

Contents

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options - Assessment Report	
1 Introduction	3
2 Spatial Vision	4
3 Spatial Objectives	5
4 Settlement Areas	6
5 Broad Spatial Options	8
6 Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration	9
7 Broad Spatial Option 2 - Balanced Growth	17
8 Broad Spatial Option 3 - Urban Expansion	25
9 Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	33
10 Scale of New Housing Development	39
11 Distribution of Housing	58
12 Phasing Housing	66
13 Order of Preference	72
14 Affordable and Specialist Housing	76
15 Gypsies and Travellers	82
16 Distribution of Employment	86
17 Town Centre Hierarchy	97
18 Distribution of Retailing	102
19 Renewable, Decentralised and Low Carbon Energy	111
20 Better Design	118
21 Development Management	122

Contents

22 Developer Contributions	126
23 Green Infrastructure	131
24 Minerals	141
25 Waste Management	144
26 Strategic Locations	149
27 Document List	154
28 Glossary	159

1 Introduction

1.1 This document sets out additional information about the assessment of the options considered by the Council in arriving at the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

1.2 The information is provided in the same general format as in the Spatial Options Report published by the Council in January 2010⁽¹⁾ but has been updated to include some of the suggestions and comments received in response to consultation and to reflect the changes now made to the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy.

1.3 The options under consideration are each in turn assessed against their likely implications for:

- the fit with national and local policies and initiatives
- the findings of relevant evidence base studies
- the Preferred Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy (reproduced in section 2 below)
- the Preferred Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy (reproduced in section 3 below)
- each of the eight Settlement Areas within the Borough (identified in section 4 below)
- their prospects for delivery
- the need for any additional infrastructure
- the findings of a sustainability appraisal

1.4 This document has been published for public consultation alongside the Preferred Options Report⁽²⁾. Any comments on the content of this assessment will need to be submitted in writing to arrive at the address below **no later than 17.00 hours on Friday 7 January 2011**.

1.5 Please note that the Council will not be able to keep any of the comments you make private and that your name or organisation as well as your comments may need to be recorded in a published report of consultation.

1.6 Copies of this document have also been placed in public libraries and One-Stop-Shops and can be made available in alternative formats on request from the address below.

For further information please contact: Wirral Council, Strategic Development, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED Telephone 0151 691 8206 Fax 0151 691 8188 Email pamconway@wirral.gov.uk

1 Local Development Framework for Wirral Core Strategy Development Plan Document Spatial Options Report (January 2010)
2 Local Development Framework for Wirral Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options Report (November 2010)

2 Spatial Vision

2.1 The initial assessment of policy options for the Core Strategy was undertaken against the Spatial Vision set out in the Spatial Options Report. The assessment in this report has been undertaken against the revised Preferred Spatial Vision contained within the Preferred Options Report which has been amended to take account of the comments of stakeholders:

Preferred Spatial Vision

By April 2027, Wirral will continue to offer a high quality of life, as an attractive place to live an active, productive, safe and healthy lifestyle based on a series of distinct but well-integrated settlements, which will together make a stronger contribution to the prosperity and regeneration of the wider sub-region.

The focus of new development and investment will be on urban regeneration; tackling social, economic and environmental disparity; re-using previously developed land; and on strengthening and enhancing the distinctive assets of the Borough, including the quality and value of the natural environment; supported by a tight Green Belt.

The housing market and housing conditions within the older urban areas in east Wirral will be competing on a more equal footing with outlying residential areas. Large areas of older stock will have been improved and replaced in Birkenhead, Seacombe and Tranmere. A new city neighbourhood will be being established at East Float to create an exemplary, sustainable, mixed-use waterside community, where new homes and a wide range of employment, education, leisure, community and cultural uses will create a new impetus for wider regeneration at the heart of the older urban area, reversing trends in the loss of population, particularly among younger age groups.

The density of jobs and businesses and rates of economic activity will be moving toward regional average levels and vacant land will be being brought back into productive economic use. Sustainable economic regeneration will be being driven by the major economic hubs of Birkenhead, Bromborough and the Ports, with strong transport links to Liverpool, Chester and North Wales, supported by a thriving network of town, district and local service centres and attractive, safe and healthy residential areas within each main Settlement Area.

Wirral's potential as a visitor and tourist destination will be focused on the quality of the Borough's natural environment; built heritage; country parks; and the visitor and coastal facilities at Birkenhead, New Brighton, Leasowe, Hoylake, West Kirby, Thurstaston and along the Mersey coast.

Wirral's rural areas will be providing for an efficient and productive agricultural economy making full and effective use of the Borough's best and most versatile agricultural land, promoting local production and food security.

Development and investment will support and encourage a more sustainable pattern of travel that will reduce emissions; reduce the level of traffic along major routes; improve air quality; increase the use of public transport; and make greater use of alternative forms of transport such as walking and cycling.

There will be a greater emphasis, across all sectors, on securing sustainable approaches to design and construction; energy; water; waste management; carbon impact; local employment and production; and mitigation, adaption and resilience to climate change.

3 Spatial Objectives

3.1 The initial assessment of the policy options for the Core Strategy was undertaken against the Spatial Objectives set out in the Spatial Options Report. The assessment in this report has been undertaken against the revised Preferred Spatial Objectives contained within the Preferred Options Report, which have been amended to take account of the comments of stakeholders and to express the priority to be given to issues related to economic revitalisation; housing growth and housing market renewal; transport accessibility; neighbourhood services; environmental quality; flood risk; and the creation of a new city neighbourhood in east Wirral:

Preferred Spatial Objective 1 - Economic Revitalisation

To focus new employment development and investment within the existing employment areas in the Assisted Areas and existing centres

Preferred Spatial Objective 2 - Housing Growth and Market Renewal

To focus housing development and investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area; the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point; and other vulnerable housing market areas

Preferred Spatial Objective 3 - Transport Accessibility

To direct new development to locations with easy access to existing centres and high frequency public transport corridors

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

Preferred Spatial Objective 4 - Neighbourhood Services

To focus the provision of shops, services, health and community facilities on existing centres which meet the everyday needs of local communities

Preferred Spatial Objective 5 - Environmental Quality

To ensure that development and investment will enhance and improve the locally distinctive characteristics and assets

Preferred Spatial Objective 6 - Flood Risk

To direct new development away from areas that may be liable to flooding

Preferred Spatial Objective 7 - New City Neighbourhood

To establish a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban areas in Birkenhead

4 Settlement Areas

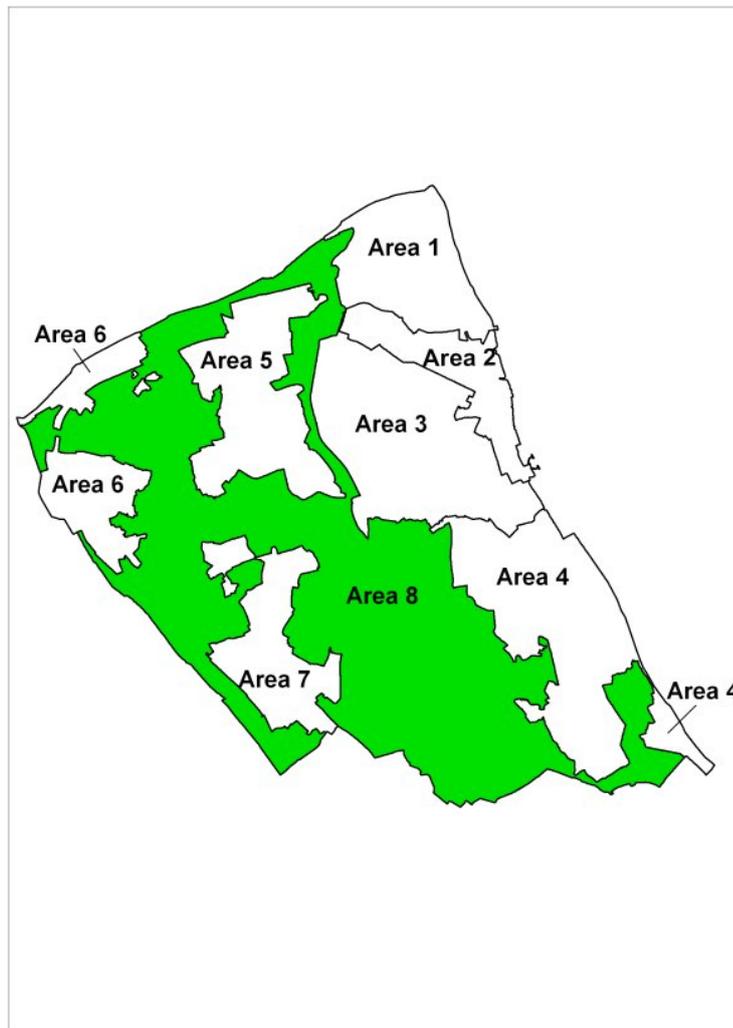
4.1 The Spatial Options Report divided the Borough into eight main Settlement Areas based on the main groups of settlements throughout the Borough. The Preferred Options Report retains this approach.

4.2 The assessment of the policy options in this report sets out the likely implications for each of the following Settlement Areas, as shown on Picture 4.1:

Settlement Area:	Locations Included:
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	New Brighton, Liscard, Egremont, Seacombe, Poulton and Wallasey Village
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	Birkenhead and Wallasey Docklands, Bidston Moss, Valley Road, Birkenhead Town Centre, Hamilton Square, Twelve Quays, Woodside, Hind Street, Monks Ferry and Cammell Lairds

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	Bidston, Beechwood, Claughton, Oxton, Noctorum, Prenton, Mountwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Rock Park
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	New Ferry, Bebington, Port Sunlight, Brookhurst, Raby Mere, Poulton Spital and Bromborough Pool
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Woodchurch and Greasby
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Meols, Newton and Caldy, Birchcroft Road/Rycroft Road and Barn Hey Crescent.
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	Gayton, Pensby, Thingwall and Irby
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Areas	Clatterbridge Hospital, Thornton Hough, Raby, Barnston, Brimstage, Storeton, Landican, Thurstaston, Frankby, Saughall Massie, North Wirral Coastal Plain, M53 Corridor, Eastham.



Picture 4.1

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

5 Broad Spatial Options

5.1 The Council consulted on three Broad Spatial Options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration;
- Broad Spatial Option 2 - Balanced Growth; and
- Broad Spatial Option 3 - Urban Expansion.

5.2 The Council initially indicated that Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration was likely to be Council's Preferred Broad Spatial Option.

5.3 Public consultation showed that the majority of respondents did not believe that another Broad Spatial Option needed to be considered. Those who did, mainly suggested a hybrid of the existing Options, linked to the promotion of elements of Broad Spatial Option 3; and a more strongly transport-orientated approach to the release of development sites.

5.4 There was support for key elements like Strategic Regional Sites to be retained whatever Broad Spatial Option was pursued and an additional Tourism Regeneration Focus was requested for Birkenhead.

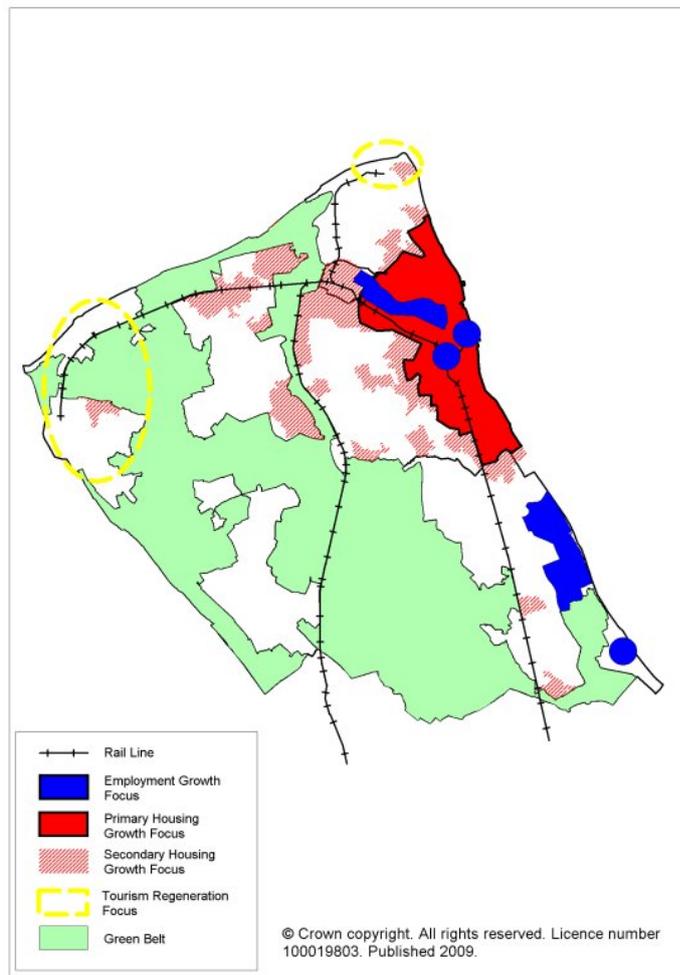
5.5 A number of comments were directed towards the development proposals emerging within the Birkenhead Dock Estate, at Wirral Waters. A small number of respondents, while supportive of regeneration, believed that the scale of the proposals could have too great an impact on the surrounding areas, including areas outside Wirral. Others did not believe it could be delivered in the current economic climate.

5.6 Three planning applications have now been recommended for approval at Wirral Waters subject to Section 106 Agreements and notification to the Secretary of State. The applications provide for up to 15,000 residential dwellings and over 600,000 square metres of commercial, office, leisure and retail floorspace.

5.7 In finalising the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy, the Council has considered the comments received on the Spatial Options Report and has re-assessed the implications of the initial three Broad Spatial Options against the Preferred Spatial Vision and the Preferred Spatial Objectives. The revised assessment of the initial three Broad Spatial Options, followed by the rationale for the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy is, therefore, now set out below:

6 Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration

6.1 The first Broad Spatial Option, illustrated on Picture 6.1 below, is to maintain a very strong focus on growth and development within the older inner urban areas of east Wirral and other areas which are in the greatest need of social, economic and environmental regeneration.



Picture 6.1

6.2 The area identified as the Primary Housing Growth Focus is the boundary to the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point which was also used to define the RSS Inner Area of the Liverpool City Region for the purposes of the former Regional Spatial Strategy.

6.3 The areas identified as the Secondary Housing Growth Focus are equivalent to the areas with the greatest social, economic and environmental needs identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation for England⁽³⁾.

6.4 The areas identified as the Employment Growth Focus include the Birkenhead Docklands, the areas around Birkenhead Town Centre and Woodside, Wirral International Business Park and the facilities associated with the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal.

6.5 The areas identified as the Tourism Regeneration Focus include the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby.

Results of Consultation

6.6 Public consultation on the Spatial Options Report showed only limited support for Broad Spatial Option 1.

6.7 Positively, respondents believed that Broad Spatial Option 1 would support regeneration; maximise the benefits of major urban re-development opportunities; make the best use of re-development land; focus development into areas most in need; prevent pressure for development in other areas of the Borough; and protect the Green Belt.

6.8 Negatively, respondents believed that Broad Spatial Option 1 would fail to provide a clear planning framework for the Borough as a whole; fail to deliver the necessary level of jobs, growth and investment; provide too narrow and inflexible a strategy; put pressure on areas already experiencing a shortfall in green infrastructure; and place too much reliance on a small number of partners and a single major development. It was also felt that Broad Spatial Option 1 would ignore decline in other areas elsewhere; affect the re-use of vacant previously developed land outside the priority areas; and limit scope for local employment elsewhere. Some respondents considered that was not an appropriate strategy given the prevailing economic circumstances and would do little to encourage business growth, investment or wealth creation across the Borough as a whole. The impact of continued housing restraint on population movements and the ability to deliver affordable housing were also highlighted.

6.9 One respondent considered that the Golf Resort had no place under Broad Spatial Option 1, as it would conflict with statements relating to the protection of the open countryside and the prioritisation of previously developed land⁽⁴⁾.

3 defined as localities falling within the lowest scoring 20% in England

4 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the accompanying Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010).

Summary of Spatial Implications

6.10 Broad Spatial Option 1 would seek to focus growth and new development, almost exclusively, into identified regeneration priority areas, including the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and other areas outside the Pathfinder that demonstrate the highest levels of need, including areas like parts of Bidston, Leasowe and Woodchurch, which are shown shaded on Picture 6.1.

6.11 This priority would apply to all forms of development, including housing, retail, employment and services. Outside the regeneration priority areas, the emphasis would be on restraining growth, maintaining existing patterns of provision, replacing existing facilities and providing for identified local needs, unless specific strategic opportunities could be identified, such as the Wirral International Business Park, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Hoylake Golf Resort. Previously undeveloped greenfield sites would not be developed until previously developed brownfield opportunities had been taken up and the Green Belt would be retained unaltered.

6.12 The main focus for new development would be on previously developed brownfield sites in older urban areas like Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside, Hind Street and Cammell Lairds, the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters. Housing and employment densities in these areas would be medium to high to make the most efficient use of land, investment and infrastructure and to deliver the scale of transformation necessary to support a self-sustaining programme of regeneration.

6.13 Housing growth would focus on the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and on the delivery of housing market renewal within the Newheartlands Pathfinder. Outside these areas, new housing would only focus on providing for identified local needs.

6.14 Employment growth and economic revitalisation would focus on the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead, including Wirral Waters and Wirral International Business Park and on Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside, Hind Street and Cammell Lairds. Existing employment sites outside these areas would, however, continue to be protected for employment uses to maintain an appropriate choice and distribution of employment opportunities and to minimise the need to travel.

6.15 Retail growth would be directed to Birkenhead Town Centre and/or Wirral Waters. Local centres within identified regeneration priority areas would be strengthened and enhanced as part of wider regeneration programmes. The vitality and viability of other centres across the Borough could continue to be supported by new investment to meet identified local needs but would not be promoted for major new development.

Policy Fit

6.16 Broad Spatial Option 1 would largely represent a continuation of the recent public policy emphasis on targeted growth and regeneration and the objectives of the existing Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development to focus the delivery of new housing and investment within the identified regeneration priority areas to meet established priorities.

6.17 When the Spatial Options Report was published, Broad Spatial Option 1 would have strongly supported the spatial principles of the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy, which included an emphasis on development within the Inner Areas of the Liverpool City Region⁽⁵⁾, where the priority was to secure a significant increase in population and support major regeneration. While Broad Spatial Option 1 would also have supported wider housing market restructuring, it would not have directly supported the wider focus on expanding the choice of housing in the Outer Area of the City Region⁽⁶⁾.

6.18 Broad Spatial Option 1 would, however, still be broadly consistent with retaining the restrictions contained within the Council's existing Interim Planning Policy, even though the restrictions under Broad Spatial Option 1 would apply to a slightly smaller area.

6.19 The pattern and density of growth encouraged under Broad Spatial Option 1, concentrated in the most accessible areas of the Borough, could support a reduction in the need to travel by car and help tackle climate change by minimising carbon emissions. Broad Spatial Option 1 would also support the re-development of previously developed brownfield land; preserve the character of outlying areas; maintain the Green Belt boundary; and ensure the continued protection of the open countryside and undeveloped coastline.

Evidence Base

6.20 A series of studies and datasets related to social, economic and environmental conditions underline the need for regeneration in the inner urban areas in east Wirral and have identified the potential of these areas to accommodate high levels of development for homes, jobs and services. The capacity of other regeneration priority areas, outside the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, is more limited but would still be able to make a significant contribution, widening the choice of site and location.

6.21 The Wirral Economic Regeneration and Investment Framework and the Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework, now part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, include a comprehensive baseline assessment of the social, economic and environmental conditions within the area. The Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010) goes further, stressing the need to improve the overall sense of connectivity through Birkenhead; improve the quality of key areas

5 in Wirral, defined by the boundary to the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area

6 in Wirral, the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway

of public realm; and develop a land use structure that can guide development in a way that will help to improve the ‘intactness’ and coherence of Birkenhead’s urban structure.

6.22 The Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment demonstrates an overall potential capacity of over 22,000 dwellings, with over 16,400 within the Newheatlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point of which over 13,700 would be located in Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core.

6.23 The latest schedule of employment land shows over 120 hectares of development land available within the two Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Wirral International Business Park and a further 40 hectares within the remainder of the former RSS Inner Area, including Wirral Waters.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

6.24 Broad Spatial Option 1 would deliver the elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to the social, economic and environmental regeneration of east Wirral. It would, however, provide less support for elements suggesting improvements in areas falling outside the regeneration priority areas.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

6.25 The likely implications of Broad Spatial Option 1 for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Focused Regeneration
Economic Revitalisation	Broad Spatial Option 1 would focus economic revitalisation on areas most closely associated with income and employment based deprivation and worklessness within the Assisted Areas and on the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Bromborough but would limit the potential for growth in jobs and investment outside these areas.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Broad Spatial Option 1 would focus housing growth and housing market restructuring within the Newheatlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and other areas of greatest need.
Transport Accessibility	Broad Spatial Option 1 would focus development on some of the most accessible areas of the Borough: in Birkenhead and along the A41 corridor, which are most able to support the increased use of public transport. Higher density mixed-use development within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point could also help to minimise the need to travel. Transport improvements would be needed to support improved accessibility at Wirral Waters.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Focused Regeneration
Neighbourhood Services	Broad Spatial Option 1 would direct the majority of new development to sustainable locations, again, focused on Birkenhead and other areas of greatest need. It would, however, only provide for identified local needs to be addressed in communities outside the regeneration priority areas.
Environmental Quality	Broad Spatial Option 1 would direct the majority of new development to areas where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest but increased growth in Settlement Areas 1, 2 and 3 will still need to be sensitive to existing local character and heritage and may place additional pressure on areas with an existing shortfall of green infrastructure and biodiversity. While the strategy may offer the opportunity to secure additional green infrastructure within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, opportunities to provide for environmental improvements outside the regeneration priority areas would be more limited.
Flood Risk	Additional controls may be needed to prevent flooding from sea level rise over the longer term in some of the regeneration priority areas. A sequential approach will need to be applied to minimise the risk of flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	Broad Spatial Option 1 would support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban areas of Birkenhead by directing the majority of new development of all types to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters.

Implications for Settlement Areas

6.26 Broad Spatial Option 1 is likely to have the following implications for each of the Settlement Areas:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of Focused Regeneration
Area 1 - Wallasey	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to be supported in the southern part of Settlement Area 1, in Poulton, Seacombe and Egremont as well as parts of New Brighton and Liscard, where additional development would address social, economic and environmental needs. Tourist-related development would continue to be focused on New Brighton.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The majority of development, change and growth in the Borough would occur in Settlement Area 2 with the highest levels of housing and employment growth directed to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and Wirral Waters. New retail development would be directed

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of Focused Regeneration
	to Birkenhead and Wirral Waters. Additional pressure on limited biodiversity and green infrastructure and improvements to other local infrastructure would also need to be addressed.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to be supported in the eastern part of Settlement Area 3, around Tranmere and Rock Ferry, as well as in identified areas of need around Bidston and North Birkenhead, where additional development could be permitted to address social, economic and environmental needs.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Settlement Area 4 would still experience continued economic revitalisation and employment growth but would only see limited housing development to meet identified local needs. Wirral International Business Park would be developed to full capacity and port-related facilities would be improved at the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham. The additional regeneration priority areas at New Ferry, Bromborough and Mill Park could also see local improvements.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Settlement Area 5 would see limited development to meet identified local needs except in parts of Leasowe, Moreton and Woodchurch where additional development could be permitted to address social, economic and environmental needs.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Settlement Area 6 could see additional development and investment to enhance the area as a leisure and tourist destination but with only limited housing development to meet identified local needs.
Area 7 - Heswall	Settlement Area 7 would see only limited development to meet identified local needs.
Area 8 - Rural Area	New development would continue to be restricted by national Green Belt controls.

Implications for Delivery

6.27 Broad Spatial Option 1 would be supported by public and private sector funding associated with housing market renewal through the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the delivery of the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Bromborough. The provision of affordable housing would continue to be supported within the regeneration priority areas but the likelihood of additional provision in other areas would be significantly reduced.

6.28 The operation of the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development has demonstrated the potential to deliver high levels of housing ahead of previous regional targets within the identified regeneration priority areas. The background work already undertaken to support the reconfiguration of the Birkenhead Dock Estate at Wirral Waters, development at Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside

and Hind Street, including the designation of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the ongoing commitment of landowners, indicate that high levels of development is likely to be deliverable during the plan period subject to the return of improved market conditions.

6.29 The Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study has merged the existing masterplanning work for Newheartlands, Wirral Waters, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, Woodside and Hind Street with the surrounding neighbourhoods and their associated delivery frameworks, to secure the co-ordinated delivery of the Wirral Investment Strategy aspirations for the older urban areas. A high dependence on sites in these areas could, however, require them to be identified as strategic locations which are essential to the delivery of the Core Strategy and to provide a higher level of certainty.

6.30 The reliance on a smaller number of sites and development partners within a concentrated area may, however, make Broad Spatial Option 1 more vulnerable to delivery problems, for example, from unforeseen delays in the provision of essential infrastructure, challenging market conditions and/or significantly reduced public funding for regeneration.

Implications for Infrastructure

6.31 Previous consultation responses have not indicated any significant obstacles to the delivery of Broad Spatial Option 1, based on the capacity of existing services and infrastructure. The specific infrastructure needs of development at Wirral Waters have already been addressed through the planning application process. Power needs may still need to be addressed at Wirral International Business Park subject to the pace and nature of new development.

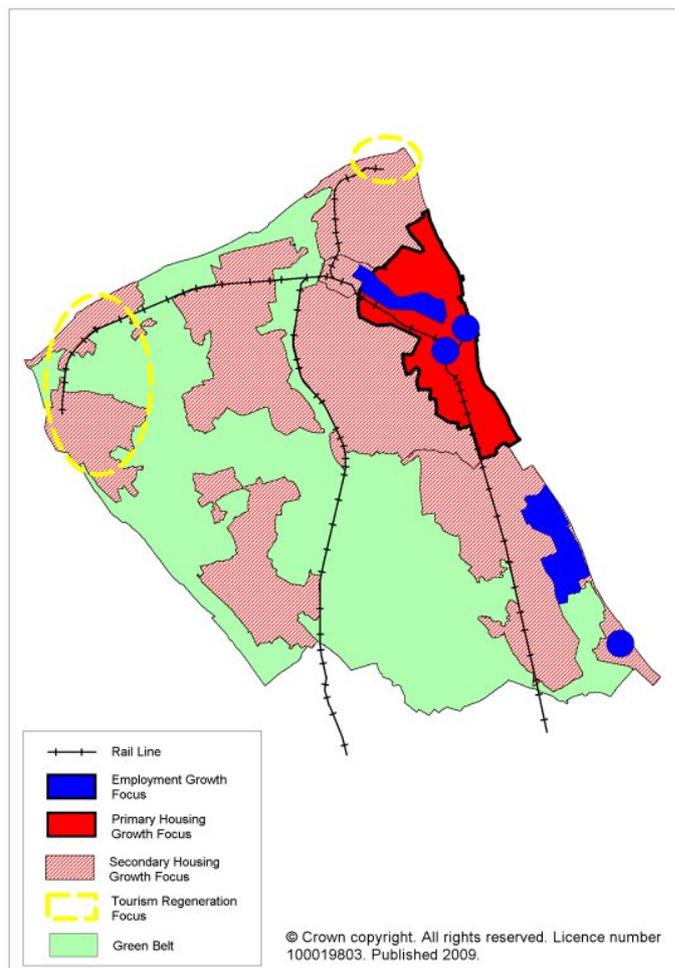
Interim Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Broad Spatial Option 1 generally scores positively, given its focus on urban regeneration. However, over the longer term, there is potential for adverse impacts in terms of the separation of compatible land uses and traffic intrusion in residential areas, as development opportunities become more scarce. It is unclear, with the exception of major development opportunities such as Wirral Waters, whether the likely emphasis on smaller urban windfalls would deliver developments of sufficient scale to enable the incorporation of viable sustainable energy generation. Later on in the plan period, additional consideration may have to be given to sites in areas at risk of flooding, if a supply of sequentially preferable alternatives is not sustained⁽⁷⁾.

7 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

7 Broad Spatial Option 2 - Balanced Growth

7.1 The second Broad Spatial Option, illustrated on Picture 7.1 below, was to continue to maintain an emphasis on development within the the older inner urban areas of east Wirral but to also direct growth more widely across the existing urban areas as a whole. The Green Belt would, however, still be retained unaltered.



Picture 7.1

7.2 The area identified as the Primary Housing Growth Focus is the boundary to the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point which was also used to define the RSS Inner Area of the Liverpool City Region for the purposes of the former Regional Spatial Strategy.

7.3 The areas identified as the Secondary Housing Growth Focus are equivalent to the urban areas falling outside the Green Belt established in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000.

7.4 The areas identified as the Employment Growth Focus include the Birkenhead Docklands, the areas around Birkenhead Town Centre and Woodside, Wirral International Business Park and the facilities associated with the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal.

7.5 The areas identified as the Tourism Regeneration Focus include the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby.

Results of Consultation

7.6 Public consultation indicated broad support for the main elements of Broad Spatial Option 2.

7.7 Positively, Broad Spatial Option 2 was considered to offer a fairer, more realistic, balanced set of priorities, allowing development objectives to be set for other Settlement Areas; existing centres to be maintained and improved; vacant previously developed land to be re-used in areas outside the regeneration priority areas; and the benefits of development to be spread more widely. Respondents also indicated that Broad Spatial Option 2 would provide for a wider uplift of the area; would not prevent other worthwhile development; would better reflect the different markets operating within Wirral; would allow employment to be provided over a wider range of sites; and could be more sustainable, helping to reduce commuting distances.

7.8 Negatively, respondents believed that Broad Spatial Option 2 was less likely to be effective in securing regeneration and could lead to over-development, loss of green space and damage to local character over a wider area of the Borough.

7.9 A couple of respondents favoured Broad Spatial Option 2A, which would only allow growth within the wider urban area to the east of the M53 Motorway, while retaining restraint in the west⁽⁸⁾.

Summary of Spatial Implications

7.10 Broad Spatial Option 2 would still seek to direct growth and investment to regeneration priority areas in east Wirral but would make a greater allowance for supporting development in other urban locations across the Borough. Additional priority could be given to locations close to existing centres or with good access to public transport. This would apply to all forms of development, including housing, retail, employment and services. Previously undeveloped greenfield sites would still not be developed until previously developed brownfield opportunities had been taken up.

7.11 Broad Spatial Option 2 would, however, offer greater flexibility by allowing brownfield sites to be re-developed outside the regeneration priority areas. Although Broad Spatial Option 2 would still seek to make an efficient use of existing urban

8 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

infrastructure, there could be less need to develop at higher densities. A lower scale of development could, however, provide less support for major infrastructure enhancements in the inner urban areas.

7.12 Housing growth could still focus on the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area but a wider range and choice of housing could now also be provided outside the inner urban areas. This could lead to a further intensification of development within the outlying urban areas which, without additional controls, could have a cumulative impact on the character of these areas. This could also reduce the support for a self-sustaining programme of regeneration in the inner urban areas.

7.13 Employment growth and economic revitalisation would still focus on the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead, including Wirral Waters and Wirral International Business Park, Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside, Hind Street, Cammell Lairds and key facilities such as the Manchester Ship Canal but existing employment sites and centres outside these areas could now play a larger role in providing for the Borough's future employment needs.

7.14 Retail growth would, again, continue to be directed to Birkenhead and/or Wirral Waters but other local and district centres could also be considered for new development, which could help to promote their viability and reduce the need to travel.

7.15 A sub-option could direct development only to areas to the east of the M53 Motorway (Broad Spatial Option 2A).

7.16 Broad Spatial Option 2 (and Broad Spatial Option 2A) could support an increased level of development and regeneration in the coastal resorts of Hoykake, West Kirby and New Brighton to further promote key tourism and leisure destinations, including the Hoylake Golf Resort.

