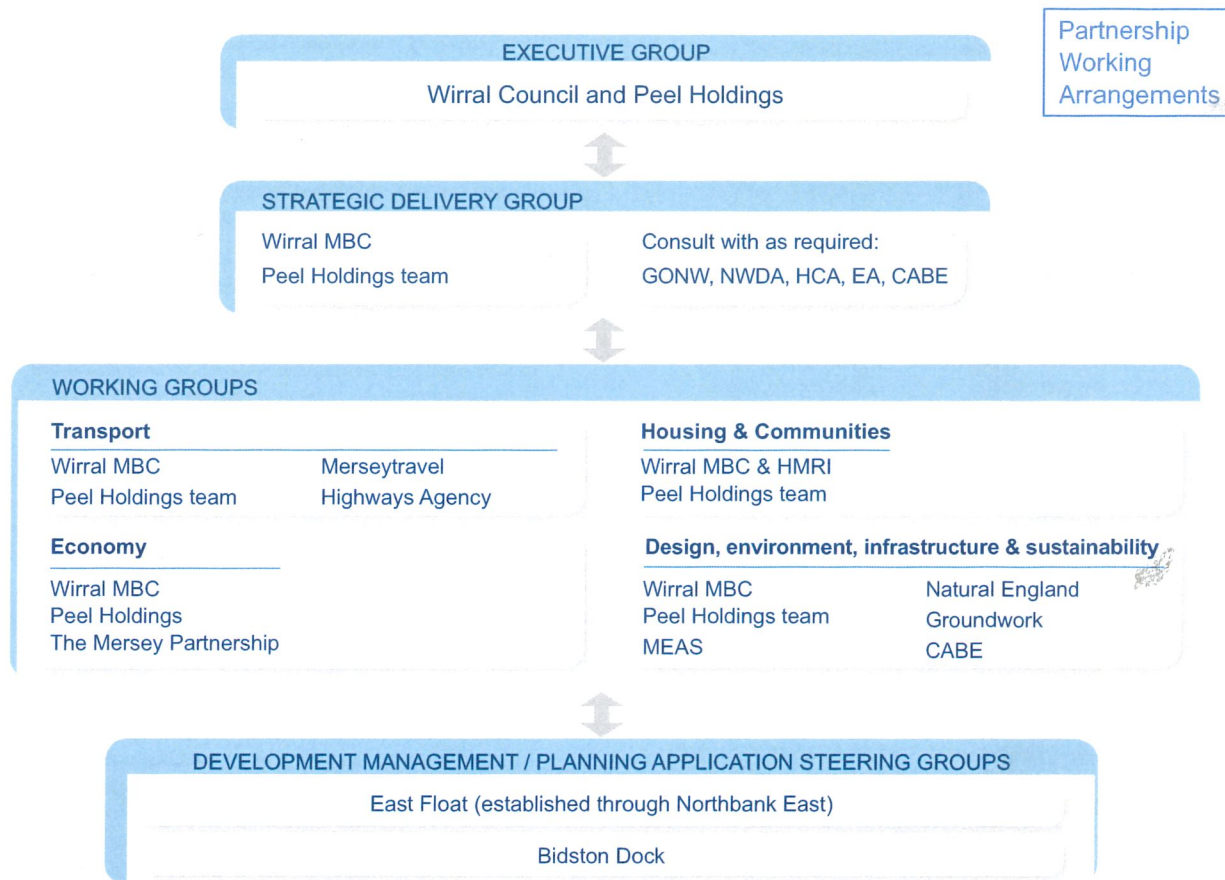
## Towards Delivery: Design-led, and in Partnership

# 04

## Recommendations & Next Steps

4.1 The recommendations and next steps for these Guiding Principles are as follows:

- Consult with Wirral Council, the HMRI team and other stakeholders, via the Housing and Communities Working Group;
- Progress the marketing and branding of Wirral Waters as new sustainable community, drawing on the strengths and opportunities identified by this strategy;
- Continue to research and explore new and emerging models of providing for wide ranging housing needs with high density and high design quality;
- Bring forward early phases of Wirral Waters containing new mixed housing products;
- Bring forward Social and Community Infrastructure (SCI) and other aspects of the Vision and Guiding Principles, to support the creation of a sustainable community.
- Crystallise the 'priorities' and delivery objectives;
- Establish a mechanism for Wirral Waters to assist in addressing the recognised affordable housing issue (progressing via Northbank East);
- Progress further joint-working with Wirral Council, the Home and Communities Agency, Registered Social Landlords and other partners to agree how to make the best use of available public funding resources, to assist in the delivery of a mixed housing offer alongside the wide ranging list of social, environmental and economic priorities for inner Wirral; and
- Wirral Council and Peel Holdings to undertake further housing market assessment work as outlined in section 2.



- 5.1 Peel Holdings and Wirral Council will progress the delivery of the Guiding Principles for Housing and ensure that it is kept up to date and responsive to changing circumstances.
- 5.2 The Housing and Communities Working Group is the primary vehicle for identifying change, to update and refresh the Guiding Principles. It is envisaged that this will take place in response to new information that is published; for example the revised SHMA and other housing market evidence; and in response to changing economic circumstances.
- 5.3 Thereafter, as Wirral Waters goes through a transition from planning to delivery, it will be necessary to carry out 'detailed assessments' of the amount, type and nature of housing being provided. Clearly over the lifetime of Wirral Waters these factors will all change significantly, as influenced by policy and market considerations.
- 5.4 At 'trigger points' to be agreed, there will be a requirement to readdress the affordable housing debate. The principal mechanism for this will be the legal agreements established by the Council as Planning Authority at the time, having previously consulted with the Working Group and a range of partners.
- 5.5 At the discretion of the Working Group recommending to the LPA as decision-maker, the detailed assessment could include some or all of the following:
- an update on the local economy and employment drivers that have been inwardly drawn;
  - an updated assessment of housing need in the local area, taking account of prevailing national/regional/local policy;
  - a review of affordable housing principles;
  - an assessment of the availability of public funding for affordable housing;
  - exploration of evolving affordable housing techniques (on-site, off-site, rented/shared-ownership etc);
  - an economic viability assessment of that particular phase of development; and
  - in light of the above a judgement of the priority to be given to affordable housing against other priority objectives and the ability of the developer to provide for affordable housing.