Policy Fit

7.17 Broad Spatial Option 2 would essentially be a return to the approach followed by the existing Wirral Unitary Development Plan, before a more focused approach to urban regeneration was introduced by Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, March 2003). The adoption of Broad Spatial Option 2 would also involve moving away from the restrictions set out in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development.

7.18 Most of the elements of Broad Spatial Option 2 would have sat well with the former Regional Spatial Strategy, by supporting regeneration in the Inner Areas of the Liverpool City Region⁽⁹⁾ and by supporting housing market restructuring and a

9 in Wirral, defined by the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area

secondary focus that would expand the choice of housing and maintain and enhance key service centres in the Outer Area⁽¹⁰⁾. Allowing the secondary focus to extend further west would not comply with the former Regional Spatial Strategy⁽¹¹⁾.

7.19 Broad Spatial Option 2 could maximise the potential for the re-development of previously developed urban land and could ensure the continued protection of the open countryside and undeveloped coastline but would need additional controls to preserve the character of outlying urban areas from the impact of higher levels of development.

7.20 Allowing development over a wider area, depending on the type and density of development permitted, could increase the need to travel but could also offer additional flexibility, if progress on regeneration was not delivering the levels of development expected.

Evidence Base

7.21 The evidence base shows that vacant and underused urban land is largely but not exclusively concentrated within the regeneration priority areas in the older urban areas of east Wirral.

7.22 Evidence from the Council's less restrictive Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development, in operation between December 2003 and October 2005, was that new development did not go, as expected, to the most central regeneration priority areas in east Wirral but to outlying areas where housing stock was already attractive. Consultation, at that time, showed a strong resistance to the loss of local character in areas which already had a more strongly performing housing market, through the demolition and redevelopment of larger older properties with higher density infill development.

7.23 Broad Spatial Option 2 would, however, align more strongly with the findings of the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009, which indicates a need to widen the economic contribution of all the Borough's existing centres and employment areas.

7.24 The Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies a potential capacity of up to 5,600 dwellings or approximately 25% of the Borough's potential supply overall falling in areas outside the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

7.25 The latest schedule of employment land shows that up to a third of the Borough's available development land falls outside the two Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Wirral International Business Park and the remainder of the former Regional Spatial Strategy RSS Inner Area, including Wirral Waters.

10 in Wirral, the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway

11 the areas to the west of the M53 Motorway

Implications for the Spatial Vision

7.26 Broad Spatial Option 2 could still deliver the elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to the regeneration of areas most in need of additional population and investment but would also lend more support to elements supporting a wider range of improvements in areas outside the regeneration priority areas.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

7.27 The likely implications of Broad Spatial Option 2 for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Balanced Growth
Economic Revitalisation	Broad Spatial Option 2 would still support economic revitalisation within the Strategic Regional Sites and Assisted Areas but could also provide for economic revitalisation across a wider area of the Borough.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Broad Spatial Option 2 would still focus housing growth and investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, including Wirral Waters, but could distribute housing growth more widely which could slow the delivery of housing market renewal by allowing sites to come forward for development in outlying areas where the market is already strong.
Transport Accessibility	Broad Spatial Option 2 would continue to support development in existing centres and other areas accessible by public transport but in the absence of additional controls could lead to a more dispersed pattern of development which could increase the need to travel, require the provision of additional transport infrastructure and increase the level of traffic and congestion. Transport improvements would still be needed to support improved accessibility at Wirral Waters.
Neighbourhood Services	Broad Spatial Option 2 could support the vitality of other existing centres outside the regeneration priority areas by promoting homes, jobs and services across a wider area of the Borough but in the absence of additional controls could detract from directing investment to where it is needed most.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to ensure that the local distinctiveness and biodiversity of outlying areas would continue to be preserved. Broad Spatial Option 2 could, however, spread the benefits of improvements to green infrastructure over a wider area. Assets associated with the open countryside and undeveloped coastline would continue to be protected by national Green Belt controls.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Balanced Growth
Flood Risk	Additional controls, including sustainable urban drainage, may be required to minimise the risk of flooding across a wider area of the Borough. A sequential approach would need to be applied to the selection of development sites and the capacity of existing water infrastructure may need to be further investigated.
New City Neighbourhood	Broad Spatial Option 2 could provide reduced support for the establishment of a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban area of Birkenhead by allowing a larger proportion of development of all types across a wider area.

Implications for Settlement Areas

7.28 Broad Spatial Option 2 is likely to have the following implications for each of the Settlement Areas:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of Balanced Growth
Area 1 - Wallasey	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to be supported in the southern parts of Settlement Area 1 in Poulton, Seacombe and Egremont but moderate levels of development of all types would also be permitted throughout the remaining urban areas, in addition to the coastal resort of New Brighton.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	Broad Spatial Option 2 would continue to support regeneration in Settlement Area 2, with the highest levels of housing and employment growth directed to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and Wirral Waters. New retail development would be directed to Birkenhead and Wirral Waters. Additional pressure on limited biodiversity and green infrastructure and improvements to other local infrastructure would also need to be addressed.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to occur in the eastern part of Settlement Area 3 around Tranmere and Rock Ferry as well as in identified areas of need around Bidston and north Birkenhead but moderate levels of development of all types would also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Settlement Area 4 would continue to experience continued economic revitalisation and employment growth. The additional regeneration priority areas at New Ferry, Bromborough and Mill Park could also continue to see local improvements but moderate levels of development of all types would also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area. Wirral International Business Park would be developed to full capacity and port-related facilities would be improved at the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of Balanced Growth
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Moderate levels of development of all types would be permitted throughout the urban area. The employment areas at Moreton and Upton could be further promoted to make a stronger contribution to economic revitalisation.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Development and investment to enhance the area as a leisure and tourist destination would continue to be supported but moderate levels of development of all types would also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area.
Area 7 - Heswall	Moderate levels of development of all types would be permitted throughout the urban area.
Area 8 - Rural Area	New development would continue to be restricted by national Green Belt controls.

Implications for Delivery

7.29 The delivery of additional urban sites is likely to be supported by the market as existing policies have restricted new housing development to the west of the M53 Motorway since December 2003 and outside the regeneration priority areas to the east of the M53 Motorway since October 2005. The restrictions on the use of garden land introduced by the new Coalition Government may, however, place an additional limit on the capacity of the outlying urban areas⁽¹²⁾.

7.30 The delivery of additional employment development across a wider area may still be dependent on the pattern of grant aid and other support.

7.31 Allowing development to take place in a larger number of locations involving a wider range of development interests may make Broad Spatial Option 2 less vulnerable to problems with delivery but could also reduce the scale and pace of regeneration and the re-use of previously developed sites within the identified regeneration priority areas. Broad Spatial Option 2 could, however, also serve to secure additional improvements to local infrastructure and services across a wider area and increase the amount and distribution of affordable housing provided as part of new developments.

7.32 Careful monitoring of housing delivery would be required to support housing market renewal within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point to ensure that targets for delivery continue to be met before other land is released for development. Maintaining the focus on housing growth within the Growth Point could still require sites within these areas to be identified as strategic locations which are essential to the delivery of the Core Strategy.

12 garden land is now considered to be previously undeveloped greenfield land

Implications for Infrastructure

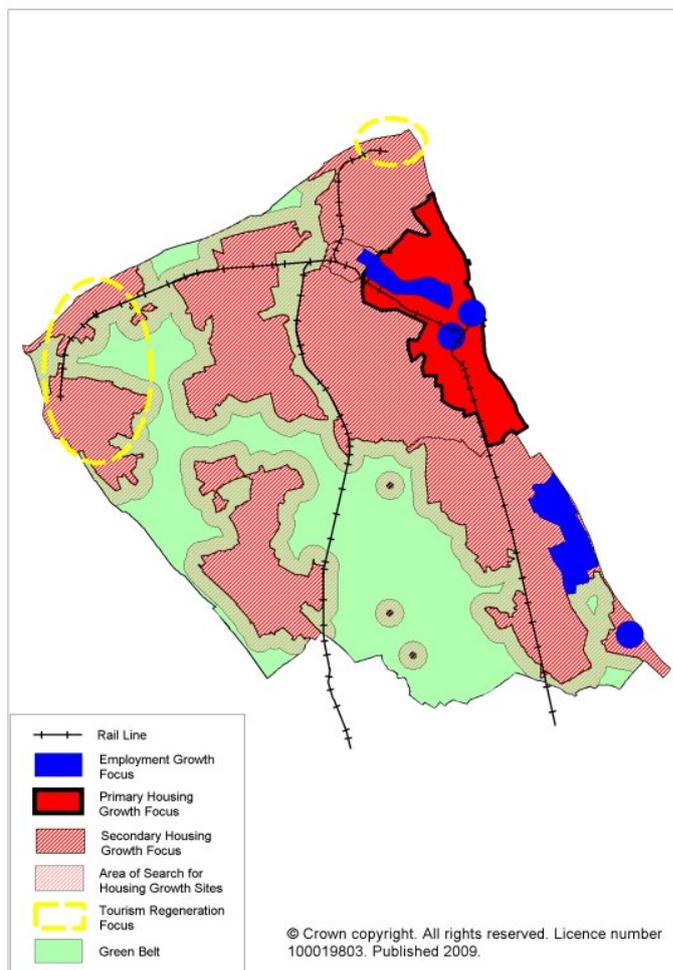
7.33 Previous consultation responses have not indicated any significant obstacles to the delivery of Broad Spatial Option 2 based on the capacity of existing services and infrastructure, although supporting development over a wider area may have implications for water and public transport infrastructure. The specific infrastructure needs of development at Wirral Waters have already been addressed through the planning application process. Power needs may still need to be addressed at Wirral International Business Park subject to the pace and nature of new development.

Interim Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Broad Spatial Option 2, again, generally scores positively, given the focus on development in the existing urban area, although scores less well than Broad Spatial Option 1 against issues such as tackling deprivation and support for housing market renewal. As with Broad Spatial Option 1, over the longer term there is potential for adverse impacts in terms of the separation of compatible land uses and traffic intrusion in residential areas, as development opportunities become more scarce. It is unclear, with the exception of major development opportunities such as Wirral Waters, whether the likely emphasis on smaller windfalls could deliver developments of sufficient scale to enable the incorporation of viable sustainable energy generation. Later on in the plan period additional consideration may have to be given to sites in areas at risk of flooding, if a supply of sequentially preferable alternatives is not sustained⁽¹³⁾.

8 Broad Spatial Option 3 - Urban Expansion

8.1 The third Broad Spatial Option, illustrated on Picture 8.1 below, was to pursue a strategy of urban expansion. A strategy of this nature has not been pursued in Wirral since the 1960s and 1970s and has been specifically discounted in Development Plans since the Merseyside Structure Plan was adopted in 1980.



Picture 8.1

8.2 The area identified as the Primary Housing Growth Focus is the boundary to the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point which was also used to define the Inner Area of the Liverpool City Region for the purposes of the former Regional Spatial Strategy.

8.3 The areas identified as the Secondary Housing Growth Focus are equivalent to the urban areas falling outside the Green Belt established in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000.

8.4 The areas identified as Areas of Search for Housing Growth Sites are equivalent to areas within 400 meters of the existing urban edge.

8.5 The areas identified as the Employment Growth Focus include the Birkenhead Docklands, the areas around Birkenhead Town Centre and Woodside, Wirral International Business Park and the facilities associated with the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal.

8.6 The areas identified as the Tourism Regeneration Focus include the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby.

8.7 Although Broad Spatial Option 3 was likely to be the least consistent with the Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy, the Spatial Options Report indicated that some elements might have needed to be considered, at least towards the end of the plan period, if the Council was unable to demonstrate that a long term supply of suitable and deliverable sites was likely to be available within the existing urban area to 2031.

Results of Consultation

8.8 Public consultation on the Spatial Options Report indicated very little support for Broad Spatial Option 3.

8.9 Almost all respondents opposed development in the Green Belt outside the existing urban area, believing that this would be contrary to higher level policies; would undermine regeneration; would harm the natural environment, wildlife, heritage, character, identity and distinctiveness of the Borough, making Wirral a less attractive place; and that it would lead to the loss of productive agricultural land at a time when local production was becoming more important.

8.10 The small number of respondents who supported Broad Spatial Option 3, usually had a particular development site in mind. These respondents argued that even Broad Spatial Option 2 would be unable to provide the range of sites needed and that limited urban expansion could deliver sustainable, accessible sites without cost to the public purse.

8.11 A couple of respondents indicated that Picture 8.1 had over-stated the likely impact on the Green Belt and that the majority of new development would not need to be on urban expansion sites, even if Broad Spatial Option 3 was preferred⁽¹⁴⁾.

Summary of Spatial Implications

8.12 Broad Spatial Option 3 would involve actively permitting some development to take place outside the existing urban areas on land currently within the Green Belt. Priority would be given to the most sustainable locations that could best integrate with existing infrastructure and services such as public transport and existing centres;

14 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

would have the least impact on existing settlement patterns; and would continue to protect areas of environmental importance. The precise amount of land involved would need to reflect any potential shortfall in delivery from within the urban areas.

8.13 Housing growth could still focus, in the first instance, on the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point but a wider range and choice of housing could also be provided elsewhere. Under Broad Spatial Option 3, this may not necessarily lead to a further intensification of development within the outlying urban areas but, without additional controls, could still reduce the support for a self-sustaining programme of regeneration in the inner urban areas. Outside the regeneration priority areas, the character of areas where greenfield sites were being identified for development would take the brunt of any future changes.

8.14 Existing employment sites and centres outside the inner urban areas could still play a larger role in providing for the Borough's future employment needs alongside the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Wirral International Business Park but an additional greenfield site (or sites) could also be accommodated to provide additional capacity as the remaining land supply within the International Business Park reduced⁽¹⁵⁾.

8.15 Retail growth could continue to be directed to Birkenhead and/or Wirral Waters but other district and local centres could also be considered for new development, which could even include new purpose built centres and facilities to serve any major new areas of housing.

8.16 A sub-option could only direct growth to areas to the east of the M53 Motorway, which would have a reduced impact on areas in the west (Broad Spatial Option 3A).

8.17 Broad Spatial Option 3 (and Broad Spatial Option 3A) could continue to support regeneration and development in the coastal resorts of Hoylake, West Kirby and New Brighton to promote key tourism and leisure destinations, including the Hoylake Golf Resort and may also provide the opportunity to allow additional development to strengthen the viability of tourism and leisure projects.

Policy Fit

8.18 The new Coalition Government has committed itself to maintaining the Green Belt.

8.19 The former Regional Spatial Strategy indicated that there was no need for any exceptional substantial change to the Green Belt boundary in Merseyside before 2011, and that after this date the presumption would continue to be against a change to the boundaries. The review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which had also decided not to include a review of the Green Belt has now, however, been abandoned.

15 in line with the findings of the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009

8.20 A strategy of urban expansion would previously have required a strategic review of the Green Belt, which could only have been confirmed through a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy following a formally endorsed sub-regional study.

8.21 A new regionally significant employment site in the Green Belt would have also been contrary to the former Regional Spatial Strategy.

8.22 The current extent of the Green Belt was established in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan in February 2000. The adoption of Broad Spatial Option 3 would also involve a radical departure from the restrictions set out in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development.

8.23 Without additional controls, Broad Spatial Option 3 could reduce the emphasis on the re-use of previously developed brownfield land and could have a major impact on the separation of settlements and the character of the countryside and undeveloped coastline. A more dispersed pattern of development could also increase the need to travel and is likely to require additional supporting infrastructure of all types.

Evidence

8.24 The Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment demonstrates that the supply of land is likely to be sufficient to meet housing requirements under a range of future scenarios without releasing Green Belt land, at least until the end of the plan period when circumstances may, in any case, have markedly changed. The delivery of housing will, however, need to be monitored on an annual basis to ensure that sufficient deliverable housing land is available to meet requirements.

8.25 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 similarly indicates that there may be a longer term need for additional employment land towards the end of the plan period, subject to the densities of development that can be achieved on sites within the existing urban area.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

8.26 Broad Spatial Option 3 shows the least alignment with the Preferred Spatial Vision.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

8.27 The likely implications of Broad Spatial Option 3 for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Urban Expansion
Economic Revitalisation	Broad Spatial Option 3 would still support economic revitalisation within the Strategic Regional Sites and Assisted Areas but could also increase the availability of readily developable greenfield sites.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of Urban Expansion
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Broad Spatial Option 3 could still focus development and investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters but could slow the delivery of housing market renewal and housing growth in the inner areas of the Liverpool City Region by allowing greenfield sites in outlying areas to come forward for development.
Transport Accessibility	Broad Spatial Option 3 could still support development in existing centres and other areas accessible by public transport but in the absence of additional controls could lead to a more dispersed pattern of development which could increase the need to travel, require the provision of additional transport infrastructure and increase the level of traffic and congestion.
Neighbourhood Services	Broad Spatial Option 3 could still support the vitality of other existing centres outside the regeneration priority areas by promoting homes, jobs and services across a wider area of the Borough but in the absence of additional controls could detract from directing investment to where it is needed most and lead to new services being required in alternative locations.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to ensure that the local distinctiveness of outlying areas and the separation of settlements would be preserved. Broad Spatial Option 3 could place increased pressure on green infrastructure and biodiversity at the edge of the existing urban areas but could also spread the benefits of new and improved provision over a wider area to address local deficiencies. Additional controls would be needed to minimise the impact on the natural and semi-natural character and appearance of the countryside and coast.
Flood Risk	Additional controls, including sustainable urban drainage, may be required to minimise the risk of flooding across a wider area of the Borough. A sequential approach would need to be applied to the selection of development sites and the capacity of existing water infrastructure may need to be further investigated.
New City Neighbourhood	Allowing a significant amount of new development across a wider area and on greenfield sites at the urban edge is likely to undermine the establishment of a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the urban area of Birkenhead.

Implications for the Settlement Areas

8.28 Broad Spatial Option 3 is likely to have the following implications for each of the Settlement Areas:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of Urban Expansion
Area 1 - Wallasey	Regeneration could continue to be supported in the southern part of Settlement Area 1 but moderate levels of development could also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area in the most accessible locations, in addition to the coastal resort of New Brighton.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The majority of development and growth in the Borough could still continue to occur in Settlement Area 2, which would experience significant change. The highest levels of housing and employment growth could continue to be directed to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Regeneration could continue to occur in the eastern part of Settlement Area 3 but moderate levels of development could also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area in the most accessible locations.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Settlement Area 4 would continue to experience continued economic revitalisation and employment growth. Moderate levels of development would also be permitted throughout the remaining urban area in the most accessible locations. The release of Green Belt land could be considered towards the eastern and southern edge of the urban area, subject to appropriate environmental controls.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Moderate levels of development would be permitted throughout the urban area in the most accessible locations. The release of Green Belt land could be considered towards the edge of the urban area in areas that would not be subject to flooding or significantly reduce the separation between Settlement Areas.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Development and investment to enhance the Settlement Area as a leisure and tourist destination would continue to be supported. Moderate levels of development would also be permitted throughout the urban area in the most accessible locations. The release of Green Belt land could be considered towards the edge of the urban area in areas that would not be subject to flooding or significantly reduce the separation between Settlement Areas.
Area 7 - Heswall	Moderate levels of development would be permitted throughout the urban area in the most accessible locations. The release of Green Belt land towards the edge of the urban area could be considered in areas that would not significantly reduce the separation between Settlement Areas.
Area 8 - Rural Area	Limited development could be permitted in and around the designated Infill Villages at Storeton, Barnston, Thornton Hough, Raby Village and Eastham, subject to the impact on rural character.

Implications for Delivery

8.29 The arrangements that would be necessary to establish a review of the Green Belt following the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy are still unclear.

8.30 The sites submitted to the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites and the responses to consultation on the Spatial Options Report indicate the willingness of landowners and developers to deliver the greenfield elements of Broad Spatial Option 3.

8.31 Broad Spatial Option 3 could, however, have significant implications for the scale and pace of the delivery of the wider economic, social and environmental benefits associated with regeneration at the heart of the urban area. In the absence of additional controls, it could also have an impact on the scale and pace of regeneration within neighbouring areas outside the Borough.

8.32 A strategy of urban expansion, even late on in the plan period, would require broad locations for potential new development in the Green Belt to be identified in the Core Strategy.

Implications for Infrastructure

8.33 A strategy of urban expansion could lead to significant requirements for additional infrastructure as a number of sites that may be promoted would be remote from services such as public transport, schools and shops. Further information would need to be provided by the relevant utilities undertakers and service operators before Broad Spatial Option 3 could be realistically pursued. The specific infrastructure needs of development at Wirral Waters has been dealt with through the planning application process.

Interim Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Broad Spatial Option 3 generally scores poorly against sustainability objectives, with the exception of issues such as the separation of incompatible land uses and the reduction of exposure to pollution and hazards. Broad Spatial Option 3 has the potential to cause the most harm to sustainability objectives related to protection of the natural environment. Some of the adverse scores in relation to matters such as accessibility would, however, have potential for mitigation through additional infrastructure provided as part of development proposals⁽¹⁶⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

8.34 The Council's revised assessment is that Broad Spatial Option 1 should no longer be the Council's preferred option. Although Broad Spatial Option 1 has the closest fit with the delivery of the Preferred Spatial Vision and the Preferred Spatial Objectives; would offer the strongest support for public investment programmes; maximise the potential social, economic and environmental benefits of major urban re-development opportunities; and is likely to provide the greatest level of protection for the wider environment, it is considered that the overall requirements of the Borough may be better served by maintaining a focus on regeneration whilst permitting some additional development outside the identified regeneration priority areas.

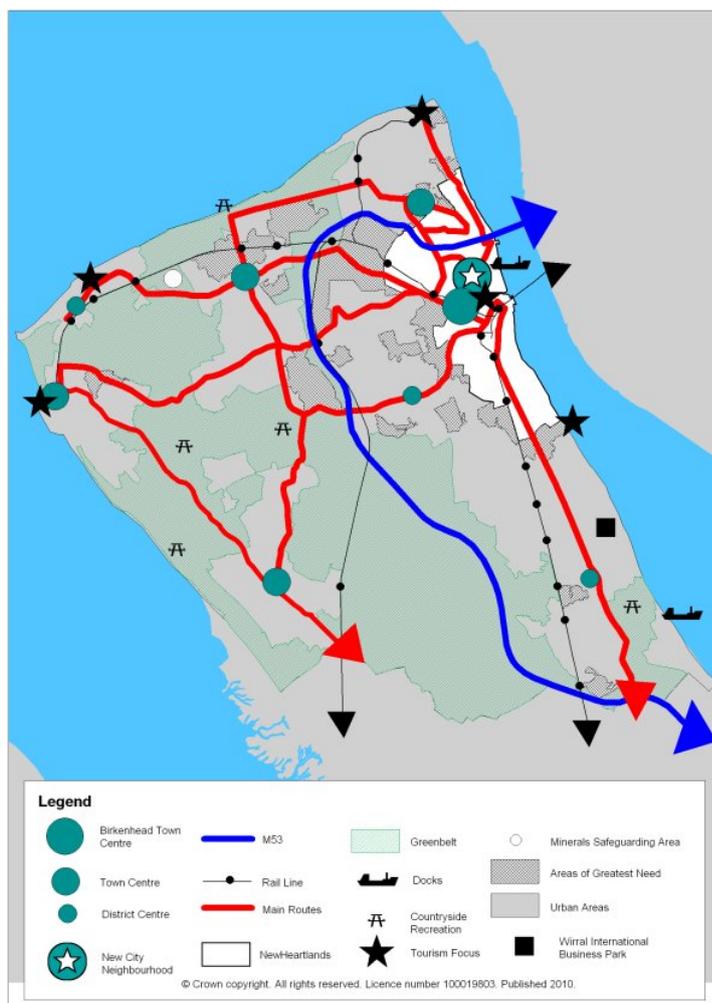
8.35 While Broad Spatial Option 2 could potentially undermine the delivery of housing market renewal and housing growth within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and other regeneration priority areas, the Council nevertheless believes that some of the benefits of Broad Spatial Option 2 should be reconsidered because of the greater flexibility to underpin future delivery and the ability to provide for improvements and revitalisation across a wider area of the Borough. Additional mechanisms would, however, be required to secure the most sustainable pattern of development, to safeguard local distinctiveness and to address the potential for a diluted focus on the delivery of well-established regeneration priorities. Further restrictions would still be needed in west Wirral, if the priorities contained within the former Regional Spatial Strategy were to be continued.

8.36 The Council still does not believe that a strategy of urban expansion would be an appropriate response to the current needs of the Borough and believes that Broad Spatial Option 3 could only be justified as a last resort on the basis that sustainable urban regeneration had already been successfully completed and on the basis that land to meet identified development needs was no longer available within the existing urban areas.

8.37 The Council does not believe that the available evidence indicates that a strategy based on Broad Spatial Option 3 could be justified during the early parts of the plan period and believes that it could also be doubtful towards the end of the plan period, which has now been shortened to 2027, if schemes associated with the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the Strategic Regional Sites are effectively delivered and other opportunities within the urban area are fully exploited.

9 Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy

9.1 The Preferred Broad Spatial Option is illustrated on Picture 9.1 below:



Picture 9.1

Summary of Spatial Implications

9.2 The Council's Preferred Broad Spatial Option is essentially Broad Spatial Option 1 with elements of Broad Spatial Option 2 but with a greater emphasis on transport accessibility and access to local services. As a result, the Preferred Broad Spatial Option seeks to continue to support a strong focus regeneration in east Wirral, while allowing some additional development over a wider area but only in the most sustainable urban locations. Limits on development outside the regeneration priority areas would, therefore, be based more on issues related to the promotion of a more sustainable pattern of development than on blanket restrictions and priority would be given to sustainable locations that could best integrate with existing infrastructure

and services such as public transport and existing centres; would have the least impact on existing settlement patterns; and would continue to protect areas of environmental importance.

9.3 Housing growth would still focus, in the first instance, on the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and other regeneration priority areas⁽¹⁷⁾ but with a secondary focus on sites in and around existing centres and high frequency public transport corridors. Outside these areas development would be required to be small scale, low density and limited to identified local needs.

9.4 Employment growth and economic revitalisation will, again, continue to be focused on the urban areas in east Wirral including the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Wirral International Business Park, Birkenhead Town Centre and other key locations like Hind Street, Cammell Lairds and the Manchester Ship Canal. Existing employment sites outside these areas would, however, also be allowed to play a large role in providing for the Borough's future employment needs to address the general shortage of suitable employment development opportunities across the Borough as a whole.

9.5 Retail growth would continue to be directed to Birkenhead and/or Wirral Waters as a strategic priority but other existing centres could now also be considered for new development, to support their continued vitality and other local improvements to neighbourhood services to reduce the need to travel.

9.6 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would also continue to support tourism regeneration and development in Birkenhead and along the Mersey coast; in the coastal resorts of Hoylake, West Kirby and New Brighton; and to promote key tourism and leisure opportunities including the Royal Liverpool Golf Course and a Hoylake Golf Resort.

Policy Fit

9.7 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would be largely consistent with the existing Wirral Unitary Development Plan, with the exception of a stronger emphasis on prioritising sustainable locations close to existing services, infrastructure and public transport.

9.8 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would, however, move away from the strictly area-based approach set out in the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development, to allow some additional development in the most sustainable urban locations.

17 defined by communities falling within the lowest 20% in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation for England

9.9 The Preferred Broad Spatial Option would continue to prioritise the re-use of previously developed urban land and would maintain the existing Green Belt boundary to secure the continued protection of the open countryside and undeveloped coastline but with additional controls to preserve the character of the outlying urban areas.

9.10 The Preferred Broad Spatial Option would also broadly conform to the priorities set out within the former Regional Spatial Strategy by continuing to provide for regeneration in RSS Inner Area of the Liverpool City Region, while allowing for choice in RSS Outer Area in the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway and support for key service centres across the Borough as a whole.

9.11 Directing growth to locations with good access to public transport and local services would align well with national policies and minimise the need for additional infrastructure and services.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

9.12 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would be closely aligned with the delivery of the Preferred Spatial Vision.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

9.13 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy
Economic Revitalisation	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would still support economic revitalisation within the Strategic Regional Sites and Assisted Areas but could also provide for economic revitalisation across a wider area of the Borough.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would still focus housing growth and investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters and other areas of greatest need.
Transport Accessibility	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would support development in some of the most accessible areas of the Borough. Higher density mixed-use development within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the focus on development in and around existing centres could also help to minimise the need to travel. Transport improvements would still be needed to support improved accessibility at Wirral Waters.
Neighbourhood Services	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy will support the vitality of existing centres by directing the majority of new development to sustainable locations with easy access to local centres.
Environmental Quality	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would direct the majority of new development to areas where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest but could also spread the benefits

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy
	of improvements to green infrastructure over a wider area. Additional controls would be needed to ensure that local distinctiveness, green infrastructure and biodiversity would continue to be preserved. Assets associated with the open countryside and undeveloped coastline would continue to be protected by national Green Belt controls.
Flood Risk	Additional controls, including sustainable urban drainage, may be required to minimise the risk of flooding. A sequential approach would need to be applied to the selection of development sites.
New City Neighbourhood	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would continue to support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban area of Birkenhead.

Implications for the Settlement Areas

9.14 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would have the following implications for each of the Settlement Areas:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy
Area 1 - Wallasey	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to be prioritised in the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area in the southern part of Settlement Area 1 but some development would also be permitted in the most accessible urban locations. Tourist-related development would continue to be focused on New Brighton and along the Mersey Coast. Cross Lane Industrial Estate would continue to be promoted for new employment development.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The majority of development and growth in the Borough would still continue to occur in Settlement Area 2, which would experience significant change. The highest levels of housing and employment growth would continue to be directed to the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Housing regeneration and initiatives to improve local centres would continue to be prioritised in the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area in the northern and eastern parts of the Settlement Area but some development would also be permitted in the most accessible urban locations. The North Cheshire Trading Estate would continue to be promoted for new employment development.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Wirral International Business Park and the factory complex at Port Sunlight would continue to be promoted for new employment development and some development would also be permitted in the most accessible urban locations.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Some development would be permitted in the most accessible urban locations and the employment areas at Moreton and Upton would be promoted to make a stronger contribution to economic revitalisation and employment growth.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Development and investment to enhance the Settlement Area as a leisure and tourist destination would continue to be supported and some development would also be permitted in the most accessible urban locations.
Area 7 - Heswall	Some development would be permitted in the most accessible urban locations.
Area 8 - Rural Area	New development would continue to be restricted by national Green Belt controls.

Implications for Delivery

9.15 The focus on identified regeneration priority areas in the Preferred Broad Spatial Option would be supported by public and private sector funding associated with housing market renewal through the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the delivery of the Strategic Regional Sites.

9.16 The Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study combines the existing masterplanning work for Newheartlands, Wirral Waters, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, Woodside, Hind Street, the surrounding neighbourhoods and their associated delivery frameworks, to secure the co-ordinated delivery of the Wirral Investment Strategy aspirations for the older urban areas.

9.17 The delivery of additional employment development across a wider area may still be dependent on the pattern of grant aid and other support.

9.18 Allowing development to take place in a larger number of locations involving a wider range of development interests will make the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy less vulnerable to problems with delivery and will also provide additional flexibility, if progress on regeneration was not delivering the levels of development expected.

9.19 Maintaining the focus on housing growth within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point will require key sites within the area to be identified as a strategic location which will be essential to the delivery of the Core Strategy.

Implications for Infrastructure

9.20 Previous consultation responses have not indicated any significant obstacles to the delivery of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy based on the capacity of existing services and infrastructure. The specific infrastructure needs of development

at Wirral Waters have already been addressed through the planning application process. Power needs may still need to be addressed at Wirral International Business Park subject to the pace and nature of new development.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy generally scores positively against sustainability objectives, given its focus on urban regeneration within the areas identified as having the greatest social, economic and environmental need. The Preferred Option directs development to previously developed sites within the urban area, which will reduce pressure of development on sensitive areas, therefore having a positive impact on the protection of important habitats and local distinctiveness. It will also create and provide jobs, services and facilities which could assist in the retention of the working age population. However, growth will increase energy consumption which may increase the demand of non-renewable energy resources, place pressure on water resources and lead to increased household and commercial waste. Measures to respond, mitigate and adapt to these demands will therefore need to be implemented⁽¹⁸⁾.

10 Scale of New Housing Development

10.1 Targets for new house building in Wirral were previously contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy issued by the Secretary of State. The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, to return decision making powers on housing and planning to local councils, means that the Council must now re-consult on the scale of housing to be provided across the Borough.

10.2 Options for the scale of new housing development were not consulted on as part of earlier Spatial Options Report and this is, therefore, the first time that they have been presented for public comment.

10.3 Although mentioned in the context of a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which will not now happen, national planning policy indicates that it may be necessary to reassess need and demand in circumstances where market conditions have changed⁽¹⁹⁾.

10.4 The Council has, therefore, considered four main options, to assess the range of provision that may be needed:

- Policy Option PO1 - a policy based option based on the figures advised by the Government as a starting point for future discussions
- Policy Option PO2 - a housing needs option based on the Council's latest assessment of local housing needs
- Policy Option PO3 - a land capacity option based on the amount of land that is actually likely to be available for development
- Policy Option PO4 - a market delivery model based on general assumptions about the number of homes that could be provided if and when the market recovers from the recent downturn

10.5 The implications of each of these Policy Options is considered in turn below. The numbers presented for each Settlement Area are, at this stage, indicative only and should not be taken as final policy numbers.

Policy Option PO1 - Policy Model

10.6 The Conservative Party pre-Election Green Paper advised that 'Option 1' numbers should be used by local authorities as the baseline for the projections provided to neighbourhoods at the start of the collaborative planning process and as provisional numbers in Local Development Frameworks, once Regional Strategies had been revoked⁽²⁰⁾. The 'Option 1' figure for Wirral is a net annual average of 250

19 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3, CLG, June 2010, paragraph 66)

20 Open Source Planning (Conservative Policy Green Paper No 14, February 2010)

additional dwellings, which equated to a *maximum* housing requirement of 4,500 net additional dwellings between 2003 and 2021⁽²¹⁾. The figure includes affordable housing and allowed for a Borough wide vacancy rate of 3 per cent.

10.7 The figure was subsequently raised to a *minimum* requirement of 500 net additional dwellings in the now revoked North West of England Plan to 2021.

10.8 Policy Option PO1 applies the 'Option 1' figure for Wirral from the beginning of the plan period in April 2012. The likely impact on each Settlement Area has been assessed by dividing the total requirement by the proportion of land likely to be available for housing by April 2012 based on the capacity identified in the Council's latest land availability assessment⁽²²⁾. The figures take account of past and expected performance from April 2008 to March 2012 and the calculations are shown on Table 10.2 below.

10.9 The figures in Table 10.2 are net additional dwellings and do not take account of projected demolitions, currently estimated at 133 each year from 2012 onwards, which could raise the annual requirement under Policy Option PO1 to up to 380 dwellings gross, subject to the continued availability of public funding for market restructuring and estate re-modelling⁽²³⁾.

10.10 The pattern and scale of previous demolitions are shown in Table 10.1 below:

Settlement Area	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Area 1 - Wallasey	7	22	1	20	74	32	31	187
Area 2 - Commercial Core	34	57	91	40	5	1	0	228
Area 3 - Birkenhead	158	313	169	126	131	205	64	1166
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	0	2	5	4	7	0	2	20
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	3	17	3	11	3	2	3	42
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	5	4	2	2	4	0	0	17
Area 7 - Heswall	4	4	6	7	3	1	29	54
Area 8 - Rural Area	1	0	0	5	3	1	2	12
Total	212	419	277	215	230	242	131	1726

Table 10.1 Past Demolitions

10.11 Table 10.3 shows an additional option so that the impact of the large scale proposals at Wirral Waters within the Birkenhead Dock Estate in Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core can be identified. No additional demolitions would be needed to support the development at Wirral Waters.

21 Option 1 Housing Numbers (4NW, July 2010)

22 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, July 2010)

23 Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (2009)

Settlement Area	SHLAA Capacity (April 2008) ⁽²⁴⁾	2008/09 (gross actual)	2009/10 (gross actual)	2010/11 (gross assumed) ⁽²⁵⁾	2011/12 (gross assumed) ⁽²⁶⁾	SHLAA Residual (April 2012)	% of Residual	Implied Annual Target (net)	Implied Plan Target April 2012 to March 2027 (net)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	902	62	66	69	69	636	3%	8	129
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	13,652	92	34	36	36	13,455	73%	182	2,724
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	2,411	295	92	96	96	1,831	10%	25	371
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	2,142	73	65	68	68	1,868	10%	25	378
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	491	20	78	82	82	230	1%	3	47
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	178	43	0	0	0	135	1%	2	27
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	127	7	2	2	2	114	1%	2	23
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	269	7	3	3	3	253	1%	3	51
TOTAL	20,172	599	340	356	356	18,522	100%	250	3,750

Table 10.2 Policy Option PO1A - Including Wirral Waters

26 assuming that the scale and pattern of gross completions and demolitions will be the same as in 2010/11

25 including estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement at 160 net plus programmed demolitions for 2010/11 at 196 assuming the pattern of gross completions will be the same as in 2009/10

24 based on the assessed capacity of previously developed sites, including greenfield sites with planning permission at April 2008

Settlement Area	SHLAA Capacity (April 2008) ⁽²⁷⁾	2008/09 (gross actual)	2009/10 (gross actual)	2010/11 (gross assumed) ⁽²⁸⁾	2011/12 (gross assumed) ⁽²⁹⁾	SHLAA Residual (April 2012)	% of Residual	Implied Annual Target (net)	Implied Plan Target April 2012 to March 2027 (net)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	902	62	66	69	69	636	7%	17	257
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	4,425	92	34	36	36	4,228	45%	114	1,706
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	2,411	295	92	96	96	1,831	20%	49	739
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	2,142	73	65	68	68	1,868	20%	50	754
Settlement Area 5 - Mid -Wirral	491	20	78	82	82	230	3%	6	93
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	178	43	0	0	0	135	1%	4	54
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	127	7	2	2	2	114	1%	3	46
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	269	7	3	3	3	253	3%	7	101
TOTAL	10,945	599	340	356	356	9,295	100%	250	3,750

Table 10.3 Policy Option PO1B - Without Wirral Waters

- 29 assuming that the scale and pattern of gross completions and demolitions will be the same as in 2010/11
- 28 including estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement at 160 net plus programmed demolitions for 2010/11 at 196 assuming the pattern of gross completions will be the same as in 2009/10
- 27 based on the assessed capacity of previously developed sites, including greenfield sites with planning permission at April 2008

Policy Option PO2 - Needs Model

10.12 The Coalition Government has indicated that one of the tests of any locally derived housing target will be whether the Council has conducted a professional assessment of local housing need⁽³⁰⁾. Policy Option PO2 is, therefore, based on the figures contained within the Council's latest housing needs assessment, which identifies the number of new homes that would be needed to meet local needs over the twenty years to 2029⁽³¹⁾.

10.13 The assessment estimates a need for up to 11,400 new dwellings, including ordinary, specialist and affordable housing, at an annual average of 570 additional dwellings to meet the needs of the population in 2029, with a need for up to 7,478 ordinary dwellings including affordable and market housing and up to 3,922 specialist dwellings including affordable specialist housing.

10.14 The figures in the housing needs assessment are disaggregated into the three spatial areas identified in the former Regional Spatial Strategy. The likely impact of Policy Option PO2 on each Settlement Area has, therefore, been assessed by dividing the scale of the need identified by the proportion of existing dwellings in each Settlement Area, as shown in Table 10.4.

10.15 The final figures, shown in Table 10.5, take account of past and expected performance from April 2009 to March 2012, assuming that any backlog from April 2009 will be made up equally over the remaining years to 2029. The figures are net additional dwellings and do not take account of forecast demolitions.

10.16 Three additional factors need to be taken into account.

10.17 Firstly, the population and household projections used as the basis of the housing market assessment are not housing policy numbers and do not take into account the impact of regeneration initiatives or national policy designations such as the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area or the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point. The figures in Table 10.5 for Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core are, for example, negative over the longer term based on the needs of the existing resident population and the actual and assumed pattern of completions to April 2012 and the assessment as a whole assumes that housing needs including the need for market housing will only be met within their immediate area of origin.

10.18 Secondly, the model used in the assessment does not take account of vacant properties but does not assume that the needs identified would be met through new build dwellings alone. The current Borough wide vacancy rate is 4.2 per cent, with a larger proportion of vacancies within the older urban areas in east Wirral and pockets of vacancy within the social housing stock in other areas, held in advance of demolition programmes.

30 Open Source Planning (Conservative Policy Green Paper No 14, February 2010)

31 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordhams Research, 2010), carried out to take account of the impact of the recession

Settlement Area	Existing Dwellings in RSS Inner Area ⁽³²⁾	% of existing dwellings in Inner Area	Implied Need in Inner Area	Existing Dwellings in RSS Outer Area ⁽³³⁾	% of existing dwellings in Outer Area	Implied Need in Outer Area	Existing Dwellings in RSS Rural Area ⁽³⁴⁾	% of existing dwellings in Rural Area	Implied Need in Rural Area	Total Implied Need April 2009 to March 2029 (net)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	9,336	38%	375	18,561	26%	1,194	1	0	0	1,568
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	1,282	5%	51	8	0	1	0	0	0	52
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	13,719	56%	550	27,614	39%	1,776	0	0	0	2,326
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	0	0%	0	24,696	34%	1,587	0	0	0	1,588
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	0	0%	0	0	0	0	24,293	48%	2,775	2,775
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	0	0%	0	0	0	0	11,585	23%	1,323	1,323
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	0	0%	0	0	0	0	12,997	25%	1,485	1,485
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	0	0%	0	775	1%	50	2,031	4%	232	282
Total Need	24,337	100%	976	71,654	100%	4,608	50,907	100%	5,815	11,399

Table 10.4 Policy Option PO2 - Calculation of Housing Need by Settlement Area

³⁴ areas to the west of the M53 Motorway

³³ the remaining areas, outside the RSS Inner Area, to the east of the M53 Motorway

³² defined by the boundary to the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and Mersey Heartlands Growth Point

Settlement Area	Total Implied Need April 2012 to March 2027 (net) ⁽³⁵⁾	2009/10 (actual net) ⁽³⁶⁾	2010/11 (assumed net) ⁽³⁷⁾	2011/12 (assumed net) ⁽³⁸⁾	Backlog April 2009 to March 2012	Implied Plan Target April 2012 to March 2027 (net) ⁽³⁹⁾	Implied Annual Need (net)	% of Annual Need
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	1,176	33	23	23	156	1,314	88	14%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	39	34	37	37	-99	-49	-3	<1%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,745	24	-3	-3	330	2,036	136	21%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	1,191	60	64	64	51	1,236	82	13%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	2,081	75	79	79	182	2,242	149	23%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	992	0	0	0	198	1,168	78	12%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1,113	-27	-41	-41	331	1,405	94	15%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	211	1	0	0	41	247	16	2%
Total Need	8549	200	160	160	1,190	9,599	640	100%

Table 10.5 Policy Option PO2 - Calculation of Implied Plan Requirements for Total Housing Need

- ³⁹ with backlog applied calculated as backlog from April 2009 to March 2012 divided by 17 to calculate the additional annual requirement to be applied over the remaining years to 2029 multiplied by 15 to apply to the 15 year plan period added to the Total Implied Need for April 2012 to March 2027 from column 1
- ³⁸ calculated in the same way as for 2010/11
- ³⁷ calculated as a proportion of estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement based on the pattern of actual performance during 2009/10
- ³⁶ calculated as total implied need 2009/29 divided by 20 less actual net performance for 2009/10
- ³⁵ calculated as total implied need for April 2009 to March 2029 from Table 10.4 divided by 20 and multiplied by 15 to apply to the plan period

10.19 The Coalition Government intends to explore a range of measures to bring empty homes into use, which could be used to contribute to the future housing supply. The Council alongside other sub-regional partners is currently targeting properties that have been empty for more than six months, which has been steadily rising over recent years to include an increasing proportion of new build developments. The target in the existing Wirral Housing Strategy is to reduce the long term vacancy within the private sector stock to 2.23 per cent overall.

10.20 Thirdly, the 2006-based population and household projections used to underpin the assessment showed the population increasing by 1.3%; households increasing by 11,400 or 8.3 per cent between 2009 and 2029; and average household size decreasing from 2.26 in 2009 to 2.11 in 2029. The nationally calculated mid-year estimates for previous years have since been revised downwards and the accompanying 2008-based population estimates now show the population declining by 1% or by 3,300 from 307,800 in 2009 to 304,500 in 2029. Revised 2008-based household projections are not yet available.

Policy Option PO3 - Capacity Model

10.21 The Council's latest assessment of housing land indicates that up to 20,100 dwellings could be capable of being developed on previously developed sites in the period to 2026/27, without using previously undeveloped greenfield sites. Of these, approximately 9,200 units were associated with the development of sites at Wirral Waters⁽⁴⁰⁾.

10.22 Tables 12.1 to 12.3 in Section 12 of this Assessment Report set out a summary of the main findings for the various categories of site in each Settlement Area. Policy Option PO3, therefore, uses these findings to provide an additional approach based on the capacity of the existing built-up areas to accommodate new housing development.

10.23 The figures for each Settlement Area, shown in Table 10.6 and Table 10.7, reflect the total assessed capacity of deliverable housing land within each Settlement Area at April 2008, rolled forward to take account of past and expected performance from April 2008 to March 2012. The figures represent the gross deliverable capacity within each Settlement Area and are presented under two scenarios: with and without the additional capacity at Wirral Waters.

10.24 The results indicate that with Wirral Waters, there is sufficient capacity to build up to 1,235 dwellings each year and that without Wirral Waters, there is sufficient capacity to build up to 620 units each year, without building on additional previously undeveloped land.

40 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, July 2010)

Settlement Area	SHLAA Capacity (April 2008) ⁽⁴¹⁾	2008/09 (gross actual)	2009/10 (gross actual)	2010/11 (gross assumed) ⁽⁴²⁾	2011/12 (gross assumed) ⁽⁴³⁾	Residual Capacity (gross, April 2012)	% of Residual Capacity	Implied Annual Capacity (gross)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	902	62	66	69	69	636	3%	42
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	13,652	92	34	36	36	13,455	73%	897
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	2,411	295	92	96	96	1,831	10%	122
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	2,142	73	65	68	68	1,868	10%	125
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	491	20	78	82	82	230	1%	15
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	178	43	0	0	0	135	1%	9
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	127	7	2	2	2	114	1%	8
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	269	7	3	3	3	253	1%	17
TOTAL	20,172	599	340	356	356	18,522	100%	1,235

Table 10.6 Policy Option PO3A - Dwelling Capacity Including Wirral Waters

- 43 assuming that the scale and pattern of gross completions and demolitions will be the same as in 2010/11
- 42 including estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement at 160 net plus programmed demolitions for 2010/11 at 196 assuming the geographical pattern of gross completions will be the same as in 2009/10
- 41 based on the assessed capacity of previously developed sites, including greenfield sites with planning permission at April 2008

Settlement Area	SHLAA Capacity (April 2008) ⁽⁴⁴⁾	2008/09 (gross actual)	2009/10 (gross actual)	2010/11 (gross assumed) ⁽⁴⁵⁾	2011/12 (gross assumed) ⁽⁴⁶⁾	Residual Capacity (gross, April 2012)	% of Residual Capacity	Implied Annual Capacity (gross)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	902	62	66	69	69	636	7%	42
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	4,425	92	34	36	36	4,228	45%	282
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	2,411	295	92	96	96	1,831	20%	122
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	2,142	73	65	68	68	1,868	20%	125
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	491	20	78	82	82	230	3%	15
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	178	43	0	0	0	135	1%	9
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	127	7	2	2	2	114	1%	8
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	269	7	3	3	3	253	3%	17
TOTAL	10,945	599	340	356	356	9,295	100%	620

Table 10.7 Policy Option PO3A - Dwelling Capacity Without Wirral Waters

- 46 assuming that the scale and pattern of gross completions and demolitions will be the same as in 2010/11
- 45 including estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement at 160 net plus programmed demolitions for 2010/11 at 196 assuming the geographical pattern of gross completions will be the same as in 2009/10
- 44 based on the assessed capacity of previously developed sites, assuming the delivery of a 40% affordable housing target, including greenfield sites with planning permission at April 2008

Policy Option PO4 - Market Delivery Model

10.25 The delivery of housing is largely dependent on market conditions. This dependence is expected to increase as public funding for housing market restructuring and estate re-modelling declines. Policy Option PO4 has, therefore, been included as an initial indication only, to illustrate what could realistically be delivered over the plan period, taking account of the current market downturn and the short and longer term prospects of market recovery.

10.26 The past performance of gross housing completions within each Settlement Area and the Borough's overall net annual performance is set out in Table 10.8 below:

Settlement Area	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total	Annual Average	%
Area 1 - Wallasey	45	29	150	77	153	62	66	582	83	14%
Area 2 - Commercial Core	42	10	21	76	49	92	34	324	46	8%
Area 3 - Birkenhead	269	149	184	404	329	295	92	1,722	246	41%
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	62	5	23	93	185	73	65	506	72	12%
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	108	138	32	60	84	20	78	520	74	12%
Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	55	65	18	16	7	43	0	204	29	5%
Area 7 - Heswall	81	75	74	10	10	7	2	259	37	6%
Area 8 - Rural Area	24	60	9	0	3	7	3	106	15	2%
Total (Gross)	686	531	511	736	820	599	340	4,223	603	100%
Total (Net)	443	102	220	506	564	334	200	2,369	338	

Table 10.8 Past Housing Completions

10.27 The two scenarios presented under Policy Option PO4 both assume a recovery to a pre-downturn annual housing delivery of 500 net additional dwellings. Policy Option PO4A assumes a linear year-on-year improvement from April 2012 to full recovery by the end of March 2017. Policy Option PO4B assumes a linear year on year improvement from April 2015 to full recovery by the end of the plan period in March 2027⁽⁴⁷⁾.

47 April 2015 has been chosen to reflect the findings of the long term economic forecast for the region which expects the impacts of the recession to continue to 2015 with a return to longer-term growth trends between 2015 and 2030 (State of the North West Economy A Long Term Forecast, REFP, 2010)

Settlement Area	2011/12 (net assumed) ⁽⁴⁸⁾	2012/13 (net)	2013/14 (net)	2014/15 (net)	2015/16 (net)	2016/17 (net)	Total April 2017 to March 2027 (net) ⁽⁴⁹⁾	Total Plan Period (net)	Implied Annual Rate (net)	% of Implied Annual Rate
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	5	8	10	12	15	17	172	234	16	3%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	116	166	215	264	314	363	3,632	4,954	330	73%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	16	23	29	36	43	49	494	674	45	10%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	16	23	30	37	44	50	504	688	46	10%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	2	3	4	5	5	6	62	85	6	1%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	1	2	2	3	3	4	36	50	3	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	2	1	2	2	3	3	31	42	3	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	2	3	4	5	6	7	68	93	6	1%
TOTAL	160	228	296	364	432	500	5,000	6,820	455	100%

Table 10.9 Policy Option PO4A - Early Market Recovery

49 continuing at 500 net additional dwellings each year

48 estimated future completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement

Settlement Area	11/12 (net) ⁽⁵⁰⁾	12/13 (net)	13/14 (net)	14/15 (net)	15/16 (net)	16/17 (net)	17/18 (net)	18/19 (net)	19/20 (net)	20/21 (net)	21/22 (net)	22/23 (net)	23/24 (net)	24/25 (net)	25/26 (net)	26/27 (net)	Total Plan Period (net)	Implied Annual Rate (net)	% of Implied Annual Rate
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	11	11	11	13	15	17	17	19	21	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	314	21	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	73	73	73	86	98	111	124	136	149	162	175	187	200	213	227	227	2,087	139	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	32	32	32	37	43	48	54	59	65	70	76	81	87	92	98	98	904	60	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	32	32	32	38	43	49	55	60	66	72	77	83	88	94	100	100	922	61	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	4	4	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	12	114	8	3%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	66	4	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	56	4	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	4	4	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	14	125	9	3%
TOTAL	160	160	160	188	216	244	272	300	328	356	384	412	440	468	500	4,588	306	100%	

Table 10.10 Policy Option PO4B - Prolonged Market Recovery

⁵⁰ estimated future net completions agreed with the previous Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement at 160

10.28 The likely impact on each Settlement Area has been assessed by using the proportion of land likely to be available for housing by April 2012. Policy Option PO4A is based on the proportion of land likely to be available including Wirral Waters, to represent the capacity that could be delivered under stronger market conditions. Policy Option PO4B is based on the proportion of land likely to be available without Wirral Waters, to represent the capacity that could be delivered under weaker market conditions. The figures are net additional dwellings and do not take account of forecast demolitions.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

10.29 The Preferred Spatial Vision does not directly comment on the scale of development envisaged but sets out the aspirations of supporting regeneration and market renewal within the older urban areas in east Wirral and establishing a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead. Only Policy Option PO2, would generate a distribution of new housing development that would be inconsistent within these aspirations.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

10.30 The implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Most of the Policy Options would support economic revitalisation by ensuring that the majority of new housing would be provided alongside new employment opportunities to support wider regeneration. Policy Option PO2 would focus housing delivery away from areas of employment growth.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Policy Option PO2 could undermine housing growth and market renewal within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area by providing for new housing development across a wider area. Policy Options including the additional capacity at Wirral Waters would direct the highest proportion of new development towards the Pathfinder but Policy Option PO3A would provide the strongest support.
Transport Accessibility	Most of the Policy Options would direct the majority of new development towards some of the most accessible locations in the Borough. Policy Option PO2 is, however, likely to generate a level and pattern of development that could not easily be accommodated in the most accessible locations.
Neighbourhood Services	All the Policy Options could be used to support the provision of neighbourhood services but Policy Option PO2 could generate a level and pattern of development that may not easily be served by existing centres.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to preserve and enhance environmental quality under all the Policy Options but Policy Options that would focus the majority of new development towards

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
	previously developed sites within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area are likely to have the lowest impact on the Borough's wider environmental assets and could focus development on areas where the need for local improvement is greatest. Policy Option PO2 is most likely to generate a pattern and level of development that could have a significant impact on local distinctiveness.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed under all the Policy Options to direct development to sites away from areas at risk from flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	Policy Option PO2 would do least to support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

10.31 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Only Policy Option PO2, which would provide almost half of the Borough's new housing outside Settlement Areas 1, 2 and 3, would be inconsistent with focused regeneration. Policy Options including the additional capacity at Wirral Waters would, however, make the strongest contribution.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Policy Option PO2 would distribute new housing most widely across the Borough. Policy Options that would not rely on the additional capacity at Wirral Waters could also contribute but would still direct the majority of growth to locations to the east of the M53 Motorway.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Only Policy Option PO2 is likely to support a strategy of urban expansion.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Only Policy Option PO2 is likely to be inconsistent with the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy.

Implications for Settlement Areas

10.32 The figures provided for each Settlement Area are indicative only and do not at this stage constitute policy numbers. The likely implications for each of the Settlement Areas, nevertheless, include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	The Policy Options would provide for a full range of levels of new development in Settlement Area 1. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO2 would require Settlement Area

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
	<p>1 to accommodate between 8 and 88 additional dwellings each year or between 3% and 14% of the total supply. All but Policy Option PO2 would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are significantly above the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 531 dwellings in Settlement Area 1.</p>
<p>Area 2 - Commercial Core</p>	<p>All but Policy Option PO2 would provide for a significant level of new development in Settlement Area 2. The lowest, Policy Option PO1B and the highest, Policy Option PO3A would require Settlement Area 2 to accommodate between 114 and 897 additional dwellings each year or between 45% and 73% of the total supply. Policy Options including delivery at Wirral Waters are likely to be the most effective in securing significant regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land. All but Policy Option PO2 would provide for a level of new development significantly above local housing needs, which are significantly below the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 201 dwellings in Settlement Area 2, excluding the additional sites at Wirral Waters.</p>
<p>Area 3 - Birkenhead</p>	<p>All the Policy Options would provide for a moderate to high level of new development in Settlement Area 3. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO2 would require Settlement Area 3 to accommodate between 25 and 136 additional dwellings each year or between 10% and 21% of the total supply. The majority of Policy Options would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are a little above the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 1,564 dwellings in Settlement Area 3.</p>
<p>Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham</p>	<p>The Policy Options would provide for a moderate to high level of new development in Settlement Area 4. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO3B would require Settlement Area 4 to accommodate between 25 and 125 additional dwellings each year or between 10% and 20% of the total supply. All but Policy Option PO3 would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are below the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 441 dwellings in Settlement Area 4.</p>
<p>Area 5 - Mid-Wirral</p>	<p>The Policy Options would provide for a full range of levels of new development in Settlement Area 5. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO2 would require Settlement Area 5 to accommodate between 3 and 149 additional dwellings each year or between 1% and 23% of the total supply. All but Policy</p>

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
	Option 2 would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are significantly above the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 198 dwellings in Settlement Area 5.
Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	The Policy Options would provide for a full range of levels of new development in Settlement Area 6. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO2 would require Settlement Area 6 to accommodate between 2 and 78 additional dwellings each year or between 1% and 12% of the total supply. All but Policy Option 2 would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are significantly above the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 66 dwellings in Settlement Area 6.
Area 7 - Heswall	The Policy Options would provide for a full range of levels of new development in Settlement Area 7. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO2 would require Settlement Area 7 to accommodate between 2 and 94 additional dwellings each year or between 1% and 15% of the total supply. All but Policy Option 2 would provide for a level of new development significantly below local housing needs, which are significantly above the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 44 dwellings in Settlement Area 7.
Area 8 - Rural Area	All the Policy Options would provide for a low level of new development in Settlement Area 8. The lowest, Policy Option PO1A and the highest, Policy Option PO3B would require Settlement Area 8 to accommodate between 3 and 16 additional dwellings each year or between 1% and 3% of the total supply. Local housing needs are very close to the assessed capacity under Policy Option PO3. Planning permission has already been granted for up to 46 dwellings in Settlement Area 1.

10.33 The effect of development at Wirral Waters would be to reduce the number and proportion of new development needed in other Settlement Areas under all the Policy Options.

Implications for Delivery

10.34 The prospect of future market delivery has already been considered under Policy Option PO4 but will need to be the subject of continuous monitoring.

10.35 The Council's annual schedule of land for April 2010 shows 3,405 dwellings with planning permission⁽⁵¹⁾. Delivery has, however, stalled over recent years because of the inability of developers to obtain development finance and the inability of potential house-buyers to obtain mortgages. This is expected to continue over the next few years, irrespective of the number of planning permissions granted. The reduction in the forecast of net completions for 2010/11 of 160 dwellings, agreed with the last Government as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement, did not assume cutbacks in public funding during 2010/11.

10.36 The number of demolitions has historically had a disproportionate influence on the delivery of net additional dwellings within the Borough. Demolitions, initially programmed to reduce from 2007/08, have nevertheless remained reasonably high supported by public funding advanced from programmes for future years under the previous Government in response to the recession. While the number of demolitions could be expected to reduce as public funding reduces over future years, the demolition of high-rise tower blocks and the closure and re-development of elderly persons accommodation may still reduce net additions over the next few years.

10.37 Table 10.11 below sets out the likely gross annual residual requirements:

Policy Option	Net Annual Requirement	Gross Annual Requirement ⁽⁵²⁾	Plan Period (gross additional dwellings)	Sites With Consent ⁽⁵³⁾	Core Strategy Residual (gross)	Annual Residual for Core Strategy (gross)
Policy Option PO1 - 'RSS Option 1'	250	383	5,745	3,091	2,654	177
Policy Option PO2 - Local Need	640	773	11,595	3,091	8,504	567
Policy Option PO3A - Capacity With Wirral Waters	n/a	1,235	18,522	3,091	15,431	1,028
Policy Option PO3B - Capacity Without Wirral Waters	n/a	620	9,295	3,091	6,204	414
Policy Option PO4A - Early Recovery	455	588	8,820	3,091	5,729	382
Policy Option PO4B - Prolonged Recovery	306	439	6,585	3,091	3,494	233
Former Regional Spatial Strategy	500	633	9,495	3,091	6,404	427

Table 10.11 Indicative Gross Residual Requirements

51 the total has not gone below 3,000 units since 2005 and does not yet include the additional capacity of sites approved at Wirral Waters subject to Section 106 Agreements and notification to the Secretary of State

53 at April 2008, excluding additional capacity at Wirral Waters, discounted by 20% for potential non-implementation

52 taking account of forecast demolitions at 133 each year

10.38 Table 10.11 shows that Policy Option PO1 and a prolonged recovery under Policy Option PO4 would be the closest to average net past performance over recent years and to future short term estimates. Perhaps more importantly, only Policy Option PO1 and the two recovery scenarios under Policy Option PO4 are likely to be easily accommodated by the existing capacity of previously developed sites. Policy Option PO2 could only be delivered through the additional capacity at Wirral Waters.

Implications for Infrastructure

10.39 Previous consultation responses have not indicated any significant obstacles to the delivery of Policy Options seeking to focus development towards the older urban areas where the capacity of existing services and infrastructure is higher due to previous levels of investment. Policy Option PO2 could, however, have significant implications by directing higher levels of development to areas where existing systems may have a more limited capacity. The specific infrastructure needs arising from the development at Wirral Waters have been dealt with through the planning application process.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets, scores generally positively against sustainability objectives. The provision of high quality housing alongside employment opportunities as part of the Growth Point initiative could attract a skilled workforce to areas of the greatest need, reducing out migration and creating a more balanced population. It could also help to close the gap between standards of living and access to opportunity. Focusing development in the urban areas in the east could reduce pressure of development in more sensitive areas to the west, protecting local biodiversity habitats and local distinctiveness. Developing on land in the Newheartlands Pathfinder and Mersey Heartlands Growth Point could maximise opportunities for the take-up of previously developed land, however an increase in housing in these areas may also heighten traffic congestion in areas already experiencing congestion, pollution and loss of air quality at peak times. Furthermore, housing growth could increase energy demand and the use of non-renewable energy, in addition to generating more waste. The need for the Preferred Option 5 to be operated alongside other control measures has therefore been identified⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Council's Assessment

10.40 The Council's current assessment is that Policy Option PO1 is likely to provide the best balance between the prospects of market delivery assessed under Policy Option PO4, and the need to offer flexibility within the capacity of available urban land under Policy Option PO3.

10.41 In line with Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy, the Council would be willing to support development ahead of the figures included under Policy Option PO1 within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, to reflect the additional potential capacity of vacant land within these areas but in the interests of urban regeneration, would not be willing to do so elsewhere. This approach would best support delivery against Preferred Spatial Objective 3 - Housing Growth and Market Renewal, which supports the revitalisation of the housing market in the older urban areas and the delivery of a growth in housing and population within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, including at Wirral Waters.

11 Distribution of Housing

11.1 The Spatial Options Report considered four main Policy Options for the spatial distribution of new housing development:

- Policy Option HD1 - deliver the whole of the Borough's requirement for new housing including the Growth Point commitment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area
- Policy Option HD2 - deliver the Growth Point commitment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area but deliver the remainder of the requirement to the east of the M53 Motorway
- Policy Option HD3 - deliver the Growth Point commitment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area but deliver the remainder of the requirement elsewhere within the Borough, including to the west of the M53 Motorway
- Policy Option HD4 - deliver less than the Growth Point commitment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area but deliver the remainder of the requirement elsewhere within the Borough

11.2 The numbers involved and the geographical divisions were based on the targets for new dwellings and the geographical priorities set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, which has now been revoked⁽⁵⁵⁾.

11.3 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option HD1 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option, as this was more likely to be consistent with the Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy.

Results of Consultation

11.4 Approximately half the respondents thought that Policy Option HD1 was the most sustainable option, with the least impact on biodiversity and greenspace, although it was also considered important that quality green infrastructure was provided as part of any new developments within the regeneration priority area.

Others respondents, however, believed that Policy Option HD1 was too restrictive and would not be able to deliver the number of homes required, particularly if public funding for regeneration was reduced. One respondent suggested that Wirral Waters would need to be identified as a strategic allocation because of its importance in delivering the scale of the numbers being put forward in the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area.

11.5 Supporters of alternative options, such as Policy Option HD2, pointed to areas of deprivation and sustainable locations outside the regeneration priority areas and the need to consider Policy Option HD2 as a more flexible alternative, should Policy Option HD1 not deliver the number of units anticipated. Some respondents noted the need to ensure that expanding the housing offer did not undermine regeneration in priority areas.

11.6 Respondents supporting an even wider distribution of housing believed that Policy Options HD3 and HD4 would provide a greater choice of housing which would support inward investment and attract a highly skilled workforce and allow housing needs to be better addressed within the Borough's rural areas. The release of Green Belt land was not widely favoured but several respondents suggested that Green Belt release may be necessary if, as they believed, the results of the Council's land availability assessment indicated that housing requirements could not be met in any other way.

11.7 Several respondents pointed to the number of empty properties and the number of properties available on the second hand property market as an indication that a lower level of development should be provided for⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Evidence Base

11.8 Much of the evidence to support future policies for the distribution of new housing development has already been presented in Section 10 of this Assessment Report, using the proportions of capacity identified under Tables 10.2 and Table 10.3 or the needs identified in Table 10.5.

11.9 The distribution of new housing must, however, also be informed by wider spatial priorities such as the objectives of national regeneration initiatives such as the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point; the pattern of social, economic and environmental need and disparity; the pattern of existing population; and the location of employment and services. The results of consultation on the Broad Spatial Options will also need to be taken into account.

11.10 The Council's latest assessment of housing land indicates that up to 20,100 dwellings were capable of being developed on previously developed land over in the period to 2026/27, without using previously undeveloped greenfield sites. Of these, approximately 9,200 units were associated with the development of sites at Wirral

56 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

Waters⁽⁵⁷⁾.

11.11 The table below shows the distribution of current capacity on previously developed sites that were identified as likely to be developable within the first ten years. While the final available capacity will need to be rolled forward as part of the next stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy, the figures can be used as a proxy estimate for a potential future distribution of new housing development across the Borough:

Settlement Area	First Five Years ⁽⁵⁸⁾	Years Six to Ten ⁽⁵⁹⁾	Total Capacity (gross)	Assumed Completions 2008/12	Residual Capacity (gross)	% of Residual Capacity
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	669	49	717	266	451	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core ⁽⁶⁰⁾	1,112	1,909	3,021	197	2,824	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,942	109	2,051	580	1,471	23%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	765	652	1,417	274	1,143	18%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	220	124	344	261	83	1%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	115	61	177	43	134	2%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	67	17	84	13	71	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area ⁽⁶¹⁾	45	132	177	16	161	3%
Total	4,935	3,052	7,988	1,650	6,338	100%

Table 11.1

11.12 As development has not yet started at Wirral Waters and planning permission at East Float has been recommended for approval subject to notification to the Secretary of State, a conservative approach has been taken by halving the potential capacity shown for sites at Wirral Waters during the first ten years. These figures have, therefore, been used as the basis for Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing in the Preferred Options Report.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

11.13 Policy Option HD1 would continue to reflect elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to the regeneration of the older urban areas and the creation of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead. Policy Option HD2 and Policy Option HD3 would, however, also allow other regeneration priority areas outside the Newheartlands

57 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, July 2010)

59 includes Category 2 Sites and 184 small sites allocated to years six to ten

58 includes Category 1 Sites, sites with planning permission and 253 small sites allocated to the first five years

60 includes Wirral Waters at half the rate shown in the SHLAA

61 included previously developed sites in Category 1 and Category 2 within designated Infill Villages and Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

Pathfinder Area to contribute toward tackling disparity and the re-use of previously developed land in both east and west Wirral. The Preferred Option would continue to promote development within regeneration priority areas but with a higher focus on sites in eastern Wirral.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

11.14 The implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Policy Options maintaining the number of dwellings within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point will assist economic revitalisation by ensuring that new high quality housing is provided alongside new employment to support wider regeneration and improvements. Policy Option HD4 would not support the same level of focused economic revitalisation but an appropriate quality of housing could still support the wider attractiveness of the Borough to investors.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Policy Option HD1, Policy Option HD2 and the Preferred Option are most likely to support the continued delivery of housing market renewal and housing growth in priority areas. Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could, however, undermine housing market renewal by providing for development across a wider area.
Transport Accessibility	Policy Option HD1, Policy Option HD2 and the Preferred Option are most likely to direct new development to the most accessible locations. Additional controls would be needed to ensure that development promoted under Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would be directed to the most sustainable locations.
Neighbourhood Services	Policy Option HD1 and Policy Option HD2 would support neighbourhood services in east Wirral but would not address equivalent needs in locations to the west of the M53 Motorway. Additional controls would be needed to ensure that Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 met these needs in the most sustainable locations. The Preferred Option should allow neighbourhood services to be supported across a wider area of the Borough.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to protect locally distinctive characteristics under all the Policy Options. Policy Options that would promote a more dispersed pattern of development may be more likely to lead to a potential conflict but could enable local improvements to be secured across a wider geographical area. Policy Options that would concentrate development into the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point could, however, maximise the opportunity for new green infrastructure in areas most in need.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed under all the Policy Options to ensure that new housing was provided away from areas at risk from flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	Policy Option HD1, Policy Option HD2 and the Preferred Options are most likely to support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban area in Birkenhead. In the absence of additional controls, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could undermine the establishment of a new city neighbourhood by providing for development across a wider area of the Borough.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

11.15 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Policy Option HD1 would be most consistent with focused regeneration. While a focus on regeneration would be maintained under all the Policy Options, Policy Option HD4 is most likely to act against the effective delivery of focused regeneration.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could all be consistent with balanced growth. The Preferred Option, although less restrictive than Policy Option HD1, would still, however, promote a higher emphasis on sites in east Wirral.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Only Policy Option HD4 would be likely to support a strategy of urban expansion, although green field sites at the edge of the urban area could also be considered under Policy Option HD2 and Policy Option HD3. The Preferred Option would not be consistent with urban expansion.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Policy Option HD1 would only support a continued focus on regeneration alone. While Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would all allow for additional development across the rest of the Borough, further controls would be needed to bring them fully within the scope of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy. The Preferred Option is best aligned with maintaining a focus on regeneration while allowing limited development elsewhere in the most sustainable urban locations.

Implications for Settlement Areas

11.16 The likely implications for each of the Settlement Areas include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	Policy Option HD1 would focus new housing within the older urban areas to the south of Settlement Area 1. While Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for development across the whole of Settlement Area 1, Policy Options HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could potentially reduce the pressure for new housing in Settlement Area 1 by making a wider range of Settlement Areas within the Borough available for development. The Preferred Option would still focus new housing within the older urban areas to the south of Settlement Area 1 but would also allow for some additional development around existing centres and along well-served public transport corridors.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	Policy Option HD1, Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and the Preferred Option would maintain a strong focus on the delivery of high levels of new housing development in Settlement Area 2. Policy Option HD4 would reduce this by accepting a lower rate of delivery within Settlement Area 2 and by re-distributing any shortfall across a wider range of Settlement Areas.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Policy Option HD1 would focus new housing within the older urban areas to the north and east of Settlement Area 3. While Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for development across the whole of Settlement Area 3, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could reduce the pressure for new housing in Settlement Area 3 by making a wider range of Settlement Areas within the Borough available for development. The Preferred Option would still focus new housing within the older urban areas to the north and east of Settlement Area 3 but would also allow for some additional development around existing centres and along well-served public transport corridors.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Only Policy Option HD1 would restrict development in Settlement Area 4. While Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for development across the whole of Settlement Area 4, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could potentially reduce the pressure for new housing in Settlement Area 4 by making a wider range of Settlement Areas within the Borough available for development. The Preferred Option would continue to allow a significant proportion of new housing development in Settlement Area 4, reflecting the pattern of existing capacity and the high level of public transport provision throughout the Area.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Policy Option HD1 and Policy Option HD2 would continue to restrict development in Settlement Area 5. Only Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for new housing across the whole of Settlement Area 5. The Preferred Option would only



Settlement Area	Likely Implications
	allow for limited additional development around existing centres and along well-served public transport corridors within the existing urban areas of Settlement Area 5.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Policy Option HD1 and Policy Option HD2 would restrict development in Settlement Area 6. Only Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for new housing across the whole of Settlement Area 6. The Preferred Option would only allow for limited additional development around existing centres and along well-served transport corridors within the existing urban areas of Settlement Area 6.
Area 7 - Heswall	Policy Option HD1 and Policy Option HD2 would restrict development in Settlement Area 7. Only Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 would provide for new housing across the whole of Settlement Area 7. The Preferred Option would only allow for limited additional development around existing centres and along well-served transport corridors within the existing urban areas of Settlement Area 7.
Area 8 - Rural Area	Housing development would continue to be limited by national Green Belt policies under all the Policy Options, although Policy Option HD2, Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 could also be used to support urban expansion at the urban edge. The Preferred Options would limit future housing provision to the capacity of previously developed sites within designated Infill Villages and Major Developed Sites in Settlement Area 8.

Implications for Delivery

11.17 The implications for delivery are similar to those identified in Section 10 of this Assessment Report. Core Strategy proposals will need to be delivered through the combined actions of landowners, developers and Registered Social Landlords in line with the capacity available at suitable sites. A reduction in public funding may increase the reliance on private regeneration projects, such as land associated with the New City Neighbourhood in Birkenhead, but a number of publicly assembled sites in regeneration priority areas will continue to be available to accommodate new development in the short term.

11.18 Delivery will be highly sensitive to future market conditions, which are still at best uncertain. Policy Options for the scale of new housing provision considered under Section 10 of this Assessment Report have already addressed the future prospects of different rates of market delivery and the impact on the scale and distribution of delivery with and without the sites at Wirral Waters. Table 11.1 below sets out the three main scenarios:

Settlement Area	Preferred Option	Strong Market	Weak Market
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	7%	3%	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	45%	73%	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	23%	10%	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	18%	10%	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	1%	1%	3%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	2%	1%	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1%	1%	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	3%	1%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 11.2 Alternative Options for the Distribution of New Housing

11.19 In the event of a strengthening market, the Council believes that the future distribution of new housing could move closer towards the distribution shown under Policy Options including the additional capacity at Wirral Waters. In the event of a continuation of weaker market conditions, the Council believes that the future distribution of new housing could be closer to the distribution shown under Policy Options which exclude the additional capacity at Wirral Waters. The Council's Preferred Option currently seeks to take a middle ground between the two.

Implications for Infrastructure

11.20 Options that focus on the re-use of previously developed land in regeneration priority areas and on sites in the most sustainable locations around existing centres and major public transport corridors are most likely to be able to use the capacity of existing urban services.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option HD1 would be the most sustainable. Policy Option HD1 could assist in restructuring local housing markets and attract a wider mix of population to the area, which could enhance economic performance. Policy Option HD1 could also assist in maximising the use of previously developed urban land and buildings whilst restricting development in the open countryside⁽⁶²⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal indicates that Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing scores positively against sustainability objectives. It would have a positive impact in relation to urban regeneration and economic growth, through directing new housing to areas of employment growth and supporting housing market renewal. Allowing limited development in areas in and around existing centres and along well-served transport corridors could support local tourism

62 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

initiatives and enhance the viability of centres. In relation to biodiversity, traffic intrusion, waste management, carbon reduction and local heritage, the impact could be positive or negative, depending on how the Preferred Option is implemented. The need for Preferred Option 6 to be operated in conjunction other control measures is identified⁽⁶³⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

11.21 The Council's revised assessment is that the future distribution of housing will need to be more closely aligned to the existing available capacity of suitable sites within the urban area. As a result, the Preferred Option seeks to retain the emphasis on the re-use of previously developed land at the core of the older urban areas in east Wirral, while allowing some additional development over a wider area of the Borough in the most sustainable urban locations in line with the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy.

12 Phasing Housing

12.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main options for the phasing of new housing development in the Core Strategy:

- Policy Option HP1 - Borough wide phasing
- Policy Option HP2 - Settlement Area phasing

12.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option HP2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

12.3 Public consultation did not show a clear preference for either Policy Option but to those who gave reasons for their views, Policy Option HP2 appeared too complicated; would lead to the loss of valuable greenspace in areas where brownfield land was scarce; would be less likely to support development in areas of greatest need; and would be difficult to implement in Settlement Area 8. It was also felt that Policy Option HP1 would allow brownfield land to be used right across the Borough before using greenfield land in the east, where open space is most lacking; and would not limit development to one particular area.

12.4 Other respondents indicated that the approach to phasing should be closely related to decisions on spatial distribution of new development; follow employment to reduce the travel to work; reflect the viability of development in the current economic climate; and avoid the poor economic use of land in areas of existing restraint⁽⁶⁴⁾.

63 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

64 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

Settlement Area	Sites With Consent	Category 1 Sites (65)	Category 2 Sites (66)	Category 3 Sites (67)	Small Sites (68)	Total	% of Borough Total
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	531	96	34	129	112	902	4%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	201	1,648	3,432	8,216	155	13,652	68%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,510	229	66	218	334	2,357	12%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	441	313	629	699	60	2,142	11%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	185	15	86	102	90	478	2%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	65	34	42	1	35	177	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	43	14	10	26	33	126	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	44	0	132	91	0	267	1%
Total	3,020	2,349	4,431	9,482	819	20,101	100%

Table 12.1 Supply of Previously Developed Sites (April 2008)

Settlement Area	Sites With Consent	Category 1 Sites	Category 2 Sites	Category 3 Sites	Small Sites	Total	% of Borough Total
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	0	18	23	36	53	130	6%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	0	0	0	53	33	86	4%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	54	39	30	78	74	275	13%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	0	25	67	216	36	344	17%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	13	123	112	716	38	1,002	49%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	1	5	49	12	12	79	4%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1	23	16	11	26	77	4%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	2	0	25	35	0	62	3%
Total	71	233	322	1,157	272	2,055	100%

Table 12.2 Supply of Greenfield Sites (April 2008)

- 68 sites below 0.4 hectares
- 67 not currently developable but deliverable within ten to fifteen years
- 66 capable of being developed within five to ten years
- 65 capable of being delivered within five years

Settlement Area	Sites With Consent	Category 1 Sites	Category 2 Sites	Category 3 Sites	Small Sites	Total	% of Borough Total
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	531	96	34	129	112	902	8%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	201	148	332	3,589	155	4,425	41%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,510	229	66	218	334	2,357	22%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	441	313	629	699	60	2,142	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	185	15	86	102	90	478	4%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	65	34	42	1	35	177	2%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	43	14	10	26	33	126	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	44	0	132	91	0	267	2%
Total	3,020	849	1,331	4,855	819	10,874	100%

Table 12.3 Supply of Previously Developed Sites Without Wirral Waters (April 2008)

Policy Fit

12.5 National planning policy states that Local Development Documents should manage the delivery of housing and previously developed land to deliver the spatial vision for the area in the most sustainable way⁽⁶⁹⁾. A phasing policy may also be necessary to ensure that an adverse impact on European Sites can be avoided⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Evidence Base

12.6 The Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report indicates that the former Regional Spatial Strategy target to deliver 80% of new housing on previously developed land has been consistently exceeded in the past. The Council's latest housing land assessment highlights a potential future capacity of up to 20,100 dwellings on previously developed sites over the period to 2026⁽⁷¹⁾. The geographical distribution of this potential capacity is set out in Tables 12.1 to 12.3.

12.7 National planning policy no longer considers private residential gardens to be previously developed land, which will need to be taken into account in future monitoring⁽⁷²⁾.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

12.8 Both Policy Options for phasing new housing development could align with the Preferred Preferred Spatial Vision for the Borough but Policy Option HP1 would promote the re-use of brownfield land in all areas of the Borough before any greenfield land is released for development and will therefore contribute more strongly to the re-use of vacant urban land in priority locations.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

12.9 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Both Policy Options would support economic revitalisation but Policy Option HP1 could be more effective in directing new housing to previously developed land in regeneration priority areas.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Both Policy Options are likely to support housing market renewal and the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point. Policy Option HP2 may be able to offer additional support by directing

69 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3, CLG, June 2010, para 43 and 62)

70 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

71 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010)

72 PPS3 Housing (CLG, June 2010, Annex B Definitions)

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
	new housing development to specific locations within each Settlement Area but Policy Option HP1 would better promote the use of previously developed land in regeneration priority areas.
Transport Accessibility	Additional controls would be needed to secure transport accessibility under both Policy Options but Policy Option HP2 may be able to offer additional support by directing new housing development to specific locations within each Settlement Area.
Neighbourhood Services	Both Policy Options could support neighbourhood services. Policy Option HP1 would be most likely to support centres in regeneration priority areas. Policy HP2 could, however, be used to support a wider range of centres by directing new development to specific locations within each Settlement Area.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to respect local distinctiveness and secure the appropriate provision of green infrastructure under both Policy Options but Policy Option HP1 appears to offer additional protection for previously undeveloped land, particularly in Settlement Areas outside the regeneration priority areas.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and avoid areas at risk from flooding under both Policy Options.
New City Neighbourhood	Both Policy Options could be used to support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead but Policy Option HP1 could offer additional support by directing new housing to previously developed land in regeneration priority areas.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

12.10 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Both Policy Options could be used to deliver focused regeneration but Policy Option HP1 is most likely to direct new housing development to previously developed sites which are more likely to be located within regeneration priority areas.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Both Policy Options could be used to deliver balanced growth but Policy Option HP2 is most likely to support the provision of new housing across a wider area of the Borough.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Both Policy Options could be used to deliver urban expansion but Policy Option HP1 is more likely to ensure that urban expansion is only considered as a last resort.

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Both Policy Options could be used to deliver the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy. While Policy Option HP1 would offer the clearest support for development within regeneration priority areas, Policy Option HP2 could be used to support new housing development in the most sustainable locations within each Settlement Area.

Implications for Settlement Areas

12.11 The implications for individual Settlement Areas are closely related to the sequence likely to be adopted under Preferred Options 8 - Order of Preference. A sequence that prioritises the re-use of previously developed urban land across the Borough as a whole under Policy Option HP1 is, however, more likely to favour higher levels of housing development in Settlement Area 1, Settlement 2 and Settlement 3, in areas where vacant urban land is more prevalent, before development is considered elsewhere.

Implications for Delivery

12.12 Both Policy Options would require the supply of land within different categories and locations to be monitored through the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report before any decision on the release of land of a different category or in a different location was permitted.

12.13 Both Policy Options would need to be based on figures associated with maintaining a continuous five year supply of housing land. Policy Option HP1 is, however, likely to be simpler to apply. Policy Option HP2 would require a more complex classification involving a closer analysis of local housing needs and land supply within specific locations, which could be difficult to manage where the numbers of dwellings allocated to each Settlement Area under Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing are small and could be easily exceeded by a single development proposal.

12.14 Both Policy Options would, however, offer an element of flexibility, where land of one type or location was no longer available.

Implications for Infrastructure

12.15 The implications of both Policy Options are likely to be more closely related to the final numbers allocated to each Settlement Area under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets and Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing. Options that would increase the focus on the re-use of previously developed land in regeneration priority areas are more likely to be able to use the capacity of existing urban services.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option HP2 would be the most sustainable. Directing housing development to particular areas could assist in restructuring local housing markets and attracting a wider mix of population to the area. Policy Option HP2 could also support economic revitalisation and reduce unemployment and income deprivation by focusing new housing on areas of employment growth⁽⁷³⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal shows that Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development, scores positively against sustainability objectives. This option could have a positive impact on restructuring housing markets, supporting social inclusion and securing a balanced population through prioritising development in regeneration priority areas. However, the Preferred Option would need to be applied in accordance with Preferred Option 8, which states the order of preference for the phasing of housing land. Preferred Option 7 is more likely than Policy Option HP2 to achieve sustainability objectives relating to the take-up of previously developed land and local distinctiveness, although in order to achieve this, it too would need to be operated alongside Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference⁽⁷⁴⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

12.16 The Council's Preferred Option is now to adopt a Borough-wide phasing approach under Policy Option HP1 due to the complicated nature of phasing by Settlement Area under Policy Option HP2 and the benefit of promoting the re-use of previously developed land across the Borough as a whole before any greenfield land is released for development in any Settlement Area.

13 Order of Preference

13.1 The Spatial Options Report also consulted on an order of preference for the type and location of site that should be developed first. The Council did not, however, indicate its own preference in the Spatial Options Report.

Results of Consultation

13.2 Public consultation showed clear support for using previously developed brownfield land before previously undeveloped greenfield land, with the majority of respondents selecting: urban brownfield - in regeneration priority areas; urban brownfield - in rest of east Wirral; and urban brownfield - west Wirral, as their highest

73 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

74 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

preferences. Rural brownfield was also generally preferred over urban greenfield land. One respondent wanted the approach to recognise that brownfield sites can sometimes include important habitats that should be protected⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Policy Fit

13.3 National planning policy seeks to encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed⁽⁷⁶⁾.

Evidence Base

13.4 Background information on the geographical distribution of previously developed sites was contained within the Spatial Options Report⁽⁷⁷⁾ and is now contained within the accompanying Revised Spatial Portrait⁽⁷⁸⁾.

13.5 The Council's latest housing land assessment highlights a potential future capacity of up to 22,100 dwellings, of which over 90% is on previously developed sites⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

13.6 Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference would support the Preferred Spatial Vision by clearly promoting the re-use of previously developed sites in regeneration priority areas in east Wirral.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

13.7 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	The Preferred Option would support economic revitalisation by directing new housing to previously developed sites in regeneration priority areas in east Wirral.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	The Preferred Option would support housing market renewal and the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point by prioritising urban brownfield sites in identified regeneration priority areas.

75 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)
 76 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPG3, CLG, June 2010, paragraph 40)
 77 Core Strategy Spatial Options Report (January 2010, Picture 4.2, page 86)
 78 Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (November 2010)
 79 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010)

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Transport Accessibility	Additional controls would be needed to secure easy access to existing centres and public transport corridors but Preferred Option 8 would offer additional support by directing new housing development to urban brownfield sites in some of the most accessible locations in the Borough.
Neighbourhood Services	The Preferred Option could support neighbourhood services by directing new development to previously developed sites within the existing urban areas.
Environmental Quality	the Preferred Option would provide additional support for the protection for previously undeveloped sites in all areas of the Borough but additional controls would be needed to respect local distinctiveness, including biodiversity on brownfield sites.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and avoid areas at risk from flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	The Preferred Option would provide additional support for the creation of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead by prioritising development on brownfield sites in identified regeneration priority areas.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

13.8 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	The Preferred Option would support focused regeneration by prioritising development in identified regeneration priority areas.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	The Preferred Option could offer less support for balanced growth by clearly prioritising development in identified regeneration priority areas.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	The Preferred Option would ensure that urban expansion was seen as a last resort by promoting the re-use of previously developed urban land and urban greenfield sites before sites within the Green Belt.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	The Preferred Option would support the Preferred Broad Spatial Option by prioritising development on previously developed sites in identified regeneration priority areas whilst allowing the opportunity for some development on previously developed sites elsewhere in the Borough.

Implications for Settlement Areas

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	The Preferred Option would prioritise the re-use of urban brownfield land within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point in the south of the Area before allowing development elsewhere in east Wirral, including the remainder of Settlement Area 1, as a second priority.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The Preferred Option would prioritise the re-use of urban brownfield land in Settlement Area 2 before allowing development elsewhere in the Borough.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	The Preferred Option would prioritise the re-use of urban brownfield land within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Areas in the north and east of the Area before allowing development elsewhere in east Wirral, including the remainder of Settlement Area 3, as a second priority.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	The re-use of urban brownfield land in Settlement Area 4 would be a second priority behind the re-use of brownfield sites within regeneration priority areas in Settlement Areas 1, 2 and 3.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	The re-use of urban brownfield land in Settlement Area 5 would be promoted as a third priority behind the re-use of previously developed sites in east Wirral.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	The re-use of urban brownfield land in Settlement Area 6 would be promoted as a third priority behind the re-use of previously developed sites in east Wirral.
Area 7 - Heswall	The re-use of urban brownfield land in Settlement Area 7 would be promoted as a third priority behind the re-use of previously developed sites in east Wirral.
Area 8 - Rural Area	The re-use of rural brownfield land to the east of the M53 Motorway in Settlement Area 8 would be the fourth priority behind the re-use of urban brownfield land in both east and west Wirral. The re-use of rural brownfield land to the west of the M53 Motorway in Settlement Area 8 would be the lowest priority before the re-use of urban greenfield sites.

Implications for Delivery

13.9 Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference would require the supply of land across the Borough to be monitored before any decision on the release of land in a different category or in a different location was permitted. The Preferred Option would, however, also offer an element of flexibility where land of one type or location was no longer available.

Implications for Infrastructure

13.10 The implications of Preferred Option 8 are likely to be more closely related to the final numbers allocated to each Settlement Area under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets and Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing. Options that would increase the focus on the re-use of previously developed land in regeneration priority areas are more likely to be able to use the capacity of existing urban services.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference, generally scores positively against sustainability objectives. The Preferred Option is likely to have a positive effect in relation to urban regeneration and economic growth, through prioritising new housing in areas of employment growth and supporting housing market renewal. Prioritising housing development in the urban east of Wirral could reduce the pressure of development in sensitive areas, but could place brownfield sites in the urban area with biodiversity or local heritage value under greater pressure. The Preferred Option will need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to mitigate impacts on biodiversity and local heritage⁽⁸⁰⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

13.11 Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference proposes to prioritise the re-use of previously developed brownfield land ahead of previously undeveloped green field sites in all areas of the Borough and to prioritise the re-use of urban brownfield land in east Wirral in Settlement Areas to the east of the M53 Motorway, before urban brownfield land in west Wirral in Settlement Areas to the west of the M53 Motorway.

14 Affordable and Specialist Housing

14.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main options for the delivery of affordable and specialist housing:

- Policy Option AH1 - set a Borough-wide target in the Core Strategy for new housing developments
- Policy Option AH2 - set targets for geographically specific areas, where evidence shows specific local needs

14.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option AH1 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

14.3 Public consultation indicated a general support for Policy Option AH1. A number of respondents believed that Policy Option AH1 was likely to result in a more even distribution of affordable housing and would be easier to implement. Supporters of Policy Option AH2, nevertheless, felt that Policy Option AH2 would allow affordable housing to be targeted to the most sustainable locations and take greater account of local need⁽⁸¹⁾.

Policy Fit

14.4 The objectives of national policy are to ensure social progress which recognises the needs of everyone⁽⁸²⁾ and to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home which they can afford⁽⁸³⁾.

14.5 Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy HSG2 and Policy HS6 currently allow the Council to negotiate the provision of affordable housing with applicants and developers in line with an assessment of local needs. Private developers are usually required to enter a contract with a partner Registered Social Landlord to ensure the number of affordable units provided continue to remain available. Policy HS7 and Policy HS9 provide for sheltered and mobility housing. Policy HS8 provides for nursing and residential care homes.

14.6 The Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) currently permits the provision of affordable and specialist housing in areas that are subject to restrictions, where a proposal can be shown to meet an identified local housing need.

Evidence Base

14.7 The Council's latest assessment of local housing needs, updated to take account of the recent market downturn, indicates that the annual need for affordable housing in Wirral had risen by over 50% since 2007 to 2,784 in April 2009⁽⁸⁴⁾. The need for additional affordable housing was mainly focused within east Wirral, with 44 percent of local affordable housing need arising from within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, 44 percent from the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway and 12 percent from Settlement Areas to the west of the M53 Motorway⁽⁸⁵⁾.

81 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

82 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPG1, CLG, January 2005, paragraph 4)

83 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPG3, CLG, June 2010, paragraph 9)

84 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordham Research, 2010), using the national CLG Model for assessing current housing need

85 the geographical distribution by Electoral Ward is shown on Picture 2.4 in the accompanying Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (2010)

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

14.8 Table 14.1 and Table 14.2 below, estimate the likely scale of the need for ordinary and specialist housing in each Settlement Area based on the calculations used under Policy Option PO2 in Section 10 of this Assessment Report:

Settlement Area	Implied Plan Target (net)	Implied Annual Need (net)	% of Annual Need
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	824	55	13%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	-36	-2	n/a
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,280	85	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	799	53	13%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	1,525	102	24%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	792	53	13%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	952	63	15%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	166	11	2%
Total	6,302	420	100%

Table 14.1 Ordinary Housing Need

Settlement Area	Implied Plan Target (net)	Implied Annual Need (net)	% of Annual Need
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	490	33	15%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	-12	<-1	n/a
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	756	50	23%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	437	29	13%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	717	48	22%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	375	25	11%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	454	30	14%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	81	5	2%
Total	3,298	220	100%

Table 14.2 Specialist Housing Need

14.9 Approximately 30% of future needs to 2029 are expected to be for specialist rather than ordinary housing⁽⁸⁶⁾.

14.10 While the latest assessment continues to recommend a Borough wide target of 40 percent for the provision of affordable housing within new market housing developments, a separate viability study has indicated that the local housing market would only currently be able to support a Borough wide target of 20 percent affordable

86 specialist housing includes any form of purpose-designed housing or communal establishment such as sheltered, supported, extra care or wheelchair standard housing which caters for people who are unable to live independently in ordinary housing

housing, with a target of only 10 percent within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area. The vast majority of the affordable housing required would need to be social housing (85 percent)⁽⁸⁷⁾.

14.11 As the target for affordable housing is highly sensitive to changes in prices, the viability study also recommended that a way of changing the target to respond to future changes in the housing market should be included within the Core Strategy⁽⁸⁸⁾.

14.12 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Affordable Housing Viability Study will need to be periodically updated to ensure that the targets being applied still reflected the scale and pattern of need across the Borough and are not requiring too many or too few affordable homes to be provided.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

14.13 Providing for affordable homes and specialist housing is consistent with the social aspirations of the Preferred Spatial Vision, which includes improving the housing stock, tackling disparity and providing a high quality of life for everyone.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

14.14 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Both Policy Options could support economic revitalisation by providing a higher standard of modern affordable housing and construction jobs for employees in local industry. Policy Option AH2 could, however, also be used to support a provision of affordable housing more closely related to the pattern of local employment.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Both Policy Options could be used to support the delivery of housing market renewal and housing growth but Policy Option AH2 is more likely to lead to an over-concentration of affordable and specialist housing which could limit the range and choice of accommodation available within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area.
Transport Accessibility	Additional controls would be needed under both Policy Options to ensure affordable housing was delivered in the most accessible locations but Policy Option AH2 could provide additional support by directing affordable and specialist housing to specific locations.

87 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Affordable Housing Viability Study (Fordham Research, 2010)

88 this would involve the periodic review of the target in the light of nationally published figures on house prices, building costs and alternative land-use values

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Neighbourhood Services	Additional controls would be needed under both Policy Options to ensure affordable housing was delivered in locations that would further support the provision and use of neighbourhood services. While Policy Option AH1 could support improvements across a wider area, Policy Option AH2 could provide additional support by directing affordable and specialist housing to specific locations.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to ensure that affordable and specialist housing would respect local distinctiveness and secure appropriate green infrastructure but Policy Option AH2 could provide additional support by directing affordable housing to specific locations.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to ensure that affordable and specialist housing avoided areas at risk from flooding and minimises the number of vulnerable residents exposed to any significant risk.
New City Neighbourhood	Both Policy Options could support the establishment of a mixed, new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead but could lead to an over-concentration of affordable housing which could have an impact on wider aspirations for a greater range and choice of housing within the Newheartlands Pathfinder .

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

14.15 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Both Policy Options could be used to support focused regeneration but directing the majority of affordable and specialist housing to regeneration priority areas, could fail to address the scale of need in other areas of the Borough. The potential for an over-concentration of affordable and specialist housing would, however, need to be balanced against the social benefit of providing affordable and specialist housing in the most accessible locations more closely aligned to the pattern of local job opportunities.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Policy Option AH1 would allow the need for affordable and specialist housing to be met throughout the wider urban area, wherever new market housing took place but Policy Option AH2 could focus provision towards specific areas of local need.

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Policy Option AH1 would support the delivery of affordable and specialist housing across an even wider area of the Borough, wherever new market housing took place but Policy Option AH2 could focus provision towards specific areas of local need, including within the rural areas.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Policy Option AH1 would support the delivery of affordable and specialist housing wherever new market housing took place and in the most sustainable locations but Policy Option AH2 could focus provision towards specific areas of local need.

Implications for Settlement Areas

14.16 As Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing does not specify a preferred location for the provision of affordable and specialist housing, the implications for individual Settlement Areas will largely be related to the Broad Spatial Option to be pursued and the the scale and location of new development to be allowed under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets and Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing. Policy Option AH2 would, however, also be able to deliver affordable and specialist housing in locations where needs were greatest.

Implications for Delivery

14.17 Both Policy Options could be used to support the development of sustainable, mixed communities, with varying levels of effectiveness. While Policy Option AH1 would provide affordable and specialist housing wherever new market housing was permitted, Policy Option AH2 would provide a clear link between the level of provision and local need.

14.18 The provision of affordable and specialist housing will, however, be almost totally reliant on the availability of public funding and private sector development economics. This may mean that the ability to address the scale of need over the plan period as a whole could be limited by market constraints. The viability study, for example, clearly indicates that options that will focus new development within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area are more likely to deliver a lower level of affordable housing than more viable developments elsewhere. Policy Option AH1 could, therefore, be more likely to deliver affordable and specialist housing in areas that would not be priorities for publicly funded schemes, which tend to be focused on areas where needs are greatest.

14.19 Delivery under both Policy Options would need to be closely linked to the operation of Preferred Option PO17 - Developer Contributions.

Implications for Infrastructure

14.20 The implications of both Policy Options are likely to be more closely related to the final numbers allocated to each Settlement Area under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets and Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing. Options that would increase the focus on the re-use of previously developed land in regeneration priority areas are more likely to be able to use the capacity of existing urban services.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option AH1 would be the most sustainable. Dispersing affordable and specialist housing across the Borough would better encourage the formation of more mixed, sustainable communities, supporting social inclusion, a more diverse housing offer and a wider mix of population⁽⁸⁹⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal concludes that Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing, scores positively against sustainability objectives. Targets which require provision of affordable housing across the Borough would encourage the formation of diverse, sustainable communities and would support housing market renewal through diversification of the housing offer. The high specification to which affordable units are normally required to be built could have a positive impact on quality of life, energy efficiency, waste management and carbon reduction. Preferred Option 9 should also be flexible enough to respond to local circumstances relating to viability but the provision of affordable and specialist housing should only be provided in locations where appropriate supporting infrastructure will be available within the immediate local area⁽⁹⁰⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

14.21 The Council's revised assessment is that Policy Option AH1 should still be the preferred option, as Policy Option AH1 is more likely to achieve mixed communities wherever new housing development takes place and is likely to be simpler to apply. Policy Option AH2 would direct affordable and specialist housing to areas of greatest need but could lead to an over-concentration of affordable and specialist housing, which could hinder wider objectives related to economic revitalisation, housing market renewal, balanced communities and a wider choice of housing.

15 Gypsies and Travellers

15.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main options for providing accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers:

89 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

90 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

- Policy Option GT1 - set a geographically specific target in the Core Strategy
- Policy Option GT2 - set out criteria for the assessment of planning applications were they to be submitted in the Core Strategy

15.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option GT2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

15.3 Consultation showed almost unanimous support for Policy Option GT2. Only one respondent appeared to favour Policy Option GT1. A small number of other respondents expressed no preference. A number of respondents questioned the level of demand. One suggested that the Council should only seek to provide transit accommodation. Another suggested that if a site was proposed but not used it could be made available to tourists⁽⁹¹⁾.

Policy Fit

15.4 The Council has a legal duty under the Housing Acts to make appropriate provision for accommodating Gypsies and Travellers in line with local needs. National planning policy requires the Council to plan for the need to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers⁽⁹²⁾ and core strategies are expected to set out fair, reasonable, realistic and effective criteria for the location of sites to guide future allocations⁽⁹³⁾.

15.5 The Government has advised that Local Authorities are now responsible to decide for themselves how many pitches will be necessary according to need and historic demand and has announced the intention to replace Circular 01/06 with new light touch guidance and stronger enforcement powers⁽⁹⁴⁾.

15.6 The requirement to translate the number pitches identified at regional level into specific site allocations is no longer relevant following the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy. There is no local target for provision in the current Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

Evidence Base

15.7 A sub-regional assessment commissioned in June 2007 indicated that there was a need for up to 45 residential pitches and 10 transit pitches across Merseyside for the period 2007 to 2016 and suggested that up to 10 residential pitches may need

91 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

92 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3, CLG, June 2010, paragraph 21)

93 Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (ODPM, February 2006, paragraph 32)

94 Press Release (CLG, 29 August 2010)

to be provided within Wirral⁽⁹⁵⁾. The final figures for Wirral were to be included in a now abandoned Partial Review of the former Regional Spatial Strategy.

15.8 The Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Reports indicate that there were no residential or transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers within Wirral. The national six-monthly caravan counts have shown no caravans present in Wirral for the last 10 years. Four temporary unauthorised encampments have, however, been recorded in Wirral since 2006. The last unauthorised encampments were 8 caravans at Millbrook Drive (Wallasey Docks) during October 2009 and an encampment of 2 caravans at Telegraph Road (layby, Heswall) at the end of August 2010.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

15.9 Criteria for provision for Gypsies and Travellers would be consistent with the social aspirations of the Preferred Spatial Vision including tackling disparity and providing a high quality of life for everyone.

Implications for Spatial Objectives

15.10 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location should not have any significant implications for economic revitalisation.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location should not have any significant implications for housing growth and market renewal.
Transport Accessibility	Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers will need to be well-related to the highway network.
Neighbourhood Services	Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers will need to be well-related to the availability of a full range of neighbourhood services.
Environmental Quality	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location should not have any significant implications for environmental quality.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to avoid land at risk from flooding.

95 Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (Salford University, 2008)

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
New City Neighbourhood	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location should not have any significant implications for the delivery of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

15.11 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location is unlikely to have any significant implications for focused regeneration under either Policy Option. Broad Spatial Option 1 could lead to provision for Gypsy and Travellers as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point or the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, if a suitable site was available.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location is unlikely to have any significant implications for balanced growth under either Policy Options but Broad Spatial Option 2 could lead to provision for Gypsies and Travellers anywhere within the existing urban area, if a suitable site was available.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Properly designed and well-managed accommodation in a suitable location is unlikely to have any significant implications for urban expansion but Broad Spatial Option 3 could lead to provision for Gypsies and Travellers outside the existing urban area, if a suitable site was available.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would support provision for Gypsies and Travellers in areas of identified need, if a suitable site was available.

Implications for Settlement Areas

15.12 Recent unauthorised encampments have taken place at Heswall, New Brighton and Wallasey Docks. An understanding of the travelling patterns of the Gypsy and Traveller Community would also need to be taken into account.

Implications for Delivery

15.13 It is unlikely that a private developer would wish to provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation as part of a wider proposal for development. In the absence

of grant funding, the Council is also unlikely to have the resources necessary to identify, construct and manage a new site(s), given the scale of other priorities within the Borough.

Implications for Infrastructure

15.14 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers will have implications that could only be properly assessed once a site-specific proposal is received.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that both Policy Options would be equally sustainable⁽⁹⁶⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 10 - Gypsies and Travellers, scores positively against sustainability objectives. The inclusion of appropriate criteria could help to identify need and address deficiencies in provision and improve access to appropriate accommodation, services and employment opportunities. Preferred Option 10 would, however, need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to minimise any potential adverse impacts on biodiversity, waste management, pollution and local heritage. Properly designed and well managed accommodation should not have any significant implications for incompatible uses or traffic on local roads⁽⁹⁷⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

15.15 The Council's revised assessment is that Policy Option GT2 is still likely to provide the most flexible approach.

16 Distribution of Employment

16.1 The Spatial Options Report considered three main options for the distribution of new employment development:

- Policy Option EL1 - Concentrate on identified strategic locations in east Wirral
- Policy Option EL2 - Concentrate on existing industrial areas and town centres across all of Wirral
- Policy Option EL3 - Identify a new long term strategic location outside the existing urban area

96 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

97 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

16.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option EL1 was likely to be the Council's preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

16.3 Public consultation showed broadly equal support for Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2. Positively, Policy Option EL1 was considered to maintain employment close to areas of need, with scope to support the maritime and port sector, particularly at West Float and Cammell Lairds. Negatively, respondents believed that Policy Option EL1 would preclude development at existing employment areas in other parts of the Borough.

16.4 In contrast, Policy Option EL2 was seen to provide employment opportunities nearer to people's homes, support for town centres across Wirral, and as most likely to address areas of identified need west of the M53 motorway. Some respondents felt that a combination of Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2 would offer the most sustainable solution, so that the potential to sustain and develop employment areas in suitable locations outside the Strategic Regional Sites was not held back.

16.5 There was a strong rejection of greenfield development because of the significant environmental impact, and the amount of existing brownfield land. A number of respondents indicated that locating development outside existing employment areas would also require additional infrastructure and might result in less sustainable travel patterns. There was generally strong support for focusing development in locations that are accessible by existing transport links. A small number of respondents supported Policy Option EL3, believing that this would be the only way to provide new high quality employment sites.

16.6 One respondent favoured a more flexible approach to the use of allocated employment land, to allow a wider range of alternative uses⁽⁹⁸⁾.

Policy Fit

16.7 National Planning Policy sets out the Government's objectives for delivering sustainable economic growth, through reducing the gap in economic growth rates, promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation, delivering more sustainable patterns of development, reducing the need to travel, and promoting the vitality and viability of town and other centres⁽⁹⁹⁾.

16.8 PPS4 applies to any development that provides employment, or generates wealth, or produces or generates an economic output or product. Areas with high levels of deprivation should be prioritised for investment. Policies should facilitate a

98 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

99 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4, CLG, 2009)

broad range of economic development while supporting existing business sectors and development should be prioritised on previously developed land in accessible locations.

16.9 The former Regional Spatial Strategy identified a shortfall of employment land in Merseyside and Halton to meet anticipated demand and proposed that existing employment land should only be released for other uses following a comprehensive review of commitments. RSS Policy W3 recommended that at least 30% of identified sites should be immediately available at any one time.

16.10 Strategic Regional Sites have been designated in Birkenhead and Bromborough.

16.11 The Atlantic Gateway and Liverpool SuperPort are key emerging regional projects, within which the Port of Liverpool, the Manchester Ship Canal and the redevelopment of the Birkenhead Dock Estate are identified as important projects for the Liverpool City Region as a whole.

16.12 The Wirral Investment Strategy seeks to maximise economic regeneration; improve sustainability; reduce the travel to work area; increase GVA; reduce worklessness; and provide more higher value jobs.

16.13 High levels of unemployment, low incomes and deprivation persist in many areas of the Borough and the Council has set an employment rate target of 76%⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Based on a working age population of 182,300⁽¹⁰¹⁾ and 111,000 existing jobs, this is an additional 27,500 jobs.

16.14 The Council's enterprise strategy estimates that the additional business space required to close the stock gap with the North West average, would require an additional 0.9 million square feet of industrial and 1.4 million square feet of office space⁽¹⁰²⁾.

16.15 The Council recognises that new development can make additional contributions, over and above those which may naturally be derived through the development process, if new opportunities can be generated for employment and training. Benefits could relate to assisting people into jobs; developing skills; contributing to higher and more stable levels of employment and establishing and retaining a flexible and highly skilled workforce through training and education. It is important, therefore, that a mechanism is included to secure direct employment and training opportunities for the local community as part of any new development.

16.16 A recent integrated regeneration study has identified the need to provide accommodation to meet modern business needs, including large footplate office space and smaller accommodation to support and foster start-ups and enterprise;

100 Employment for All A Full Employment Strategy for Wirral (Wirral Council, 2006)

101 NOMIS, 2008

102 Embracing Change: An Enterprise Strategy for Wirral (Wirral Council, 2007)

nurture investment in identified economic sectors; attract additional Government relocations; optimise the full potential of the Birkenhead waterfront and Birkenhead Docks; and make Birkenhead a key destination for economic opportunities⁽¹⁰³⁾.

Evidence Base

16.17 The Council's latest employment land assessment indicates that up to 302 hectares of employment land could be needed to meet employment needs to 2031. Just over 233 hectares of potential employment land was identified as available at April 2007. Sites totalling 78 hectares may, however, be unlikely to come forward for employment use further reducing the realistic land supply⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. The current distribution of available employment sites, is shown in Table 16.1 below⁽¹⁰⁵⁾:

Settlement Area	Area (ha)	%
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	1.61	1%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	63.90	41%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1.34	1%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	65.77	43%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	17.34	11%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake & West Kirby	0.22	<1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	0.00	0%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	4.72	3%
Total	154.90	100%

Table 16.1 Available Employment Land

16.18 In 2007, the Wirral Investment Strategy estimated that raising the Borough's economic activity and business stock towards the regional average would require an additional 55 hectares of land to be developed by 2016, which the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study calculated to mean a shortfall of 177 hectares by 2030. This quantity of land could only be reduced by seeking higher density employment development, for example, at Birkenhead and as part of emerging opportunities like Wirral Waters within the Birkenhead Dock Estate.

16.19 Other issues identified in the Employment Land and Premises Study included:

- a continued strong local demand for modern sites and premises in Birkenhead and Bromborough
- an acute shortage of unconstrained immediately available employment land
- a general lack of high quality sites for offices or general industry outside Wirral International Business Park
- a dependency on grant aid, even in Bromborough

103 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

104 Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009)

105 these figures will be updated before inclusion in the draft Core Strategy

16.20 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study also recommended that an additional buffer of at least five years historic land take-up was maintained, to provide range and choice and 'room-to-manoeuvre' to allow forecast structural change to occur.

16.21 The Council's latest Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report continues to identify economic revitalisation as one of the main challenges facing Wirral. While the amount of office floorspace has remained relatively stable, the amount of industrial floorspace has continued to decrease. A higher than average proportion of Wirral's factory, office and warehouse stock originates from between 1940 and 1970 with a comparatively low proportion of more recent stock. The recent slow down in the construction of new employment development shows very little office and industrial floorspace currently under construction⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.

16.22 The latest forecasts for the Liverpool City Region, taking account of the impact of the recession, expect job losses to continue to 2012 with job growth regaining pre-recession levels by 2015 and an increase of between 45,000 to 87,000 jobs by 2030 across a range of four scenarios. For Wirral, this shows job growth of between 8,740 and 19,240 jobs, assuming a 'policy on' approach and the delivery of pipeline projects. The non-intervention trend forecast figures ranged from 2,060 to 8,050 respectively. Manufacturing declines under all the scenarios⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

16.23 Key emerging projects, expected to provide a significant amount of employment in Wirral, include:

Key Project	Settlement Area	Development Use	Approximate Area	Other Information
Wirral Waters	2	Office/ Light Industry	422,757 sqm	2010-2050 development period
		Retail	60,000 sqm	
		Hotel/ Conference	38,000 sqm	
		Cultural/ Educational/ Leisure/ Flexible	100,000 sqm	
Wirral International Business Park	4	Office/ Light Industrial/ Industrial/ Distribution	65 ha	Balance of remaining land
Woodside	2	Mixed use office, retail, leisure, hotel, tourism and residential	10 ha	Updated masterplan being prepared
Scotts Quay	2	Office/ Light Industrial/ Industrial/ Distribution	12 ha	Masterplan to be prepared
Hind Street	2	Mixed use office, retail, leisure, car sales	11 ha	Masterplan being prepared
Successor site for Wirral International Business Park	Potential area of search might cover	Office/ Light Industrial/ Industrial/ Distribution	20 ha	Medium/ long term aspiration identified in Employment Land and Premises Study (2009)

106 Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (Wirral Council, 2009)

107 Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts: Recession & Recovery (TMP, 2009)

Key Project	Settlement Area	Development Use	Approximate Area	Other Information
	Settlement Areas 2/ 3/ 4			
Port-related activity	2 and 4	Port related employment	62 ha	Eastham (22 ha) Twelve Quays (2.5 ha) Cammell Lairds (24.5 ha) Birkenhead Dock Estate (13 ha)

Table 16.2 Pipeline Projects

Implications for the Spatial Vision

16.24 Policy Option EL1 would support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to urban regeneration and bringing vacant land back into productive economic use. While Policy Option EL2 and Policy Option EL3 could expand the range of sites available, this could be less supportive of priority regeneration programmes in locations where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest. The Preferred Option would, however, tie in more closely with the Preferred Spatial Vision, with a primary focus on regeneration at the heart of the older urban area and at Birkenhead, Bromborough and the Ports, as well as supporting local employment opportunities in existing centres and employment areas.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

16.25 The implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	All three Policy Options would support economic revitalisation. While Policy Option EL2 and Policy Option EL3 would expand the range and choice of sites available, this could be at the expense of regeneration at the core of the older urban areas, under Policy Option EL1. The Preferred Option would provide a high density of jobs and businesses by focusing development and investment within existing employment areas and centres, as well as the Assisted Areas, where needs are greatest.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Policy Option EL1 and the Preferred Option are likely to offer the greatest level of support to market renewal and housing growth within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and Mersey Heartlands Growth Point. The wider geographic focus of the Preferred Option has further potential to support other vulnerable housing market areas. Policy Option EL3 would offer the least support to housing market renewal.
Transport Accessibility	Policy Option EL1 is likely to support employment development in the most accessible locations. Policy Option EL2 could, however reduce the need to travel by providing a higher level of employment across a wider area. The performance of Policy

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
	Option EL3 would depend on the location and accessibility of the site(s) chosen as a successor to the Business Park. The Preferred Option is most closely aligned, as it would direct employment development to the most accessible locations across the Borough as a whole.
Neighbourhood Services	Policy Option EL1 would direct the majority of new employment development to locations that are most likely to be accessible to areas of greatest need. Policy Option EL2 would, however, allow a greater level of local employment to be maintained in outlying areas of need such as Leasowe, Moreton and Upton. The performance of Policy Option EL3 would depend on the location and accessibility of the site(s) chosen as a successor to the Business Park. The Preferred Option is most closely aligned, as it would direct employment development to the most locally accessible locations across the Borough as a whole.
Environmental Quality	By focusing on existing employment locations, Policy Option EL1, Policy Option EL2 and the Preferred Option are unlikely to have a significant impact on locally distinctive characteristics and assets. Policy Option EL3 has the greatest potential to have a harmful impact. Additional controls would, however, be necessary under all the Policy Options, to ensure that new development contributed to the enhancement of the Borough's distinctive characteristics and assets.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed under all Policy Options, to avoid the risk of flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	Policy Option EL1 and the Preferred Option would offer the greatest level of support to establishing a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban areas in Birkenhead. Policy Option EL2 and Policy Option EL3, which concentrate on existing industrial areas and local centres across the whole of the Borough, as well as new locations outside of the urban area, could offer reduced support.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

16.26 The likely implications for the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Policy Option EL1 would be consistent with focusing new development and investment into identified regeneration priority areas in east Wirral. Policy Option EL2 would also address areas of identified need to the west of the M53 Motorway. Policy Option EL3 is least likely to support Broad Spatial Option 1. The

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
	Preferred Option would direct new employment development into the identified regeneration priority areas, whilst also supporting development in existing employment areas and centres elsewhere in the Borough.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Policy Option EL2 is most likely to promote a balanced growth in employment across the urban area. Policy Option EL3 could also support a more balanced pattern of employment, subject to the location of the site(s) chosen as a successor to the Business Park. The Preferred Option would seek to direct growth to existing employment areas and centres across the Borough, whilst maintaining an emphasis on employment development in the older inner urban areas of east Wirral.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Only Policy Option EL3 would be fully consistent with a strategy of urban expansion. The Preferred Option would not be consistent with urban expansion, as it seeks to prioritise employment areas and local centres within the existing urban area only.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Policy Option EL1 would be consistent with focusing new development and investment into identified regeneration priority areas in east Wirral. Policy Option EL2 would also address areas of identified need to the west of the M53 Motorway, but may not help to deliver the scale of transformation necessary to support a self-sustaining programme of regeneration. Policy Option EL3 is least likely to support the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy. The Preferred Option is most closely aligned as it would direct employment growth to the areas in greatest need of regeneration, focus new jobs in the older urban areas of east Wirral, as well as in existing employment areas and local centres where they will be most accessible to the greatest number of residents.

Implications for Settlement Areas

16.27 The likely implications for the Settlement Areas include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	Policy Option EL1 would continue to focus new employment development to the south of Settlement Area 1. Policy Option EL2 would promote further opportunities at Liscard and other existing local centres, which could include New Brighton and Cross Lane Industrial Estate. The Preferred Option would combine the approaches of Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	Policy Option EL1 would continue to focus new employment development to the heart of Settlement Area 2. Policy Option EL2 and Policy Option EL3 would, however, extend the range of

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
	opportunities outside Settlement Area 2. The Preferred Option would balance the approach between Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	While Policy Option EL1 would continue to focus new employment development to the north and east of Settlement Area 3, Policy Option EL2 could promote a wider range of opportunities in local centres and employment areas in Settlement Area 3. The Preferred Option would continue to provide for small and medium scale opportunities to be directed to North Cheshire Trading Estate, Prenton.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Policy Option EL1 would continue to focus new employment development to the Strategic Regional Site at Wirral International Business Park and strategically important facilities such as the Lever Faberge Soap Factory and Research Laboratories at Port Sunlight and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham. While Policy Option EL2 could promote further opportunities within local centres, Policy Option EL3 could promote additional employment land at the urban edge. The Preferred Option would continue to focus major new employment development to Wirral International Business Park and Port Sunlight as well as reserving land at Eastham for port-related activities.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	While Policy Option EL1 would not promote additional employment development within Settlement Area 5, Policy Option EL2 would promote additional employment at the existing industrial areas at Leasowe, Moreton and Upton, Moreton Town Centre and other local centres. Policy Option EL3 could promote additional employment land at the urban edge. The Preferred Option would seek to promote small and medium scale employment opportunities at existing sites and centres, including Leasowe, Moreton and Upton.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	While Policy Option EL1 would not promote additional employment development within Settlement Area 6, Policy Option EL2 could promote additional opportunities at West Kirby Town Centre and other local centres. Policy Option EL3 could promote additional employment land at the urban edge. The Preferred Option would not promote additional employment development within Settlement Area 6, but would support small and medium scale activities in existing employment areas and local centres, including Carr Lane Industrial Estate.
Area 7 - Heswall	While Policy Option EL1 would not promote additional employment development within Settlement Area 7, Policy Option EL2 could promote additional opportunities at Heswall Town Centre and other local centres. Policy Option EL3 could promote additional employment land at the urban edge. The Preferred Option would

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
	not promote additional employment development within Settlement Area 7, other than small scale employment proposals in existing local centres.
Area 8 - Rural Area	Only Policy Option EL3 is likely to have implications for Settlement Area 8.

Implications for Delivery

16.28 The past success of Wirral International Business Park; the designation of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point; the new Strategic Regional Site at Birkenhead; and the continued demand for sites and premises in Birkenhead and Bromborough, mean that Policy Option EL1 is still likely to be the most deliverable, overall.

16.29 Policy Option EL1 would also be supported by proximity to Liverpool and the M53 Motorway; main freight routes; a readily available workforce in priority locations; and public funding to support the provision of new premises and infrastructure. A concentration on the most accessible locations, in and around Birkenhead, is also more likely to better support the provision of office-based developments.

16.30 Policy Option EL2 would largely need to be led by the private sector, as public resources are unlikely to be available to the levels needed across such a wide area of activity. While Policy Option EL2 would promote the spread of employment across the Borough and could reduce the need to travel, especially in areas of need like Leasowe, Moreton and Upton, the lack of public funding could hinder the delivery of the step change necessary to attract larger, non-local employers.

16.31 Policy Option EL3 is likely to involve the release of land from the Green Belt and could involve a strategic allocation or broad location to be identified in the Core Strategy, which would need to be supported by an additional evidence base, which has not yet been prepared.

16.32 Past annual rates of employment development over the last 20 years, of up to 9.9 hectares, nevertheless imply that there is still likely to be a strong underlying market for sites and premises in the Borough⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

16.33 The Wirral Waters planning application at East Float provides for over 420,000 square metres of new office floorspace over a proposed 40-year build period. Early indications are that up to 64,000 square metres will be delivered by 2020 and up to 11,000 square metres each year thereafter, with up to 261,000 square metres to be developed after 2030, providing up to 21,000 jobs by 2050.

108 Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009)

Implications for Infrastructure

16.34 Policy Option EL1, Policy Option EL2 and the Preferred Option all focus on existing strategic locations or existing industrial sites and employment areas, which are generally already well-served by a variety of appropriate infrastructure.

16.35 The additional infrastructure requirements for Wirral Waters have been assessed through the planning application process and will be dealt with through a Section 106 Agreement and subsequent reserved matters applications.

16.36 Provision of a new Primary Sub-Station and the previous package of road, drainage and junction improvements are expected to remain adequate to serve future development at Wirral International Business Park.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option EL1 was likely to be the most sustainable as it would support the creation of employment opportunities in areas of greatest need and would provide new employment in the most accessible locations⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment, will also be sustainable. It is likely to have a positive impact on urban regeneration and economic growth through directing employment growth to sustainable locations and enhancing employment opportunities. The Preferred Option will also provide an opportunity for the take-up of previously developed land in accessible locations within the Borough, helping to protect greenfield land from development, and will support town centres. The Preferred Option should be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to mitigate any adverse impacts in relation to biodiversity, pollution, traffic intrusion and waste management⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

16.37 The Preferred Option is now a hybrid of Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2 that will allow new employment development within a wider range of existing industrial estates and local centres, while directing the majority of new jobs towards strategic locations in Birkenhead and Bromborough.

16.38 The Council is not convinced that the development of new employment sites in the Green Belt under Policy Option EL3 will be necessary, even towards the end of the plan period, given the scale and quality of development that could be

109 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

110 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

accommodated on previously developed land, and given that Wirral Waters will now be promoted for larger scale, commercial office and service activities. Additional sites have also become available since the onset of the recession.

17 Town Centre Hierarchy

17.1 The Spatial Options Report consulted on an initial town centre hierarchy. The changes proposed are summarised in Table 17.1 below:

Spatial Options Report	Centre	Preferred Options Report
Sub-Regional Centre	Birkenhead Town Centre (including Grange Road West/Oxton Road and Argyle Street)	Sub Regional Centre
Town Centre	Heswall	Town Centre
Town Centre	Liscard	Town Centre
Town Centre	Moreton	Town Centre
Town Centre	West Kirkby	Town Centre
District Centre	Bromborough Village	District Centre
District Centre	Hoyle	District Centre
District Centre	Woodchurch Road, Prenton	District Centre
Local Centre	Borough Road, Prenton Park	Local Centre
Local Centre	Claughton Village	Local Centre
Local Centre	Dacre Hill	Local Centre
Local Centre	Irby Village	Local Centre
Local Centre	Laird Street	Local Centre
Local Centre	Lower Bebington	Local Centre
Local Centre	New Ferry	Local Centre
Local Centre	Oxton Village	Local Centre
Local Centre	Seacombe (Poulton Road)	Local Centre
Local Centre	New Brighton (Seabank Road)	Local Centre
Local Centre	Tranmere Urban Village	Local Centre
Local Centre	Upton Village	Local Centre
Local Centre	New Brighton (Victoria Road)	Local Centre
Local Centre	Wallasey Village	Local Centre
n/a	Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane)	Local Centre
n/a	Eastham (Mill Park Drive / New Chester Road)	Local Centre

Table 17.1 Changes from Spatial Options Report

Results of Consultation

17.2 Public consultation highlighted additional centres that should be included within the network, raised issues over where individual centres sat within the hierarchy and the role of existing out-of-centre facilities in meeting local shopping needs and providing local employment⁽¹¹¹⁾.

111 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

Policy Fit

17.3 National planning policy states that local planning authorities should define a network (the pattern of provision of centres) and a hierarchy of centres (the role and relationship of centres in the network) that will be resilient to anticipated future economic changes and will meet the needs of their catchments and identifies four 'typologies' of centre. The highest level 'City Centre' is not relevant to Wirral but the remaining three include 'Town Centre'; 'District Centre' and 'Local Centre', with a summary of what each centre should comprise⁽¹¹²⁾.

17.4 The former Regional Spatial Strategy identified Birkenhead as the sub-regional centre for the Borough.

17.5 The Wirral Unitary Development Plan, adopted in February 2000, defined nine Key Town Centres and fourteen Traditional Suburban Centres under Policy SH1 and Policy SH2, a classification of centre that reflected the policy advice of the day but is no longer consistent with national planning policy.

Evidence Base

17.6 The network and hierarchy of existing centres in Wirral has been defined on the basis of the criteria and definitions sets out in national planning policy and the findings of the Councils latest retail assessment⁽¹¹³⁾.

17.7 The latest retail assessment sets out the findings of a series of 'health checks' of the Key Town Centres and Traditional Suburban Centres designated in the Unitary Development Plan using the national indicators of vitality and viability listed in section 4 of the then PPS6⁽¹¹⁴⁾. The appraisal involved on-foot surveys, desk research, benchmarking against comparable centres in the North West, and telephone and face-to-face consultation with key stakeholders including developers, landowners, property agents, retail and leisure operators, published data on rental levels, yields etc., and the consultant's own data.

17.8 The healthiest centres in the Borough were found to be Heswall and West Kirby, closely followed by Moreton. Nine centres, including Birkenhead and Liscard, were considered to be showing some signs of weakness. Four centres, at Hoylake; Poulton Road, Seacombe; Victoria Road, New Brighton; and Borough Road, Prenton Park, were considered to be showing more significant signs of weakness. The remaining five centres, at New Ferry; Laird Street; Seabank Road, New Brighton; and Grange Road West/Oxton Road in Birkenhead, were considered to be in need

112 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4, CLG December 2009, Policy EC3.1b and Annex B)

113 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009)

114 Annex D of PPS4 repeats this list of indicators, with the addition of land values and the length of time key sites have remained undeveloped

of major intervention if they were to remain viable⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

17.9 The recommended centre classification was based on the following indicators:

- composite comparison goods market share
- quality of the convenience sector offer
- the results of the consultant's local provision index (for Traditional Suburban Centres)
- the rank of each centre in the Management Horizons Europe UK Shopping Index (based on a count of retailer presence by location)

17.10 Grange Road West/Oxton Road, which was recommended as a Local Centre by the consultants, has been proposed for incorporation with Birkenhead Town Centre as part of the wider Sub-Regional Centre to support the findings of the Council's integrated regeneration study⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

17.11 Consultation has identified two additional centres, at Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane) and at Eastham (Mill Park Drive/New Chester Road), which merit inclusion as Local Centres in view of the scale and range of their retail and local service offer.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

17.12 Preferred Option 12 would directly support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to a thriving network of town, district and local service centres.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

17.13 The implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	The Preferred Option would help to focus new employment and investment within the Borough's existing higher level centres.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Identifying a network of centres alongside priorities for each centre will support the provision of facilities that will support the regeneration of housing markets in the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and other areas of housing stress.
Transport Accessibility	Identifying a network of centres will enable new development to be directed towards the centres listed.

115 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009, Table 3.1 refers)

116 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Neighbourhood Services	Identifying a network of centres will enable the provision of shops, services, health and community facilities to be directed towards the centres listed.
Environmental Quality	Identifying a network of centres alongside the priorities for each centre will support initiatives to enhance the environmental quality of the centres listed.
Flood Risk	None of the Borough's existing centres are known to be vulnerable to a risk of flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	Identifying a network of centres will not directly support the development of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead but a strong network of existing centres would support the wider attractiveness of the area as a place to live and work.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

17.14 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Identifying a network of existing centres would support the delivery of regeneration initiatives in centres within regeneration priority areas as part of focused regeneration.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Identifying a network of existing centres would support the delivery of improvements in centres over a wider area of the Borough in support of balanced growth.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Identifying a network of existing centres would support the delivery of improvements in centres over a wider area of the Borough in support of urban expansion.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Identifying a network of existing centres would support the delivery of improvements in centres over a wider area of the Borough and support the ability to direct new development to the most sustainable locations.

Implications for Settlement Areas

17.15 The implications for each of the Settlement Areas include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	The Preferred Option identifies Liscard as a higher level Town Centre and Local Centres at New Brighton, Wallasey Village and Seacombe.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The Preferred Option identifies Birkenhead Town Centre as the highest level Sub-Regional Centre.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	The Preferred Option identifies Woodchurch Road Prenton as a District Centre and Laird Street, Claughton Road, Oxton Village, Borough Road (Prenton Park), Tranmere Urban Village and Dacre Hill as Local Centres.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	The Preferred Option identifies Bromborough Village as a District Centre and New Ferry, Lower Bebington and Eastham (Mill Park Drive/Old Chester Road) as Local Centres.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	The Preferred Option identifies Moreton as a higher level Town Centre and Upton Village and Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane) as Local Centres.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	The Preferred Option identifies West Kirby as a higher level Town Centre and Hoylake as a District Centre.
Area 7 - Heswall	The Preferred Option identifies identifies Heswall as a higher level Town Centre and Irby Village as a Local Centre.
Area 8 - Rural Area	None of the centres identified in the Preferred Option are located within the Rural Area.

Implications for Delivery

17.16 The identification of a network and hierarchy of centres is important for the delivery of other spatial objectives related to the promotion of urban regeneration, environmental quality, a more sustainable pattern of development, transport accessibility and the provision of neighbourhood services.

17.17 Preferred Option 12 also provides for the network and hierarchy of centres to be accompanied by a statements of priorities for each centre, which will identify the need for any local improvements and which will be able to include any additional specialist roles that fall outside the scope of national health check criteria, such as the importance of West Kirby and Hoylake for tourism.

Implications for Infrastructure

17.18 Identifying a network of existing centres should not have any significant implications for the provision of additional infrastructure although the identification of a hierarchy is likely to lend further support to local improvements when a need for additional infrastructure is identified.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network, scores positively against sustainability objectives. Protecting the Borough's network of centres will help to ensure that residents have continued access to a wide range of employment opportunities and may reduce the need to travel. Local heritage and the provision of facilities for culture, sport and leisure should be taken into consideration when defining the boundaries of centres⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

17.19 The Council's revised assessment is that the Preferred Option is the most appropriate reflection of the current and future role of the existing centres listed and as a focus for future service delivery.

18 Distribution of Retailing

18.1 The Spatial Options Report consulted on two main options for the provision of additional comparison floorspace:

- Policy Option CR1 - Focus on Birkenhead Town Centre and Wirral Waters
- Policy Option CR2 - Focus on Wirral Waters

18.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option CR2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

18.3 Public consultation indicated concern that Policy Option CR2 appeared to be ignoring the scope for locating new development within existing centres; concern about the potential impact of a large out-of-centre scheme at Wirral Waters and continued concern about the future of Birkenhead Town Centre. Clarification was also requested on the approach to future convenience retailing. Comments on the Spatial Portrait also indicated a need for enhanced policy coverage for the key centres within each Settlement Area⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

Policy Fit

18.4 The overall objectives of national planning policy are to promote the vitality and viability of town centres as important places for communities, by focusing economic growth and town centre uses in existing centres, and encouraging competition and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and

117 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

118 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres.

18.5 At local level, evidence should be used to assess the detailed need for land or floorspace for all main town centre uses over the plan period; identify deficiencies in the provision of local convenience and other day to day needs; and assess the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development. Specific advice is included on assessing the quantitative need for retail and leisure development and further guidance is provided in a separate Practice Guide⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

Evidence Base

18.6 The Council's latest retail assessment has assessed the need for additional retail floorspace in the period to 2021 and more indicatively to 2026⁽¹²⁰⁾. The methodology reflects established best practice:

Spending Assessments

18.7 In relation to the convenience sector, there was no strong evidence to make an adjustment for under or over trading. The associated household survey indicated that over 96 per cent of convenience spending is already retained within the Borough and therefore there was no need to assess growth on the basis of either increased or decreased retention scenarios.

18.8 In relation to comparison spending, no allowance for under and over-trading was deemed necessary as the two main comparison destinations (Birkenhead and Croft Retail Park) were trading in line with expectations. The associated household survey indicated that 65 percent of spending is retained within the Borough. The consultants have, therefore assessed alternative scenarios based on a moderate decrease in retention; static retention; a moderate increase in retention to 70 percent; and a significant increase in retention to 75 percent by 2026. Sensitivity testing took place in relation to population levels, with and without Wirral Waters, and differing assumptions on growth in turnover of existing businesses.

Quantitative Assessments

18.9 In relation to convenience retailing, the quantitative assessment concluded that low forecasts of growth in future expenditure; low forecast population growth; the need to support existing businesses; and the turnover requirements of existing planning permissions; indicated that there would be no capacity for additional convenience floorspace in the Borough in the period to 2026.

18.10 In relation to comparison floorspace, the quantitative assessment concluded that the effects of the recession on forecasts of future expenditure growth; low forecast population growth; the need to support existing retail businesses; and the turnover

119 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4, CLG December 2009, paragraph 10 and Policy EC1)

120 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009)

requirements of existing planning permissions; indicated that additional comparison floorspace could not be supported before 2014. Capacity for additional comparison floorspace was, however, likely to be generated in the medium term as expenditure growth increased over time.

18.11 The consultants did not consider that it was sensible to plan on the basis of a static or falling retention rate so their recommended focus was on the four scenarios based on increased retention rates. The final report recommended that a scenario based on increasing retention to 75 percent; a lower rate of floorspace efficiency; and population growth at Wirral Waters should be carried forward (Scenario 4D). The assessed capacity is set out in Table 16.1 of the Preferred Options Report.

18.12 In relation to commercial leisure, a broad assessment was undertaken, reflecting the fact that methodologies are less well developed in this area, based on current patterns of spending. Of the £64.1million growth in this sector to 2021, around 30 percent was anticipated to go to eating and drinking establishments with the remainder going to a wide range of activities with no single activity capturing a significant market share.

Qualitative Assessments

18.13 In relation to the convenience sector, the consultants noted low levels of convenience retention in Seacombe, Lower Bebington, and Birkenhead but considered that these would be addressed through existing provision and planning commitments.

18.14 In relation to the comparison goods sector, the consultants concluded that there was a need to improve the quality of the Borough's offer, particularly in Birkenhead Town Centre, in light of the opening of Liverpool One and further development in Chester City Centre in the medium to long term. The final report concluded that the comparison retention rate would continue to deteriorate unless there was a substantial comparison-led retail development of sufficient critical mass to stave off some of the competition from Liverpool and Chester.

Options Assessment

18.15 Six options for accommodating the need for new comparison retail and leisure facilities were considered. Each option was assessed against a range of key policy objectives and assessment criteria as set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, key sustainability objectives and the Council's own sustainability appraisal objectives. The performance of each option against each criteria was rated as good, moderate or poor.

18.16 The options together with their overall ratings, were as follows:

Option 1 - Disperse Growth Across the Town Centres at Birkenhead, Liscard, Heswall, West Kirby and Moreton - Maintain the Status Quo

Overall Rating: Poor	Reason: - Mainly on the grounds of delivery, because Option 1 assumes a continuation of existing market shares, which in turn generates a theoretical floorspace requirement in all centres, something which the market is highly unlikely to deliver.
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Option 2 - Focus Growth on Birkenhead Town Centre

Overall Rating: Poor	Reason: - Because there are no major proposals for town centre redevelopment in the pipeline, the town centre is in complex multiple ownership and physical constraints restrict the expansion of the centre.
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Option 3 - Focus Growth on the Town Centres of Birkenhead and Liscard

Overall Rating: Poor	Reason: - On the grounds that research suggests that there is unlikely to be a sufficient level of interest in either centre to support the scale of growth required.
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Option 4 - Focus Growth on the Town Centres of Birkenhead and Liscard and on Wirral Waters

Overall Rating: Moderate	Reason: - While scoring well in relation to most aspirations and policy objectives, the required scale of growth in Birkenhead and Liscard would be difficult to achieve. Option 4 also looked to direct strategic growth to Wirral Waters which scores well and could enable at least a partial implementation of this option.
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Option 5 - Focus Growth on Birkenhead Town Centre and on Wirral Waters

Overall Rating: Good	Reason: - Strikes a balance between maintaining the role of the Borough's largest centre while looking towards the future contribution of Wirral Waters but would only be successful if a viable redevelopment scheme for the town centre can be brought forward.
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Option 6 - Focus Growth on Wirral Waters

Overall Rating: Good	Reason: - The most deliverable of all the potential strategies as all the land is in the ownership of the developer and the vision, planning and implementation strategy is already well advanced. Wirral Waters also contributes to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and contributed towards the objectives of the former Regional Spatial Strategy (Policy LCR 2). Seen in this wider context and taken together with the residential and commercial elements, the retail elements would contribute positively to the wider spatial vision for the Borough.
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18.17 The consultants concluded that Options 5 and Option 6 were the two clear preferred growth options, which therefore formed the basis of Policy Option CR1 and Policy Option CR2 presented in the Spatial Options Report.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

18.18 The Preferred Option would support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to the regeneration of the older urban areas and the creation of a new city neighbourhood.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

18.19 The implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Both Policy Options would direct the majority of retail growth to locations in the Borough in greatest need of economic revitalisation. The Preferred Option would direct new retail development to existing centres as the first priority.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Both Policy Options would direct the majority of retail growth to the heart of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and to the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point. The Preferred Option would direct new retail development to existing centres as the first priority.
Transport Accessibility	Both Policy Options and the Preferred Option would direct new retail development to some of the most accessible locations in the Borough. Development at Wirral Waters would require improvements to access by public transport, walking and cycling. Additional controls may be needed, under the Preferred Option, to address the impact of any additional congestion in existing centres.
Neighbourhood Services	Policy Option CR1 would support the provision of enhanced services in Birkenhead. Policy Option CR2 would support new retail and service provision as part of the new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead. The Preferred Option would support the provision of neighbourhood services in existing centres as the first priority.
Environmental Quality	Both Policy Options are unlikely to cause harm to any of the Borough's principal environmental assets. The project level Habitats Regulations Assessment for the East Float Planning Application indicates that there will be no significant effect on the European Sites in the Mersey Estuary. The Environmental Impact Assessment for the same proposal concludes that with mitigation measures in place, the environmental effects of the East Float proposal are not so substantial as to threaten the principle of the scheme. Additional controls would be needed to protect local distinctiveness within existing centres under the Preferred Option.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Flood Risk	Development under both Policy Options and the Preferred Option would need to consider potential flood risk impacts associated with locations in and around the Birkenhead Docks.
New City Neighbourhood	Both Policy Options would support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead. The Preferred Option would support the establishment of the new city neighbourhood, subject to the availability of suitable sites in existing centres.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

18.20 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Both Policy Options would support focused regeneration but the Preferred Option would support focused regeneration subject to the availability of suitable sites in existing centres
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Both Policy Options would focus new retail development on regeneration priority areas but the Preferred Option could support a wider distribution of development to support balanced growth.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	None of the Policy Options would support the provision of new retail development outside the existing urban areas.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Both Policy Options and the Preferred Option would reflect the need to direct new retail development to regeneration priority areas but the Preferred Option would also support new retail development in the most sustainable locations.

Implications for Settlement Areas

18.21 The implications for each of the Settlement Areas include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	The Preferred Option would direct growth to Liscard Town Centre as a first priority and then to Wirral Waters, if suitable sites were not available within the Town Centre. Development in Liscard Town Centre and Birkenhead Town Centre would be accessible by a choice of means of transport but public transport enhancements could be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was highly accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 1.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 2 - Commercial Core	Both Policy Options would support the wider regeneration of Settlement Area 2. The Preferred Option would direct growth to Birkenhead Town Centre as a first priority and then to Wirral Waters, if suitable sites were not available within the Town Centre. Development in Birkenhead Town Centre would be highly accessible by a choice of means of transport but public transport enhancements could be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was highly accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 2.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Enhanced provision to the immediate north at either Birkenhead Town Centre or at Wirral Waters would address the limited provision for comparison goods within Settlement Area 3. Development in Birkenhead Town Centre would be highly accessible by a choice of means of transport but public transport enhancements could be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 3.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	Enhancing retail provision at Birkenhead Town Centre, at Wirral Waters or at other existing centres could have an impact on Croft Retail and Leisure Park, which is not protected under national or regional policies. Development in Birkenhead Town Centre would be highly accessible by a choice of means of transport. Public transport enhancements would be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 4.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	There is limited provision for comparison goods in existing centres in Settlement Area 5. The Preferred Option would direct growth to Moreton Town Centre as a first priority and then to Wirral Waters, if suitable sites were not available within the Town Centre. Development at Moreton Town Centre or at Birkenhead Town Centre would be accessible by a choice of means of transport. Development at Wirral Waters would be accessible by public transport from the northern parts of the Settlement Area but enhanced linkages would be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 5.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	The Preferred Option would direct growth first to existing centres such as West Kirby Town Centre and Hoylake District Centre. Development at Birkenhead Town Centre and at Wirral Waters would be accessible by a choice of means of transport from the majority of Settlement Area 6 but enhanced linkages would be required with Wirral Waters. Public transport enhancements would be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 6. The travelling distances involved could, however, limit the impact on local comparison retailers in existing centres in Settlement Area 6.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 7 - Heswall	The Preferred Option would direct growth first to Heswall Town Centre. Development in Birkenhead Town Centre would be accessible by a choice of means of transport. Public transport enhancements would be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 7. The travelling distances involved could, however, limit the impact on local comparison retailers in existing centres in Settlement Area 7.
Area 8 - Rural Area	Access by a choice of means of transport to existing centres and Wirral Waters is limited from many of the rural areas in Settlement Area 8. Development in Birkenhead Town Centre or other main centres may be more accessible but public transport enhancements would be required to ensure that Wirral Waters was accessible to all residents in Settlement Area 8.

Implications for Delivery

18.22 Core Strategy proposals for retailing will need to be delivered through the combined actions of landowners, developers and retailers. The Council's role in direct delivery is limited, for example, through the use and sale of its own land and buildings and the management and improvement of assets that it is responsible for such as highways and open space. Retail development is generally ineligible for direct external regeneration funding.

18.23 The absence of firm operator interest and the existing configuration of Birkenhead Town Centre appears to be limiting the delivery of new high quality retail floorspace. The realisation of Town Centre development opportunities under the Preferred Option would, therefore, largely need to rely on windfall opportunities.

18.24 Land at Wirral Waters, within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, is within single ownership and Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations identifies Birkenhead and Wirral Waters as a broad location for a new city neighbourhood. The proposals for East Float involve a phased approach to bringing forward retail elements in tandem with the housing and office uses, so that retail development supports the new residential and office community which will be created on site.

Implications for Infrastructure

18.25 Development within existing town centres is likely to make best use of existing urban services. The requirements of individual proposals will, however, need to be dealt with as part of the planning application process in line with Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

18.26 The identification of infrastructure necessary to support the development proposed at Wirral Waters has already been dealt with, in negotiation with key stakeholders, as part of the initial Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework. Further detail has now also been provided through the planning application process at East Float.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option CR1 was likely to be the most sustainable on the basis that it would ensure a wider balance of investment opportunities and was likely to secure the most accessible opportunities for retail and employment⁽¹²¹⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 13 - Retail Growth, scores positively against sustainability objectives. New retail directed towards Birkenhead and then Wirral Waters would provide jobs, services and facilities which would assist in the retention of the working age population. Enhancing the vitality and viability of the hierarchy of town centres should also have a positive impact in terms of addressing poverty, social exclusion and a reduction in the need to travel. The Preferred Option is not considered to have a direct impact on biodiversity and natural habitats but there may be an increase in traffic congestion and vehicle emissions resulting from an increase in retail premises. New retail development may also have potential negative implications for drainage through run-off generated by car parking and large roof areas, and through the generation of significant levels of waste packing and packaging material. Preferred Option 13 would need to be operated in conjunction with other Preferred Options to ensure any adverse impacts were minimised⁽¹²²⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

18.27 While Policy Option CR1 and Policy Option CR2 would both be well placed to deliver the Preferred Spatial Vision and Preferred Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy, the Council's revised assessment is that the need to respond to national policy and to address the need for improvements within other centres, requires a greater focus on existing centres before development likely to provide for more than the local needs of the new population is promoted at Wirral Waters.

18.28 The Preferred Option is now to identify separate priorities for comparison and convenience floorspace. In relation to comparison floorspace, the Preferred Option is now a balanced approach which will direct future growth to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network, having

121 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

122 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

regard to considerations of scale and impact on existing centres and any development at Wirral Waters should support the objectives of the Council's integrated regeneration study⁽¹²³⁾.

18.29 In relation to convenience floorspace, new floorspace will be first directed to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network, having regard to considerations of scale and impact on existing centres.

18.30 The Council has not considered a further option of directing growth to existing out-of-centre facilities or adjacent to existing out-of-centre superstores, as these locations do not offer the same regeneration potential as Wirral Waters and are not higher priorities for consideration in terms of the national sequential approach to site selection.

19 Renewable, Decentralised and Low Carbon Energy

19.1 The Spatial Options Report considered three main Policy Options for the promotion of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy in Wirral:

- Policy Option RE1 - a Borough wide target to be achieved by all types of development
- Policy Option RE2 - a Borough wide target(s) to be achieved by specific types of development
- Policy Option RE3 - geographically specific targets for each Settlement Area

19.2 The Council initially indicated that a combination of these Policy Options was likely to be the Council's preferred approach.

Results of Consultation

19.3 Public consultation demonstrated wide support for a hybrid approach but with little agreement over the detail. One respondent felt that insufficient information was available on which to base a choice. The majority of respondents, nevertheless, believed that Policy Option RE1 should remain the underlying assumption and that it was important that all types of development should at least be made to consider the possibilities. Supporters of Policy Option RE1 believed that any other approach would be too easy to avoid.

19.4 One respondent believed that only commercial-scale schemes, which would be only few in number, were likely to make a significant contribution, while another felt that an emphasis on only big projects was a mistake. The majority appeared to mainly favour micro-generation.

123 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

19.5 A number of respondents thought it was important to be flexible and not to have too narrow a focus and that any approach should cover the full range of potential sources, including large scale stand-alone projects, farm waste and wood fuel; be aimed at delivering improvements to existing buildings as well as new development; do more to encourage home owners; avoid the exclusion of specific technologies; allow for technological development over time; and must be coupled with reductions in energy use to have any meaningful impact. One respondent believed that any target should have no upper limit. Another believed that contributions to off-site schemes should be required in circumstances where on-site provision could not be secured.

19.6 A significant number of respondents, nevertheless, believed that most renewable and low carbon schemes were as yet untested; their actual benefits were still unclear; their wider environmental impacts had been underestimated; and that a more realistic view of their likely implications should be taken into account, including the energy impacts of their construction, use and disposal. Impacts on countryside, coast, green infrastructure, biodiversity and heritage were specifically mentioned.

19.7 One respondent believed that it was important to frame any approach at Settlement Area level, to ensure that any targets were feasible and viable and that facilities could be absorbed without harm and that extra studies and Supplementary Planning Documents were likely to be needed⁽¹²⁴⁾.

Policy Fit

19.8 The Planning & Energy Act 2008 enables local planning authorities to include policies on the amount of energy that should come from renewable sources in new development. National policies aim to generate more than 30 percent of electricity and 12 percent of heat from renewable sources. The new Coalition Government intend to increase the target for energy from renewable sources, introduce measures to encourage marine energy and support the development of a new generation of offshore wind power⁽¹²⁵⁾.

19.9 National planning policy states that Development Plans should promote renewable energy generation, set out key criteria and include policies that require a percentage of the energy used in new residential, commercial or industrial developments to come from on-site renewable sources⁽¹²⁶⁾.

19.10 Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy REN1 provides a permissive general policy subject to the protection of local amenity. No targets are specified. The targets contained in the former Regional Spatial Strategy have now been revoked.

124 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the accompanying Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

125 UK Renewable Energy Strategy (DECC, 2009)

126 Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1, January 2005); Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS1 (December 2007); and Renewable Energy (PPS22, August 2004)

19.11 The emerging Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton is expected to refer to the potential of using waste as a source of renewable or low carbon fuel to produce combined heat and power.

19.12 Recent national consultation indicates that Borough wide targets for the use of decentralised energy will become unnecessary due to proposed changes to the Building Regulations from 2013 onwards, although targets for specific sites or development type could still be set if justified⁽¹²⁷⁾. The new Coalition Government still intends to take minimum standards forward through the Building Regulations, which are due to come into force in October 2010. The role of the planning system is, however, still to be clarified and further consultation is scheduled to take place in Autumn 2010⁽¹²⁸⁾.

Evidence Base

19.13 The Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report indicates that Wirral is estimated to have consumed a total of 6,881 GWh of energy in 2006. The majority was taken up for domestic needs. The proportion taken up by industry and commerce has dropped from 35 percent in 2003. The average total domestic energy consumption per household in Wirral was, however, estimated to have reduced by 3 percent since 2005, in line with the general reduction across the North West as a whole.

19.14 A very small percentage of the total energy consumed comes from energy generated from renewables and waste and the consumption of renewable energy in Wirral was only 8.2GWh in 2006.

19.15 Carbon emissions per capita were in the lower quartile for the UK at 6.2tCO₂ in 2006, compared with 8.7tCO₂ for the North West as a whole. Data is not yet available for 2007 or 2008.

19.16 Twenty-five wind turbines, with a total capacity of up to 90MW, capable of supplying the equivalent of up to 80,000 households, have been erected at Burbo Bank off the Wirral shoreline in Liverpool Bay. Proposals to extend Burbo Bank could add a further capacity of 234MW, if approved by Central Government.

19.17 The takeup of onshore renewable energy has, however, been low. An energy-from-waste (biological process) facility has operated at Bidston Moss since 1985. Initially used to supply the industrial complex at Moreton, the energy generated is now fed directly to the National Grid. Annual output has, however, reduced over time, from 9,701 MWh in 2003 to 8,015 MWh in 2008/09. A new energy-from-waste facility at Eastham, which was granted planning consent in July 2009, if implemented, could generate up to 30MW of electricity.

127 Consultation on a Planning Policy Statement Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate (CLG, March 2010)

128 DCLG Press Release (27 July 2010) and DECC Annual Energy Statement (27 July 2010)

19.18 Initial results from an emerging sub-regional study suggest that energy consumption within Wirral could rise from 45,100MWh to over 125,500MWh between 2015 and 2025⁽¹²⁹⁾. The study has identified the re-development opportunity at Birkenhead Docklands as a potential priority zone for a district heating scheme, which could have a viable capacity for up to 3.5MW of renewable energy.

Mersey Tidal Power

19.19 The Mersey Estuary has one of the largest tidal ranges in the UK, making it one of the best locations for a tidal power generation scheme. Provisional estimates from a pre-feasibility study indicate that tidal power from the Mersey Estuary could be used to generate up to 1,200 GWh of annual energy. A large scheme could, therefore, deliver enough renewable electricity to meet the needs of a significant proportion of the homes within the Liverpool City Region, as well as beyond.

19.20 The scheme could also contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through the generation of energy from a renewable, non-polluting source. Any scheme put forward would have to take account of the ecological diversity of the Estuary, which supports internationally important bird habitats⁽¹³⁰⁾.

19.21 The Stage 1 pre-feasibility study, which was supported by the North West Development Agency, has identified a number of viable schemes⁽¹³¹⁾. A Stage 2 feasibility study is now underway, to produce key elements of the technical, economic and environmental information and to evaluate various technical configurations. A sustainability appraisal is also currently in preparation⁽¹³²⁾.

19.22 The objectives of the Mersey Tidal Power Project are to deliver the maximum amount of affordable energy and maximum contribution to carbon reduction and to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits. A timetable is being developed to enable a scheme to contribute towards renewable energy targets by 2020.

Council Initiatives

19.23 The Council is promoting CRed, a scheme which enables individuals and organisations to make and monitor pledges to reduce their carbon footprint via the internet.

19.24 A four year £1 million scheme to provide free loft and cavity wall insulation to residents in private rented or owner occupied properties is scheduled to begin in Rock Ferry, Oxton, Prenton and Claughton in Settlement Area 3 from September 2010.

129 Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (ARUP, 2010)

130 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

131 Mersey Tidal Power Project Stage 1 Options Report (Scott Wilson, 2010)

132 Mersey Tidal Power Feasibility Study Sustainability Scoping Report (Scott Wilson, July 2010)

19.25 A 'Plugged In Places' initiative is being considered to support local infrastructure for ultra low carbon vehicles, including charging points for electric vehicles.

Permitted Development Rights

19.26 Micro-generation and Permitted Development Rights will provide further sources of small scale decentralised energy. Monitoring arrangements would need to be developed to assess any contribution this would make.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

19.27 All of the Policy Options would provide for a potential increase in the amount of renewable, decentralised or low carbon energy produced, in line with the Preferred Spatial Vision.

Implications for Spatial Objectives

19.28 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	The generation of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy can provide jobs, contribute to the viability of new development and provide major industries with cheaper power, increasing their efficiency and their likelihood to remain within the Borough.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	The scale of development to be provided within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point offers an opportunity to provide a higher level of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy at the heart of the older urban area and more affordable energy bills could support wider market renewal.
Transport Accessibility	The generation of renewable and decentralised energy is unlikely to have a direct impact on access to existing centres and public transport routes but the location of facilities may be limited by the type and source of the renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy being used.
Neighbourhood Services	Micro-generation and district power and heating schemes could be developed to support the provision of neighbourhood services.
Environmental Quality	The promotion of decentralised energy can reduce greenhouse gases with positive benefits for environmental quality. Certain types of renewable, decentralised and or low carbon energy generation can, however, conflict with the existing character of an area and distinctive features of design and heritage. Additional controls would be needed to mitigate any harmful impacts.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Flood Risk	The promotion of decentralised energy should have a positive effect on climate change.
New City Neighbourhood	The generation of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy could support the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead, which is identified as priority zone for the possible implementation of a district heating scheme.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

19.29 The likely implications for the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Broad Spatial Option 1 is likely to focus investment in development-related energy generation to the older urban area. Restrictions on development outside this area could overlook the capacity of other areas to contribute.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Broad Spatial Option 2 would extend the potential benefits of development-related energy generation across a wider area, which would allow the capacity of other urban areas to be utilised in support of balanced growth.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Broad Spatial Option 3 could maximise the potential benefits of development-related energy generation but these benefits could be outweighed by the harm which could be caused by the loss of previously undeveloped greenfield land, the impact on local distinctiveness and the emissions which may be generated from serving development in less accessible locations.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy is likely to focus investment in development-related energy generation within the older urban area, whilst enabling the capacity in other accessible urban locations to be used in the most sustainable locations.

Implications for Settlement Areas

19.30 The main implications arising from the Preferred Option are likely to arise in Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core, as the New City Neighbourhood in Birkenhead would be identified as a priority zone for the possible implementation of a district heating scheme. The exploitation of tidal power from the Mersey could have implications for Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham. The main implications for the remaining Settlement Areas are more likely to be related to micro-generation.

Implications for Delivery

19.31 Additional evidence would be needed to support the feasibility and viability of any additional policy requirements. All the Policy Options could be supported by an appropriate Supplementary Planning Document or Developer's Guide and/or by requirements attached to land allocations in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

19.32 The most recent national consultation indicates that the Building Regulations are now likely to be the Government's preferred mechanism for delivering carbon savings in new development. This could, however, be further affected by planned Government reviews of national planning and energy policy during Autumn 2010, which will need to be taken into account when any final policy for decentralised energy is drafted.

Implications for Infrastructure

19.33 Grid connections and local distribution facilities could be required to support the greater use of decentralised energy. Grid connections for the the Burbo Bank Wind Farm are located adjacent to the former Bidston Dock.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option RE3, by setting targets based on the capacity of each Settlement Area and to combine stand-alone schemes with contributions from smaller developments, was the most sustainable⁽¹³³⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 14 - Decentralised Energy, scores positively against sustainability objectives. Increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable/decentralised energy will improve economic performance, with associated benefits for employment. Attracting jobs in the emerging low carbon technology sector could be an additional benefit. Employment land tends to be located in the east of the Borough, and has the potential to be supported by energy schemes located in the New City Neighbourhood and the River Mersey. The Preferred Option may, therefore, support the redevelopment of previously developed land by bringing land back into use for renewable energy schemes and is likely to have a positive effect in promoting the use of new and clean technologies, with associated benefits in tackling the effects of climate change. Renewable energy schemes and energy efficiency measures may have a negative impact on the viability of new developments, however this should only be in the short-term. Although renewable energy developments have the potential to disturb habitats and harm

133 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

biodiversity and local heritage, evidence shows that ignoring climate change will eventually damage biodiversity and natural habitats. The Preferred Option will, however, need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to mitigate any potential negative impacts⁽¹³⁴⁾

Council's Revised Assessment

19.34 Council's revised assessment is that a general policy based on the encouragement of specific local projects is currently most appropriate, subject to the review of national planning and energy policy in Autumn 2010. No alternative has been suggested, as targets for individual developments may no longer be necessary following planned changes to the Building Regulations.

20 Better Design

20.1 The Spatial Options Report considered three main Policy Options for the promotion of sustainable design and construction in the Core Strategy:

- Policy Option DE1 - Integrate requirements for improved design across all the other policies within the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DE2 - Include a separate Borough wide design policy in the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DE3 - Include provision for geographically specific design policies within the Core Strategy

20.2 The Council initially indicated that a combination of Policy Options was likely to be the Council's preferred approach.

Results of Consultation

20.3 Public consultation showed widest support for a mixed approach. The main concern was to ensure that new development matched the character and visual amenity of existing areas and to secure elements of sustainable design.

20.4 While Policy Option DE3 was considered appropriate for major developments, it was considered to be less appropriate at Core Strategy level, where the primary focus was on spatial issues. The general consensus, nevertheless, appeared to be for an overarching design policy to be included in the Core Strategy, supported by policies and guidance in lower level Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents. One respondent indicated that any such approach would need to be capable of dealing with smaller scale one-off as well as major developments⁽¹³⁵⁾.

134 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

135 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

Policy Fit

20.5 National policy expects authorities to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design. Design policies must not, however, be over-prescriptive, stifle innovation or originality through unsubstantiated requirements⁽¹³⁶⁾. Specific design guidance has been produced by national bodies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). Other guidance includes By Design; Manual for Streets; Code for Sustainable Homes; Building for Life; CABE Guidance on Tall Buildings; Secure by Design; and BREEAM, which can all be used to shape and guide the design of new development.

20.6 While the Wirral Unitary Development Plan did not include a specific stand-alone policy on design, the protection of character and amenity, controls over density and the impact on heritage, landscape, greenspace and biodiversity assets form a major part of criteria based policies for different types and classes of development.

20.7 The Wirral Planning Application Validation Checklist sets out the information that will be required to assess matters affecting the design of development, such as sustainability, crime prevention, daylight, flood risk, heritage, landscaping, lighting, materials and accessibility.

Evidence Base

20.8 Unitary Development Plan policies are supported by a series of more up-to-date Conservation Area appraisals⁽¹³⁷⁾, a landscape character appraisal⁽¹³⁸⁾ and separate historic characterisations for the Borough's urban and rural areas⁽¹³⁹⁾.

20.9 A CABE Places Matter Design Panel Workshop, held in April 2010, advised that the Core Strategy needed to place a greater emphasis on the many unique assets of the area, such as the quality and distinctiveness of the Borough's views, heritage, landscape, countryside and coast. The Panel believed that the wide variety in the nature of these features would require a variety of policy responses, rather than a single over-riding approach, to provide greater control over the design and quality of new development.

20.10 The main features of significance are now included in an update to the Core Strategy Spatial Portrait, amended following consultation⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

136 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1, ODPM, January 2005, paragraph 34 and 38)

137 Further information is available from:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/built-conservation/conservation-areas>

138 Wirral Landscape Character Assessment (TEP, 2009)

139 Cheshire Heritage Landscape Characterisation (CCC, 2008) and Merseyside Heritage Characterisation (NML, forthcoming)

140 Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (November 2010)

Implications for Spatial Vision

20.11 All three Policy Options have the potential to have a positive impact on elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to quality of life, urban regeneration, strengthening and enhancing the Borough's assets, improving local housing conditions, providing for a more sustainable pattern of travel and sustainable design and construction.

Implications for Spatial Objectives

20.12 All three Policy Options could have a positive impact on the delivery of the Preferred Spatial Objectives. The main implications for the Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Good design can support economic revitalisation by improving the value, attractiveness, operation and impact of economic development.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Good design can support the effective delivery of housing, market renewal and investment within Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point by providing attractive places where people will want to live and work.
Transport Accessibility	Good design can include specific provision for measures to secure easier access to existing centres and high frequency public transport corridors by a choice of means of transport.
Neighbourhood Services	Good design can better integrate the provision of neighbourhood services within existing centres and encourage the use and attractiveness of any new facilities.
Environmental Quality	Good design is crucial in ensuring that development and investment respects local distinctiveness and will enhance and improve the Borough's assets.
Flood Risk	Good design can contribute to minimising the impact of flood risk.
New City Neighbourhood	Good design would improve the value, attractiveness, operation and impact of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead by providing attractive places where people will want to live and work.

Implications for Broad Spatial Options

20.13 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	All the Policy Options could be used to support of focused regeneration but Policy Option DE3 could provide a stronger level of control in areas of major change.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	All the Policy Options could be used to support balanced growth but Policy Option DE2 could be better suited to deal with a wider range of smaller infill developments across the urban areas.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	All the Policy Options could be used to support sensitive urban expansion but Policy Option DE3 could be most appropriate approach, if larger land releases are required outside the existing urban area.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	All the Policy options could be used to support the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy but a mix of Policy Option DE2 and Policy Option DE3 is most likely to support both major changes at the core of the urban area and smaller infill development in the most sustainable urban locations.

Implications for Settlement Areas

20.14 The implications for the Settlement Areas are more closely related to the Broad Spatial Option to be pursued and the scale and location of new development to be allowed under Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing, Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment and Preferred Option 13 - Retail Growth.

Implications for Delivery

20.15 All three Policy Options would be equally deliverable but Policy Options seeking to be more specific about local standards could require a greater level of detailed background work to be undertaken to operate effectively. Policy Option DE2, for example, may only be able to provide a brief and general precis of existing national policy and guidance in so far as it was considered relevant to local circumstances in Wirral.

20.16 While Policy Option DE3 would provide clear site-specific requirements and would allow any site-specific considerations to be consulted on in detail before a major allocation for development was confirmed, it may not provide the same level of control over proposals coming forward on un-allocated sites.

20.17 Each of the Policy Options could be supported by additional details included in separate but related Supplementary Planning Documents or a Developer's Guide. A list of existing and future Supplementary Planning Documents will need to be provided alongside the final Core Strategy⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

141 a list of existing guidance is contained in Core Strategy Preferred Options Implications for Unitary Development Plan Policies and Proposals (2010)

Implications for Infrastructure

20.18 The Preferred Option is unlikely to have any specific infrastructure requirements but will have a significant influence on the way that many forms of infrastructure will need to be provided within new development.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that all three Policy Options were likely to be equally sustainable⁽¹⁴²⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal indicates that Preferred Option 15 - Better Design, generally scores positively against sustainability objectives. Quality design can assist in providing attractive places where people will want to live and work and can support economic revitalisation. It can also support social inclusion by ensuring that development is accessible to all, built to appropriate standards and affordable to maintain. Good design can ensure the integration of biodiversity enhancement, water efficiency, carbon reduction and sustainable transport measures into new development. Preferred Option 15 should ensure that development respects its setting, protects and enhances local heritage, as well as preventing any adverse impact on residential amenity. The scope of the requirements under Preferred Option 15 could affect the viability of schemes and the ability of previously developed land to be brought forward for development in the short term but should be flexible enough to respond to local circumstances⁽¹⁴³⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

20.19 The Council's revised assessment is that a mix of Policy Option DE2 with elements of Policy Option DE3, where more detailed control is needed in areas of major change or where additional protection is required, would provide the most appropriate level of control without over-burdening the Core Strategy with non-strategic details.

21 Development Management

21.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main Policy Options for development management:

- Policy Option DM1 - include no specific policy in the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DM2 - set out a list of general criteria within the Core Strategy

142 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

143 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

21.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option DM2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

21.3 Public consultation showed strong support for Policy Option DM2. Respondents who gave reasons for their support felt that more locally specific guidance would offer greater clarity to developers and that this should include local character, designated features, biodiversity, heritage, green infrastructure, residents opinions and as much specific detail as possible for each Settlement Area. One respondent advised that this approach would need to be supported by additional advice in a Supplementary Planning Document(s).

21.4 Only one respondent favoured Policy Option DM1, on the basis that Policy Option DM2 would provide room for confusion, duplication and over-complication. Another believed that a policy should be contained within a separate Development Plan Document. The possibility of including a policy in a separate Development Plan Document was also mentioned by two of the respondents who supported Policy Option DM2⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

Policy Fit

21.5 Legislation on planning application procedures is to be consolidated on 1 October 2010⁽¹⁴⁵⁾, followed by revised national guidance on flexibility for planning permission in November 2010⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.

21.6 Current national guidance sets out information and criteria which must be considered and addressed when submitting an outline planning application. Advice on the information to be submitted in a Design and Access Statement is also provided⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. Further guidance is provided on the new national standard application form for planning permission and other associated consents⁽¹⁴⁸⁾.

Evidence Base

21.7 Wirral Council can determine up to 2,600 applications for development consents every year, which over previous years have delivered up to 820 new homes and up to 40,000 square metres of new employment, retail and leisure and other types of development, much of which will last over 30 years and beyond.

144 Further details on the comments submitted and the Council's response are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

145 Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010

146 Letter to Chief Planning Officers (CLG, 9 September 2010)

147 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System (Circular 01/2006, CLG, June 2006)

148 Standard Application Form and Validation (Circular 02/2008, CLG, March 2008)

Implications for the Spatial Vision

21.8 The inclusion of general criteria for development management will support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to quality of life, well-integrated settlements, strengthening and enhancing distinctive assets of the borough, improving conditions within the older urban areas, supporting more sustainable travel choices and securing a more sustainable approach to design and construction.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

21.9 The inclusion of general criteria for development management will directly support the delivery of Preferred Spatial Objective 5 - Environmental Quality, Preferred Spatial Objective 6 - Flood Risk and will serve to regulate the impact of the delivery of other Preferred Spatial Objectives. The Preferred Option will also contribute to the mitigation of impacts on European Sites.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

21.10 General criteria for development management will apply equally, whichever Broad Spatial Option is eventually preferred. The preferred Broad Spatial Option may, however, influence the nature of criteria to be included under Policy Option DM2:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	The criteria to be included in the Core Strategy may need to be tailored to issues related to the consideration of development within the older, inner urban areas of east Wirral.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	The criteria to be included in the Core Strategy may need to be tailored to issues related to the consideration of development within the wider urban areas across the Borough.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	The criteria to be included in the Core Strategy may need to be tailored to issues related to the consideration of development on previously undeveloped greenfield sites outside the existing urban areas.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	The criteria to be included in the Core Strategy will need to be tailored towards the delivery urban regeneration, higher density development, local improvements to the environmental assets of the Borough, the promotion of a more sustainable pattern of development and mitigating the impacts on European Sites.

Implications for the Settlement Areas

21.11 The inclusion of general criteria for development management will have implications for all the Settlement Areas but is likely to be greater in Settlement Areas where new development is likely to be promoted under Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing, Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment, Preferred Option 13 - Retail Growth, subject to the Broad Spatial Option that is to be pursued.

Implications for Delivery

21.12 Both Policy Options would be deliverable. Policy Option DM1 is likely to be the most flexible in terms of changes in circumstances over time but would not provide a useful summary of likely considerations to help people less familiar with the requirements of the planning system. Policy Option DM2 is, however, more likely to provide a more clear and robust approach, providing that any wording was flexible enough deal with any future changes to national policy during the plan period.

Implications for Infrastructure

21.13 The Preferred Option is unlikely to have any specific infrastructure requirements but will have a significant influence on the way that many forms of infrastructure will need to be provided within new development.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option DM2 was likely to be the most sustainable approach because of the opportunity to introduce more locally specific guidance. While Policy Option DM1 was unlikely to have any adverse effects, it was likely to be the least sustainable because of the need to translate the implementation of national policies at local level⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 16 - Development Management, is sustainable, although more information is required to assess its precise impact against a number of sustainability objectives. Preferred Option 16 sets out a number of issues, including the impact on sustainable travel choices, local distinctiveness, protected species, climate change mitigation, public safety and the separation of sensitive uses. Operated in conjunction with other Preferred Options, development management policies have the potential to mitigate a wide range of potential adverse impacts. However, until the full details of any final policy and its implementation are known, it is not yet possible to determine if there will be a positive or negative effect in relation to a number of sustainability objectives⁽¹⁵⁰⁾.

149 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

150 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

Council's Revised Assessment

21.14 The Council's revised assessment is that Policy Option DM2 is still likely to be the clearest and most beneficial approach overall and would be essential if impacts on environmental assets and local character are to be properly controlled, and the quality and performance of new developments are to be maximised.

22 Developer Contributions

22.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main Policy Options for securing developer contributions from new developments in the Core Strategy:

- Policy Option DC1 - set out an enabling policy to support requirements through legal agreements and obligations.
- Policy Option DC2 - set out an enabling policy to support requirements both through legal agreements and obligations and as part of a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

22.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option DC2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

Results of Consultation

22.3 Consultation showed strong support for Policy Option DC2, primarily on the basis of its greater flexibility. The few supporters of Policy Option DC1 favoured site-by-site negotiation, believing it to be the easiest and cheapest to operate. One respondent expressed doubts about the effectiveness of Community Infrastructure Levy and the level of detail required, especially at sub-regional level.

22.4 One respondent believed that private sector funding was now the only viable option. Others did not want the Council's policies to be developer-led and were concerned about "development blackmail", with developers promising to provide a public facility in return for permission for another form of development. Another linked their response with support for Broad Spatial Option 2 on the basis that operating either of the Options under Broad Spatial Option 1 would only benefit approximately 12 percent of the Wirral population.

22.5 One respondent who did not prefer either Option, believed that any requirement would only be effective in driving developers out of the area and prejudicing the delivery of affordable homes. Another believed that this would lead to developers preferring only the most lucrative greenfield sites.

22.6 One respondent wanted any approach to be based on a more balanced assessment of the needs of the area, on the basis that the current arrangements only seemed to deliver highway improvements. Others wanted these requirements to cover the provision of community facilities; environmental, heritage and public realm improvements; green infrastructure; off-site community renewable energy

schemes; and key pieces of infrastructure such as health facilities and schools. Another was concerned that the current evidence base was unlikely to be adequate to secure indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

22.7 One respondent wanted the amounts raised and what they have been used for to be recorded and published, while another wanted voluntary and community groups to be exempt from any additional requirements⁽¹⁵¹⁾.

Policy Fit

22.8 National planning policy identifies the Core Strategy as the means of orchestrating the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure required to ensure that sustainable communities are created. To be found sound at examination, the Core Strategy must identify the infrastructure requirements for its area. As far as possible, costs, phasing, funding sources, responsibilities for delivery and contingency planning scenarios should be identified. This needs to be in detail for at least the first 5 years of the Core Strategy⁽¹⁵²⁾.

22.9 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a new charge which local authorities will be empowered, but not required, to levy on most types of new development. The proceeds of the levy will be used to provide new local and sub-regional infrastructure to support the development of an area. CIL may only be spent on infrastructure and should not be used to remedy existing deficiencies.

22.10 The Planning Act 2008 provided a wide definition of the infrastructure which can be funded by CIL, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, other health and social care facilities, play areas, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, district heating schemes, police stations and other community safety facilities.

22.11 Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy URN2 provides for old-style planning obligations to be negotiated to support urban regeneration by securing the best use of land, desirable community benefits and a planned, sustainable environment. More specific requirements relate to affordable housing, urban greenspace, children's play equipment, contaminated land, drainage and highway improvements.

Evidence Base

22.12 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations came into force on 6 April 2010 and place into law the Government's previous policy tests on the use of planning obligations, irrespective of whether a local CIL is in operation or not. Planning obligations can now only be made where they are:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms

151 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

152 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12, CLG, June 2008)

- directly related to the development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development⁽¹⁵³⁾

22.13 Local authorities wishing to levy CIL, must produce a charging schedule setting out the CIL rates in their area. There should be an up-to-date Core Strategy for an area before CIL may be charged, as the process starts with the development vision for the area and the likely cost of the infrastructure required to support it. The draft charging schedule would then need to be published for public consultation and submitted to an independent public examination.

22.14 From 6 April 2014, the Regulations will further restrict the local use of planning obligations for pooled contributions towards infrastructure items that may be funded by CIL, regardless of whether the Council has adopted a charging schedule, or not. The new Coalition Government has, however, indicated that they are likely to favour a more simplified system of single unified local tariffs, but detailed proposals have yet to be published.

22.15 The Council is in the process of preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to demonstrate that the Core Strategy is deliverable and to provide sufficient evidence for the Core Strategy to be found sound by an Inspector at an independent examination.

22.16 The IDP will look at existing infrastructure capacity and what infrastructure is required to provide for the planned growth envisaged in the Core Strategy. The IDP will also enable infrastructure requirements to be identified for any of the strategic locations identified in the Core Strategy, as well as providing sufficient evidence for establishing policies for charging the Community Infrastructure Levy on developments in the area, should the Council decide to adopt this approach.

22.17 The Council has also been working with the other Merseyside authorities to pursue the potential for a sub-regional Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Discussions have also taken place with various infrastructure providers regarding issues such as highway and power supply capacity.

22.18 The Council currently enters into approximately eight old-style legal agreements with developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act each year, obtaining a range of benefits including highways works, affordable housing, public open space, children's play equipment, public art, litter bins, bus service subsidies, repairs to listed buildings and landscaping.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

22.19 Both of the Policy Options for developer contributions would align with the Preferred Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

22.20 Both of the Policy Options for developer contributions would be capable of supporting the Preferred Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy. Policy Option DC1 would, however, be more likely to limit the Council's ability to maximise the type and scope of obligations that could be obtained, now that the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations have come into force.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

22.21 The likely implications for each of the Broad Spatial Options for the Core Strategy include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Both Policy Options could be operated to support the delivery of focused regeneration. Broad Spatial Option 1 is, however, more likely to focus the private sector resources generated on the heart of the older urban area. The additional costs associated with brownfield development in the older urban areas could, however, limit the level and range of contribution that would be viable to draw down.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Both Policy Options could be operated to support the delivery of balanced growth. Broad Spatial Option 2 is, however, more likely to spread the private sector resources generated across a wider range of areas in the Borough and may, therefore, be able to generate a wider range of improvements and a higher level of contribution overall.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Both Policy Options could be operated to support the delivery of urban expansion. Broad Spatial Option 3 is, however, more likely to focus the private sector resources generated on providing the new facilities necessary to support new development on greenfield sites outside the existing urban area. As greenfield development is likely to be more lucrative to developers, the level and range of facilities provided and the level of contribution obtainable is likely to be higher than under Broad Spatial Option 1 or Broad Spatial Option 2.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	Both Policy Options could be operated to support the delivery of the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy. The additional costs associated with brownfield development in the older urban areas could limit the level and range of contribution that would be viable to draw down but the Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy would also enable the private sector resources generated to be spread across a wider range of areas in the Borough.

Implications for Settlement Areas

22.22 The implications for individual Settlement Areas are more closely related to the final Broad Spatial Strategy for the Core Strategy and to Policy Options such as Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing and Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment.

22.23 Both Policy Options could be used to set out specific requirements within each individual Settlement Area, but, under the current Regulations, only Policy Option DC2 could be used to provide the wider infrastructure likely to be needed to support the wider development of an area, rather than only making individual schemes acceptable in planning terms.

22.24 Until a detailed schedule of infrastructure requirements is fully developed the detailed implications for each of the Settlement Areas, cannot be fully defined. A draft delivery framework is, however, available for comment as part of the consultation on the Preferred Options Report⁽¹⁵⁴⁾.

Implications for Delivery

22.25 The reduced availability of public funding will mean that developers will be increasingly expected to contribute to the cost of providing essential facilities in areas not well served by existing infrastructure.

22.26 The scope for obtaining developer contributions, which are paid for out of the value of the development, is limited by national policy and the Courts and by the financial viability of the development proposed. In some cases, the Council will need to prioritise the obligations that a particular development will provide.

22.27 Both Policy Options will require a clearly established policy framework to draw down any necessary contributions and could require a substantial amount of information to be provided within the Core Strategy to set out the Council's precise requirements for a wide range of different types of obligation, supported by additional information within a separate but related Supplementary Planning Document or Charging Schedule.

22.28 While Policy Option DC1 would offer the greatest level of flexibility, it does not align with the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy and would allow a more limited range of benefits to be secured, which will be further restricted in 2014. Any approach set out in the Core Strategy may, however, need to be flexible enough to be revised to meet the requirements of any other local tariff based system to be introduced by the Government at a later date.

Implications for Infrastructure

22.29 Although both Policy Options could be used to set out specific infrastructure requirements, under the current CIL Regulations, only Policy Option DC2 will help to provide infrastructure to support the wider development of an area. Policy Option DC1 would only be able to provide infrastructure on a site-by-site basis.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that both Policy Options were likely to be equally sustainable⁽¹⁵⁵⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions, scores positively against sustainability objectives. Securing community benefits as part of any new development will have a positive impact on the local environment, including local heritage and biodiversity, and may assist in addressing local deficiencies or inequality in service or facility provision. Preferred Option 17, should therefore help to make areas more attractive places to live. Securing modern, improved and adaptable infrastructure, including sustainable waste and water management, transport improvements and carbon-reduction measures as part of any new development, is likely to have a positive effect on the local economy and environment⁽¹⁵⁶⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

22.30 The Council's revised assessment is that Policy Option DC2 is still likely to deliver the most reliable framework for the regulation of developer contributions, subject to a potential review of the Community Infrastructure Levy system.

23 Green Infrastructure

23.1 The Spatial Options Report considered two main Policy Options for providing for green infrastructure in the Core Strategy:

- Policy Option GI1 - identify Borough wide numerical standards for different types of green infrastructure
- Policy Option GI2 - identify specific priorities within each Settlement Area to reflect local needs and characteristics

23.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option GI2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

155 Core Strategy Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal (January 2010)

156 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

Results of Consultation

23.3 Public consultation showed strong support for Policy Option GI2, which respondents believed could be more closely tailored to local needs and character and offer greater flexibility. One respondent believed that the level of detail required could merit separate a Supplementary Planning Document. A number of respondents, including some of the supporters of Policy Option GI2, still wanted local standards to be included as part of any preferred approach. Additional standards published by Natural England, the targets of the revised Regional Forestry Framework and the Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard were recommended.

23.4 Otherwise respondents wanted a stronger emphasis on the protection of green infrastructure, especially irreplaceable semi-natural assets; and a greater focus on standards of management and maintenance within existing provision as well as just its level and distribution. Others wanted to ensure that the full range of green infrastructure including biodiversity, landscape, public rights of way and wider values such as heritage; multi-functional benefits; encouraging healthy lifestyles including cycling and walking; additional types of corridors such as rail, road and rows of large gardens; and the contribution of the Green Belt would be included.

23.5 A couple of respondents questioned the validity of the evidence base, which was still emerging, particularly with regard to allotments, pending public consultation which was still to be undertaken. A particular query referred to the assessment of Settlement Area 6, which had access to walking and viewing places, sailing, wind-surfing and beaches with islands but still appeared as an area of deficiency⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

Policy Fit

23.6 Both Policy Options would support national policy objectives for creating sustainable communities⁽¹⁵⁸⁾; green belts⁽¹⁵⁹⁾; housing⁽¹⁶⁰⁾; biodiversity and geological conservation⁽¹⁶¹⁾; and open space, sport and recreation⁽¹⁶²⁾. PPG17, in particular, advocates the setting of local standards to guide the future provision of open space and sport and recreation facilities.

23.7 The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards recommended by Natural England state that all residents must have access to:

157 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

158 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1, ODPM, January 2005)

159 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2, ODPM, January 1995)

160 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (CLG, PPS3, June 2010)

161 Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9, ODPM, August 2005)

162 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17, ODPM, July 2002)

- at least one accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares, no more than 300 metres or a five-minute walk from home
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2 kilometres of home
- at least one accessible 100 hectare site within 5 kilometres of home
- at least 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserve for every thousand people

23.8 The Woodland Trust Access Standard recommends that:

- no person should live more than 500 metres from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2 hectares in size
- no person should live more than 4 kilometres away from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 hectares in size

23.9 The Regional Forestry Framework highlights the importance of the region's woodland and forest cover by developing priorities under six Action Areas including enterprise and industry; regional image; biodiversity and landscape; health, well being and quality of life; climate change and energy; and supporting and resourcing the sector.

23.10 National consultation on a replacement for PPS7, PPS9 and PPG17, undertaken between March and June 2010, recognises the distinct differences in planning for public open space and in planning for green infrastructure, which requires local planning authorities to set out, in their Local Development Framework, a strategic approach for the creation, protection and management of networks of green infrastructure ⁽¹⁶³⁾.

23.11 The new Coalition Government has committed itself to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities and intend to launch a national tree planting campaign.

23.12 The Wirral Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 includes standards for the quantity and distribution of publicly accessible open space and identifies a network of urban greenspace, allotments, sports grounds and school playing fields for protection from development. UDP Policy GR6 requires additional provision, including provision for safe children's play, in areas of new family housing. The Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan 2004 sets local standards of provision for pitch sports which may need to be updated.

23.13 The Council's Parks and Countryside Service is preparing a service delivery plan which is likely to include a hierarchy of public parks and open spaces and a strategy for future maintenance. Complementary sub-regional green infrastructure strategies are also currently being drawn up for the wider Liverpool City Region and on behalf of the Mersey Dee Alliance, alongside proposals for a national Coastal Trail.

163 New Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (CLG, March 2010)

Evidence Base

23.14 The Council's latest assessment of open space recommends standards for the Borough based on an assessment of quantity, quality and accessibility of each existing type of open space. The following table shows the recommended standards for open space provision⁽¹⁶⁴⁾:

Typology	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Green Space	Provision for Children and Young People	Allotments	Outdoor Sports Provision
Standard (hectares for every thousand residents)	2.09 ha	1.62 ha	0.37 ha	0.09 ha	0.17 ha	3.45 ha

Table 23.1 Targets for Provision of Open Space

23.15 The existing standard of provision set out in the Unitary Development Plan is 2.4 hectares of accessible public open space for every thousand people⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

23.16 In terms of accessibility, the assessment recommends that residents should have access to each type of open space within the following distance thresholds:

Typology	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Green Space	Provision for Children and Young People	Allotments	Outdoor Sports Provision
Standard (metres)	400 m	400 m	400 m	400 m	1,000 m	1,000 m

Table 23.2 Targets for Accessibility of Open Space

23.17 The existing standard set out in the Unitary Development Plan is for no part of a Primarily Residential Area to be more than 400 metres walking distance from an accessible public open space of 1.5 hectares or above⁽¹⁶⁶⁾.

23.18 In terms of quality, the assessment recommends that all public open space within the Borough aim to achieve a quality score of at least 46% based on the range of facilities and physical infrastructure contained within individual sites and the extent to which they are seen as being 'fit for purpose'.

164 Wirral Open Space Assessment (Strategic Leisure, 2010)

165 Wirral Unitary Development Plan, paragraph 8.8 (Wirral Council, February 2000)

166 Wirral Unitary Development Plan, paragraph 8.9 (Wirral Council, February 2000)

23.19 There is no existing standard for quality set out in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan. The Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Reports, however, indicates that the percentage of public open space managed to Green Flag Award Standard has progressively increased from 1% in 2005/06 to just over 30% in 2008/09.

23.20 The Council's latest assessment of sports pitch provision, prepared in consultation with representatives from national governing bodies, local leagues and clubs, revealed an additional need for:

- five senior football pitches
- fifteen junior football pitches
- two mini-soccer pitches
- one cricket pitch
- access to second pitches for two cricket clubs
- one senior rugby pitch
- one junior rugby pitch
- the possible need for a central venue site for girls' football
- the possible need for an additional central venue site for mini-soccer
- the possible need for additional provision for mini-rugby

23.21 The overall scale of the improvements needed at existing sites included :

- 21 pitches at six sites requiring major improvements to existing changing facilities
- 25 pitches at twelve sites requiring serviced changing facilities to be provided
- 55 pitches at twenty-two sites requiring improvements to drainage and/or levels

23.22 The recommended Borough-wide standard for the provision of all types of playing pitches was 0.98 hectares for every thousand people⁽¹⁶⁷⁾. Work is ongoing to determine the current level of provision and demand and usage of pitch facilities in the Borough.

23.23 The Wirral's latest assessment of biodiversity within the Borough collates all the available information on the range of statutory and non statutory protected areas within Wirral; provides an analysis of the extent and distribution of priority habitats and species; and identifies any existing and potential connections between habitats and protected sites that may need to be taken account of in any policy for green infrastructure within the Borough⁽¹⁶⁸⁾.

23.24 The Council's latest assessment of landscape quality within the Borough recommends that criteria based policy relating to landscape character should also be included within the Core Strategy as a replacement for the local landscape designations in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan, based on the assessment of twelve separate Landscape Character Areas⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

167 Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan (KKP, 2004)

168 Wirral Biodiversity Audit (Penny Anderson Associates, 2010)

169 The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment (TEP, 2010)

23.25 The Council's latest assessment of flood risk provides an additional indication of where green infrastructure may need to be provided and/or protected to reduce flood risk across the Borough⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. A recent review of the Shoreline Management Plan has identified the local priorities for managing the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to inform wider strategic planning⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

23.26 The Wirral Definitive Map of Rights of Way and Wirral Cycle Map shows where linkages may need to be provided or created to improve access to recreation, jobs and other facilities throughout the Borough.

23.27 Both the Liverpool City Region and the Mersey Dee Alliance are preparing Green Infrastructure Frameworks which encompass Wirral Borough within their area of study. The Frameworks are expected to provide additional guidance on the wider role of green infrastructure within the Borough and how the Council may wish to incorporate it within the Local Development Framework. An Ecological Framework is also being prepared for the Liverpool City Region to advise on how core biodiversity areas should be provided and allocated within the wider sub region⁽¹⁷²⁾.

23.28 The Revised Spatial Portrait now provides additional information on the type and pattern of existing provision in each Settlement Area to form the basis of a series of Settlement Area specific priorities and characteristics. A series of provision maps is being prepared to further illustrate the pattern of assets within each Settlement Area⁽¹⁷³⁾.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

23.29 Both Policy Options are capable of supporting the delivery of the Preferred Spatial Vision. Policy Option GI2 may, however, be able to better reflect local distinctiveness and work towards strengthening and enhancing the distinctive assets of the Borough.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

23.30 The likely implications for the Preferred Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	Both Policy Options could support economic revitalisation through the promotion of more attractive, better quality, higher value development. The Preferred Option could, however, provide a more flexible response to local needs and circumstances.

170 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Faber Maunsell, 2009)

171 North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (Halcrow Group, 2009)

172 Merseyside Ecological Framework (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, 2010)

173 Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (2010)

Housing Growth and Market Renewal	Both Policy Options could support the effective delivery of housing growth and market renewal through the promotion of a more attractive, higher quality residential environment and to address local shortfalls in provision.
Transport Accessibility	Green infrastructure is unlikely to contribute to directing new development to the most sustainable locations but both Policy Options could reduce the need to travel and to promote walking and cycling and be used to provide a higher quality of neighbourhood level facilities.
Neighbourhood Services	Both Policy Options could be used to enhance the provision of neighbourhood services but Policy GI2 is more likely to be able to provide for local improvements to the accessibility and attractiveness of local centres.
Environmental Quality	Both Policy Options could be used to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the Borough's key environmental assets. Policy Option GI2 could, however, provide a more flexible approach that would be more responsive to the local distinctiveness, landscape and biodiversity of each individual Settlement Area.
Flood Risk	Both Policy Options could be used to support wider measures to assist drainage and/or prevent the risk of flooding in a variety of locations within the Borough.
New City Neighbourhood	Both Policy Options could support the delivery of a New City Neighbourhood, providing a more attractive environment for commercial and residential development whilst providing for the recreational needs of new and existing residents to address local shortfalls in provision.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

23.31 The likely implications for the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Broad Spatial Option 1 would focus the provision of new green infrastructure on areas most likely to be in greatest need of environmental improvements. While Policy Option GI1 could support provision to a Borough wide standard, Policy Option GI2 could focus provision to meet more specific local priorities. The Preferred Option would ensure the protection of existing green infrastructure and address local priorities whilst applying a basic numerical standard to requirements for public open space where necessary.

BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Broad Spatial Option 2 may be able to draw in additional resources for green infrastructure within the wider urban area but could also increase the pressure on existing features through infill development. While Policy Option GI1 could support provision to a Borough wide standard, Policy Option GI2 could focus provision to meet more specific local priorities. The Preferred Option would ensure the protection of existing green infrastructure and address local priorities whilst applying a basic numerical standard to requirements for public open space where necessary.
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Broad Spatial Option 3 could threaten natural and semi natural green infrastructure at the edge of the urban area but could also provide public access to a wider range of habitat, feature or facility. While Policy Option GI1 could support provision to a Borough wide standard, Policy Option GI2 could focus provision to protect more locally distinctive features. The Preferred Option would ensure the protection of existing green infrastructure and address local priorities whilst applying a basic numerical standard to requirements for public open space where necessary.
BSO4 – Preferred Option	The Preferred Option may be able to draw in additional resources for green infrastructure within the wider urban area but could also increase the pressure on existing features through infill development. It will, however, help to ensure that all new development will have to demonstrate how it will protect and provide a linked network of green infrastructure. While Policy Option GI1 could support provision to a basic Borough wide standard, Policy Option GI2 could focus provision to meet more specific local priorities.

Implications for Settlement Areas

23.32 The implications for the Settlement Areas are more closely related to the Broad Spatial Option likely to be pursued than either of the Policy Options for green infrastructure. While Policy Option GI1 would support provision in each Settlement Area to a basic Borough wide standard, Policy Option GI2 could better focus provision to reflect more locally distinctive characteristics which are less able to be catered for by a standard approach. The Preferred Option would therefore be better able to reflect the variety of different landscapes and habitats across the Borough whilst identifying basic numerical standards to reflect the needs of each community for various types recreational space.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	There is a general lack of natural and semi natural open space outside the coastal strip . The Preferred Option would ensure that new development proposals could contribute to additional provision or to the improvement of existing space.

Area 2 - Commercial Core	There is a general lack of all types of public open space within Settlement Area 2. The Preferred Option would set numerical standards for public open space to ensure additional provision within Settlement Area 2.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	Although this Settlement Area contains the largest historic park in the Borough, open space is again, limited within the Settlement Area. There is a particular deficit in the outdoor sports facilities. The Preferred Option could be used to ensure that new development contributes to the protection and improvement of provision.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	The majority of Settlement Area 4 is well served by a wide range of open spaces and outdoor recreational facilities but there are also more localised shortages. The Preferred Option would ensure compliance with basic numerical standards, ensuring that new development contributes to the improvement of local provision. There is a significant provision of woodland within Settlement Area 4, with over 500 hectares linking into the wider Dibbinsdale network adjacent.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	There is a heavy demand for playing pitches, especially in Moreton. Facilities in Leasowe provide overspill for Wallasey, whilst facilities at Arrowe Country Park provide overspill for Birkenhead. There are also deficiencies in other forms of outdoor sports facility as well as parks and gardens and natural and semi natural provision. The Preferred Option will set basic numerical standards to ensure the protection of existing provision and ensure that new development contributes to the improvement / provision of public open space.
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	There is a large amount of natural and semi natural open space with an extensive network of public rights of way within easy access of the Settlement Area. There are also other typologies of public open space are in deficit, with outdoor sports and parks and gardens being significantly so. The Preferred Option will set numerical standards of each type of provision to ensure that new development contributes to further local improvements.
Area 7 - Heswall	The Settlement Area benefits from access to the Dee coastline and the linked facilities associated with the Wirral Way and Wirral Country Park, including the second largest provision of wetland outside the Rural Area. There is, however, a significant deficiency in outdoor sports facilities, parks and gardens and provision for children and young people. The Preferred Option will set numerical standards to ensure that new development contributes to the improvement of local provision.
Area 8 - Rural Area	The majority of the Borough's most significant biodiversity assets are located within this area. The area also contains a wide variety of country parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities,

	<p>serving the adjacent urban populations, linked to an extensive network of public rights of way. The Preferred Option will ensure that the distinctive character of these assets is preserved, irrespective of basic numerical standards of provision.</p>
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Implications for Delivery

23.33 Both Policy Options are equally deliverable. The scope for providing additional or improved green infrastructure is, however, limited by the availability of public funds, developer contributions, the value of any development being proposed and the presence and quality of any existing features. Provision must also be made for future maintenance to an appropriate standard.

23.34 Policy Option GI1 would be robust in terms of setting out a clear and consistent statement of local requirements which could be backed up by numerical analysis. Numerical standards do not, however, take into account wider considerations such as locally distinctive habitats or features which could not be provided at the same level in every Settlement Area in the Borough. As green infrastructure includes a wide range of these types of facilities and features, such as beaches, wetlands, characteristic woodlands and priority habitats, Policy Option GI2 would offer greater flexibility by focusing more on the value of locally distinctive assets and characteristics.

23.35 The protection of specific sites or features under both Policy Options would, however, need to be supported by land allocations contained within a site-specific Development Plan Document and/or by design-based Supplementary Planning Documents and the provision of any improvements would need to be integrated with the approach set out under Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

Implications for Infrastructure

23.36 Green infrastructure is itself a form of essential local infrastructure.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal suggested that Policy Option GI2 was likely to be the most sustainable, on the basis that a neighbourhood level approach to identifying priorities and targets for the provision of various types of green infrastructure was likely to be more clearly related to local circumstances and identified local needs⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure, scores highly against sustainability objectives. Providing high quality green infrastructure, based on local needs and circumstances, can have a number of positive effects. It can help to improve the environmental quality of

an area, making an area more attractive for investment while helping to create healthy sustainable communities. It can also protect and enhance biodiversity and local distinctiveness, and form an effective buffer between incompatible uses and traffic intrusion. Furthermore, it can help to reduce flood risk and mitigate the impacts of climate change, have a positive impact on the water cycle, and provide attractive open spaces for recreation and leisure⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

Council's Revised Assessment

23.37 The Council's revised assessment is that the application of robust basic numerical standards alongside an approach better suited to the wider variety of green infrastructure should now be the preferred approach.

24 Minerals

24.1 The Spatial Options Report did not include a specific Policy Option for minerals.

Results of Consultation

24.2 Government Office North West has stated that the Core Strategy must include provision for minerals⁽¹⁷⁶⁾.

Policy Fit

24.3 National planning policy requires an adequate and steady supply of material to be provided to support the infrastructure, buildings and goods that society, industry and the economy needs⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

24.4 The Regional Aggregates Working Party includes Merseyside within a wider 'Mersey Belt' sub-region with Warrington and Greater Manchester. Permitted reserves are generally in surplus⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

24.5 The Wirral Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map identifies the long-standing clay extraction site at Carr Lane in Moreton as a mineral reserve.

Evidence Base

24.6 Minerals can only be worked where they are found. In Wirral, a combination of geological and environmental factors means that mineral working has historically

175 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

176 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

177 Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals (MSP1, CLG, November 2006)

178 North West Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report (December 2009)

been limited to small quarries for local sandstone and winnable brick clay reserves. Only two sites remain, with planning permission to extract clay to 2042, at Carr Lane in Moreton; and at Prenton Dell.

24.7 The latest sub-regional assessment of minerals recommended that a mineral safeguarding area should be identified at Carr Lane in Moreton, to prevent incompatible development from sterilising the mineral reserve. The area that could be affected is shown on Picture 23.1 in the Preferred Options Report⁽¹⁷⁹⁾.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

24.8 Preferred Option 19 - Minerals will not directly support any of the main elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision but could have potentially significant implications for elements related to the protection of the urban and rural environment, including the level of traffic along major routes.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

24.9 The implications for the Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	The production of minerals can contribute to economic revitalisation by providing jobs and by providing raw materials for building projects.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	The production of minerals can contribute to housing growth and market renewal by providing raw materials for development projects.
Transport Accessibility	The production of minerals would have little impact on directing new development to locations with easy access to existing centres and high frequency public transport corridors but could affect access to these facilities through impacts on local transport networks.
Neighbourhood Services	The production of minerals will have little impact on the delivery of neighbourhood services but could affect access to these services through impacts on local centres and transport networks.
Environmental Quality	Additional controls would be needed to minimise the wide range of potential environmental damage that could be caused by the production of minerals and by the impact of extraction on local communities.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to prevent flood risk.

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
New City Neighbourhood	The production of minerals could contribute to the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead by providing raw materials for development projects.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

24.10 Preferred Option 19 - Minerals is unlikely to have any significant implications for the Broad Spatial Strategy beyond any impact that may arise from the operation of the mineral works on neighbouring Moreton.

Implications for Settlement Areas

24.11 Preferred Option 19 - Minerals is only likely to have direct implications for Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral because of the location of the site and access routes to the M53 Motorway.

Implications for Delivery

24.12 Mineral extraction will be undertaken by the private sector in response to market demand.

24.13 The final boundary of a mineral safeguarding area at Carr Lane will need to be confirmed through a site-specific Development Plan Document produced following the adoption of the Core Strategy.

Implications for Infrastructure

24.14 Mineral extraction can have a significant impact on local infrastructure through the number and impact of heavy good vehicles on local roads.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal did not consider the issue of proposals for minerals.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 19 - Minerals, generally scores positively against sustainability objectives. Preventing existing mineral reserves from being sterilised could enable future extraction, which could create jobs and improve local economic performance. However, the extraction of minerals could have a detrimental impact on the local environment, including potential harm to biodiversity, residential amenity and local heritage. Preferred Option 19 should be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to ensure any potential negative impacts can be

mitigated⁽¹⁸⁰⁾.

Council's Assessment

24.15 The Council's assessment is that a minerals safeguarding area needs to be shown for the existing mineral reserve at Carr Lane in Moreton on the Core Strategy Key Diagram and that additional criteria should be included to take account of the need to minimise the impact of mineral production on local communities and the wider environment.

24.16 No alternative Policy Options have been considered.

25 Waste Management

25.1 The Spatial Options Report did not include a specific Policy Option for waste management.

Results of Consultation

25.2 Government Office North West has stated that the Core Strategy must include provision for waste management⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

Policy Fit

25.3 National policy for waste management seeks to reduce the amount of waste produced and to increase the proportion of waste that is re-used, recycled or recovered, a strategy that needs to be supported by new types of waste management facilities⁽¹⁸²⁾.

25.4 National planning policy states that planning strategies must provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste and that would enable the sufficient and timely provision of waste management facilities to meet the needs of their communities⁽¹⁸³⁾.

25.5 The local strategy for the management and disposal of municipal waste is set out in a separate document prepared by the Merseyside Waste Partnership⁽¹⁸⁴⁾.

180 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

181 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

182 Waste Strategy for England 2007 (DEFRA, May 2007)

183 Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (PPS10, ODPM, July 2005)

184 Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside (Merseyside Waste Partnership, 2008)

25.6 The Wirral Unitary Development Plan includes a series of criteria based policies for waste management covering issues from landfill sites, to restoration and aftercare, recycling and the reuse of waste materials, provision for recycling collection, the regulation of waste reception and transfer stations and criteria for incinerators and sewage treatment and disposal facilities. The Unitary Development Plan tends to direct the provision of new waste management facilities towards the designated Primarily Industrial Areas.

25.7 The preparation of a Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton is now well advanced. Consultation on the Preferred Options for the Waste DPD took place in May 2010. The Joint Waste DPD will identify and allocate the sites needed to accommodate sub-regional and district scale facilities; waste processors and smaller scale facilities; and include a series of specialist policies for development management, to ensure a consistent approach across the wider sub-region. The Joint Waste DPD will, in particular, replace all the remaining policies for Waste Management contained within Section 17 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000.

Evidence Base

25.8 Work undertaken in consultation with stakeholders as part of the preparation of the Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton has included the collection of an extensive evidence base setting out waste arisings, the location of existing licenced facilities, the need for future facilities and the suitability of available sites⁽¹⁸⁵⁾.

25.9 The Joint Waste DPD Preferred Options Report identifies a potential sub-regional site at the former southern car park at Cammell Lairds; two potential district-level sites at existing facilities at Wallasey Bridge Road; two potential areas of search for additional smaller facilities adjacent to the docks at West Float and at Cammell Lairds in Tranmere; in addition to over thirty existing licensed facilities⁽¹⁸⁶⁾.

25.10 The Council's latest Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report indicates that Wirral typically generates over 135,000 tonnes of municipal waste and that the amount recycled and composted has significantly increased, from 10% in 2004/05 to 36% in 2008/09. The Annual Monitoring Report does not, however, record the additional amount of industrial, commercial, construction, demolition, excavation or hazardous waste arising from within Wirral, which is being dealt with as part of the evidence base for the Joint Waste DPD for Merseyside and Halton.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

25.11 The Preferred Option would support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision

185 documents related to the Joint Waste DPD for Merseyside and Halton can be viewed at <http://wasteplanningmerseyside.gov.uk/site.do>

186 Joint Waste Development Plan Document Preferred Options Report (Waste Planning Merseyside, May 2010)

related to securing more sustainable approaches to waste management.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

25.12 The implications for the Spatial Objectives include:

Spatial Objective	Likely Implications
Economic Revitalisation	The Preferred Option could support economic revitalisation by providing jobs in local waste management and by encouraging the use of waste as a resource to support local industries.
Housing Growth and Market Renewal	The Preferred Option could support Preferred Spatial Objective 2 by providing facilities essential to support the successful delivery of housing market renewal and housing growth.
Transport Accessibility	The Preferred Option would not directly support new development with easy access to existing centres and public transport corridors.
Neighbourhood Services	The Preferred Option could contribute towards the provision of neighbourhood facilities related to collection, separation and recycling.
Environmental Quality	The Preferred Option would direct new waste management facilities to locations away from residential areas but additional controls would be necessary to minimise impacts on local distinctiveness and the wider environment.
Flood Risk	Additional controls would be needed to ensure that development was directed away from areas that might be liable to flooding.
New City Neighbourhood	The Preferred Option could support Preferred Spatial Objective 7 by providing the facilities essential to support the delivery of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

25.13 The likely implications for the Broad Spatial Options include:

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO1 - Focused Regeneration	Focused regeneration would direct the majority of new waste management facilities to the older urban areas of east Wirral, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
BSO2 - Balanced Growth	Balanced growth could direct new waste management facilities across a wider area of the Borough, subject to the identification of suitable sites.

Broad Spatial Option	Likely Implications
BSO3 - Urban Expansion	Urban expansion could direct new waste management facilities across a wider area of the Borough, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy	The Preferred Option is likely to mean that the majority of new waste management facilities will need to be provided within east Wirral but additional facilities may also be needed to support development in the most sustainable locations, subject to the identification of suitable sites.

Implications for Settlement Areas

25.14 The Preferred Option is likely to have the greatest implications for Settlement Areas containing industrial areas. The implications for each of the Settlement Areas include:

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 1 - Wallasey	The Preferred Option is likely to continue to direct new waste management facilities towards the industrial areas associated with the Wallasey docklands, subject to the identification of suitable sites. The Joint Waste DPD has identified a potential area of search for smaller scale facilities to the north of the West Float docks.
Area 2 - Commercial Core	The Preferred Option is likely to continue to direct new waste management facilities towards the industrial areas associated with the Birkenhead docklands and the Cammell Lairds Shipyard, subject to the identification of suitable sites. The Joint Waste DPD has identified a potential sub-regional site at Cammell Lairds, two potential district-level sites at existing facilities at Wallasey Bridge Road, and an area of search for smaller scale facilities within the industrial areas associated with Cammell Lairds.
Area 3 - Birkenhead	The Preferred Option is only likely to provide new waste management facilities as part of neighbourhood services for the collection, separation and recycling of waste, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
Area 4 - Bromborough & Eastham	The Preferred Option could continue to direct new waste management facilities towards the industrial areas associated with the Wirral International Business Park and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	The Preferred Option is only likely to provide new waste management facilities as part of neighbourhood services for the collection, separation and recycling of waste, subject to the identification of suitable sites.

Settlement Area	Likely Implications
Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	The Preferred Option is only likely to provide new waste management facilities as part of neighbourhood services for the collection, separation and recycling of waste, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
Area 7 - Heswall	The Preferred Option is only likely to provide new waste management facilities as part of neighbourhood services for the collection, separation and recycling of waste, subject to the identification of suitable sites.
Area 8 - Rural Area	The Preferred Option is unlikely to direct new waste management facilities to the rural areas.

Implications for Delivery

25.15 The control and delivery of new facilities for waste management will mainly be delivered by the private sector through the policies and proposals of the Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton.

Implications for Infrastructure

25.16 Waste management facilities are classified as essential local infrastructure in their own right but may require additional improvements to other local infrastructure to enable them to operate effectively. The availability of appropriate supporting infrastructure has already been taken into account as part of the site evaluation process for the Joint Waste DPD.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal did not consider the issue of proposals for waste management.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 20 - Waste Management, scores positively against sustainability objectives. New waste management facilities will provide sustainable waste management solutions to promote the prevention, minimisation and recycling of waste and minimise the need for residual landfill. It will also provide additional employment opportunities and improve economic productivity. The location of new waste management facilities in industrial and commercial locations would limit the impact on the local environment, although new facilities may generate some noise pollution. New facilities will also reuse previously developed land, but may result in an increase in energy consumption. The Preferred Option should, however, be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to ensure any potential negative impacts relating to biodiversity, residential amenity and local

heritage can be mitigated⁽¹⁸⁷⁾.

Council's Assessment

25.17 The Council's assessment is that a general strategic statement will need to be included within the Core Strategy but that the majority of the lower level detail and control should be dealt with as part of the specialist Joint Waste Development Plan Document being prepared for Merseyside and Halton.

25.18 No alternative Policy Options have been considered.

26 Strategic Locations

26.1 The Spatial Options Report did not include a specific Policy Option for the identification of strategic allocations or broad locations that would be central to the delivery of the emerging Core Strategy. A number of Policy Options, nevertheless, identified the possibility of a strategic allocation or broad location being required, depending on which Spatial Option was chosen. For example:

- All three Broad Spatial Options highlighted the importance of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, the Birkenhead Docklands including Wirral Waters, Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham
- Policy Options for the distribution of new housing identified the importance of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point including Wirral Waters
- Policy Options for the distribution of employment identified the importance of the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and at Wirral International Business Park and major employment areas at Birkenhead Town Centre, Wirral waters, Woodside, Hind Street, Cammell Lairds and Port Sunlight
- Policy Options for the distribution of retailing identified Birkenhead Town Centre and Wirral Waters as key sites for additional comparison retailing

Results of Consultation

26.2 Public consultation indicated that the identification of a strategic allocation or broad location, in line with advice in national planning policy, may be beneficial to the achievement of the Strategy. One respondent encouraged the Council to consider whether Wirral Waters should be identified as a strategic site or location and a further three supported the idea that Birkenhead Docks and Wirral Waters would be of crucial importance to the emerging spatial strategy as a whole. The continuing importance of Wirral International Business Park was also specifically recognised.

187 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

26.3 Attention was drawn to the technical requirements of identifying a strategic site as opposed to a strategic location and a number of respondents wanted to ensure that that strategic sites would be focused on locations that would be accessible to all the existing main settlements⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

Policy Fit

26.4 National planning policy states that core strategies may allocate strategic sites that are central to the achievement of the strategy. This approach requires the boundaries of the Strategic Allocation to be clearly delineated on a Proposals Map. The Strategic Allocation should include all of the land required to deliver the development proposed, supported by a set of principles to guide future development such as the specific land use or mix of suitable uses, the quantum of development including size, scale and access arrangements. Once a Strategic Allocation had been established in a core strategy, there would be no need to address the site in another Development Plan Document and any site specific details could then be dealt with through a lower level masterplan or Supplementary Planning Document⁽¹⁸⁹⁾.

26.5 Alternatively, core strategies can identify Broad Locations for strategic development on the Core Strategy Key Diagram. This approach is more appropriate for sites envisaged for major development where the detailed evidence base, infrastructure costs or full extent of the land required are not yet fully known but where strategic guidance and certainty are still required. It would, however, then be necessary to provide the specific details of the site by allocating them in a subsequent Development Plan Document - possibly an Area Action Plan - at some point in the future⁽¹⁹⁰⁾.

Evidence Base

26.6 Wirral Waters is not identified in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the boundary (and policy) for the Birkenhead Dock Estate was deleted in September 2007 as the first stage in the promotion of the area for a wider range of uses⁽¹⁹¹⁾.

26.7 Wirral Waters is being brought forward through a Strategic Regeneration Framework developed in partnership with the private sector owners of the site. The long term vision for Wirral Waters is to create a new city waterfront at the heart of the older urban area in Birkenhead focused on the transformation of Birkenhead Docklands and their surrounding neighbourhoods. East Float is to be the principal focus for significant investment, delivering a new residential, commercial, cultural

188 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

189 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12, CLG June 2008, paragraph 4.6)

190 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12, CLG June 2008, paragraph 4.1(3))

191 Local Development Framework for Wirral Review of Local Development Scheme and Saved Policies (Wirral Council Cabinet Report, 28 March 2007)

and leisure destination, over a timescale of 30 years or more. The Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework demonstrates how Wirral Waters will act as a catalyst to the sustainable regeneration and growth of inner Wirral and the wider City Region.

26.8 The Wirral Investment Strategy identifies the Birkenhead Docks and the Mersey Waterfront as the Borough's best opportunity to develop new places for business growth and living opportunities to revitalise the whole of the Borough⁽¹⁹²⁾. The associated enterprise strategy also identified Wirral International Business Park, the Mersey Waterfront and the Inland Docks system at Birkenhead as important assets and opportunities in delivering the key priorities of the Investment Strategy⁽¹⁹³⁾.

26.9 The Birkenhead Dock Estate was nationally designated as part of the Merseyside Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area in April 2003 and was confirmed as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point in December 2008 to further enable a radical transformation in the local housing market, by accelerating growth and renewal at the heart of the wider City Region⁽¹⁹⁴⁾.

26.10 The North West Development Agency has recently approved the designation of thirty-five Strategic Regional Sites, including Birkenhead Docks and Wirral International Business Park to give a clear sense of spatial priorities at regional level. The designation of the Birkenhead Docks Strategic Regional Site, in particular, presented the opportunity to promote a mix of uses including housing, knowledge based and port-related uses as part of a highly accessible and exceptional quality waterside development⁽¹⁹⁵⁾.

26.11 An integrated regeneration study has subsequently shown how the proposals can be integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods and public policy initiatives⁽¹⁹⁶⁾.

26.12 Planning permission has already been granted for two phases of residential development at Northbank East subject to a Section 106 Agreement. A significantly larger development at East Float has now also been recommended for approval subject to notification to the Secretary of State and a Section 106 Agreement. Consultation responses indicated no objection from 4NW, NWDA, Highways Agency, Scottish Power and the National Air Traffic Service and no objection subject to conditions from the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, United Utilities, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Merseytravel. The application proposals also drew written support from other local authorities within the sub-region.

192 Wirral Economic Regeneration and Investment Framework (GVA Grimley, 2005)

193 Embracing Change: An Enterprise Strategy for Wirral (Wirral Council, 2007)

194 Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Development 2008-2017 (Mersey Heartlands New Growth Point Partnership, 2008)

195 Strategic Regional Sites Review Technical Report (February 2009, NWDA)

196 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

26.13 While the boundary to the Wirral International Business Park is, similarly, not shown on the Wirral Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map, the industrial areas at Bromborough are already clearly designated as Primarily Industrial Areas and any future amendments could be dealt with as part of a site-specific land allocations Development Plan Document.

Implications for the Spatial Vision

26.14 Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations would support elements of the Preferred Spatial Vision related to regeneration, market renewal and employment growth at the heart of the older urban areas and the establishment of a new city neighbourhood in Birkenhead.

Implications for the Spatial Objectives

26.15 Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations would directly support Preferred Spatial Objectives 1, 2 and 7 related to economic revitalisation, housing growth and market renewal and a new city neighbourhood.

Implications for the Broad Spatial Options

26.16 The focus on designated Strategic Regional Sites forms part of the spatial strategy under all of the Broad Spatial Options.

Implications for Settlement Areas

26.17 The identification of a broad location at Birkenhead and Wirral Waters would have direct implications for Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core and for the surrounding areas in Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey and Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead.

26.18 The identification of a broad location at Wirral International Business Park would have direct implications for Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham.

Implications for Delivery

26.19 The delivery of the proposals at Wirral Waters would be primarily supported by private sector investment, as the remaining public sector funding associated with housing market renewal and other initiatives is likely to continue to be directed towards priorities within the surrounding areas. Development within the Wirral International Business Park is likely to continue to be rely on private sector investment supported by grant aid.

26.20 Reliance on a small number of sites with similar characteristics in one broad location and a limited number of development partners could make Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations vulnerable to local delivery problems, for example, from delays in the provision of essential infrastructure or challenging market conditions but the inclusion of a broad location is still considered necessary to provide certainty over the future direction of policy and investment over the longer term.

Implications for Infrastructure

26.21 The identification of infrastructure necessary to support the development proposed at Wirral Waters has already been dealt with, in negotiation with key stakeholders, as part of the initial Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework. Further detail has now also been provided through the planning application process at East Float.

26.22 Previous public investment has already secured sufficient capacity for future development at Wirral International Business Park, with the exception of electricity supply which will continue to require additional capacity to be added to existing networks as development progresses.

Sustainability Appraisal Summary

The initial Sustainability Appraisal did not consider the issue of proposals for strategic locations.

The revised Sustainability Appraisal suggests that Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations, scores positively against sustainability objectives. Preferred Option 21 is likely to have a positive impact on the residential communities surrounding the area through increased employment opportunities, accessibility to jobs, improved economic prosperity and standards of health and wellbeing. It is also likely to result in a positive impact on the environment through the protection of greenfield sites and the focus of development on previously developed land in urban areas⁽¹⁹⁷⁾.

Council's Assessment

26.23 The Council's assessment is that identifying a broad location for a new city neighbourhood at Birkenhead and Wirral Waters would provide greater certainty to potential investors; enable the Core Strategy to be clear about the future long term vision for this area; and provide a firmer basis for key stakeholders and infrastructure providers. A Strategic Allocation has not been preferred because the majority of the proposals are still in outline; the pace of delivery will be sensitive to changing economic circumstances; and delivery is expected to extend beyond 2027.

26.24 A strategic allocation has not been made at Wirral International Business Park, as the future pattern of development in this area has already been established within the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and will be simply carried over into the Core Strategy, but the Preferred Option will provide for a statement of priorities to be included within the Settlement Area Policy for Bromborough and Eastham.

197 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

27 Document List

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Birkenhead (and Wirral Waters) Integrated Regeneration Study	A study to provide a comprehensive regeneration plan for the commercial heartland of Birkenhead	2010	GVA Grimley
By Design Urban Design in the Planning System Towards Better Practice	A national guide to promote higher standards in urban design	2000	DETR
Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project	An assessment of the historic character of the Cheshire landscape which includes an assessment of Wirral's rural areas	2008	Cheshire County Council
Core Strategy - Spatial Options Report	A consultation report setting out what the Council believes are the main options that will need to be considered before deciding on the most appropriate long term spatial strategy for the Borough	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Spatial Options Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report	A report setting out the likely implications of each of the spatial options for the Core Strategy for the promotion of local sustainable development	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Spatial Options	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Core Strategy Spatial Options Report	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Report	A consultation report setting out the Council's preferred options for the Core Strategy	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Revised Spatial Portrait	A report setting out an updated spatial portrait of the Borough amended in response to public consultation	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report	A report setting out the likely implications of each of the preferred options for the Core Strategy for the promotion of local sustainable development	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment	A report setting out an assessment of the potential impact of the preferred options for the Core Strategy on designated European Sites	2010	Wirral Council

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Implications for Unitary Development Plan Policies and Proposals	A report setting out the expected implications of the preferred options for the Core Strategy on the replacement of the policies and proposals contained within the the Wirral Unitary Development Plan	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options - Draft Delivery Framework	A consultation document setting out a summary of the main projects and developments that will contribute towards the delivery of the Core Strategy	2010	Wirral Council
Embracing Change: Enterprise Strategy for Wirral	A strategy setting out short, medium and long term priorities for improving local enterprise and economic performance	2007	Wirral Council
Employment for All: A Full Employment Strategy for Wirral	This strategy identifies the key challenges facing employment within the Borough and suggests the steps required to work towards full employment	2006	Centre for Social Inclusion
Guidance on Tall Buildings	National guidance to help evaluate planning applications for tall buildings	2007	CABE
Index of Multiple Deprivation for England	A national index which combines a range of social and economic indicators to provide a single deprivation score for local areas in England	2007	Office for National Statistics
Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development	An local policy to support the regeneration of identified priority areas in the east of the Borough	2005	Wirral Council
Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside	A document that guides the delivery of waste management in Merseyside	2008	Merseyside Waste Partnership
Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton	A sub-regional Development Plan Document which will replace the policies and proposals for waste management contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral	2010	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts: Recession & Recovery	A report setting out the long term economic prospects for the Liverpool City Region to 2030	2009	The Mersey Partnership

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study	A report setting out the likely capacity of the area to generate renewable energy	2010	Arup
Liverpool SuperPort	A prospectus setting out proposals to integrate air, port, logistics and transportation across the Liverpool City Region	2008	The Mersey Partnership
Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report	A regular report monitoring performance against national and local indicators and progress on the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework	2009	Wirral Council
Manual for Streets	National guidance for the planning, design, provision and approval of new residential streets	2007	Department for Transport
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Development	A report setting out the plans and ambitions, infrastructure requirements and funding needed to support the programme for the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point	2008	Liverpool City Council, Wirral Council and Peel Holdings
Mersey Tidal Power Project Stage 1 Options Report	The first stage of a study to select a preferred scheme for generating electricity from the tides within the Mersey Estuary	2010	Scott Wilson
Mersey Tidal Power Project Feasibility Study Sustainability Scoping Report	A consultation document setting out proposals for the approach to sustainability issues	2010	Scott Wilson
Merseyside Ecological Framework	A proposed framework for dealing with biodiversity issues in the planning process	2010	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	An assessment of the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral	2008	Salford University
Merseyside Mineral Resource Study	A review of mineral resources and reserves within Merseyside	2008	Urban Vision
North West of England Plan 2021 (revoked in July 2010)	The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West which previously formed part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral	2008	Government Office for the North West

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan SMP2 Consultation Report	A management plan setting out priorities for coast protection along the North West coastline	2010	Halcrow Group
North West Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report	An annual report setting out the demand and supply of minerals across the North West region	2009	North West Regional Aggregates Working Party
Open Source Planning	A pre-Election Green Paper setting out proposals for the future of the planning system	2010	Conservative Party
Option 1 Housing Numbers	A guidance note setting out the Option 1 numbers referred to in Open Source Planning for North West local authorities	2010	4NW
State of the Northwest Economy A Long-term Forecast for the Northwest 2010–2030	Assesses the current economic climate in the North West and provides a forecast taking into account threats and opportunities to the Northwest economy	2010	Regional Economic Forecasting Panel
Strategic Regional Sites Review Technical Report	An evidence base report setting out the background to the retentions, deletions and additions to the list of designated Strategic Regional Sites in the North West	2009	NWDA
UK Renewable Energy Strategy	A national strategy setting out priorities for renewable energy use in electricity heat and transport	2009	Department for Energy and Climate Change
Waste Strategy for England	A national strategy setting objectives for the more sustainable management of waste	2007	DEFRA
Wirral Biodiversity Audit	An audit of available information on the Borough's biodiversity resources including a review of the criteria for the selection of local wildlife sites	2009	Penny Anderson Associates
Wirral Economic Regeneration and Investment Framework	A comprehensive analysis of local economic regeneration and investment setting out the strengths and weaknesses of the Borough's economic performance	2005	GVA Grimley

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study	An assessment of the supply and demand for employment land and premises setting out recommendations on the future allocation of employment land to maintain economic growth	2009	Business Environments Group
Wirral Housing Strategy	A strategy setting out local objectives and priorities for housing and related services and an action plan for achieving sustainable communities	2005	Wirral Council
Wirral Investment Strategy	A strategy that outlines local economic opportunities and constraints and key priorities to drive economic growth	2007	Wirral Council
Wirral Landscape Character Assessment	An assessment of the landscape and visual character of the countryside in Wirral	2009	The Environment Partnership
Wirral Local Area Partnership Agreement 2008-2011	A local area agreement between central Government and local partners which sets out a three-year delivery plan for key elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy	2008	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Open Space Assessment	An audit of the quantity, quality and distribution of recreational open space	2010	Strategic Leisure
Wirral Planning Application Validation Checklist	A checklist setting out the information that must be provided when submitting an application for planning permission	2009	Wirral Council
Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan	An assessment of the supply and demand of playing pitches	2004	KKP
Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of areas at risk of flooding	2009	Faber Maunsell
Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	An assessment of the Borough's housing land supply to 2026	2010	Roger Tym and Partners and A.P. Sheenan
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update	A revised assessment of local housing needs including the need for affordable and specialist housing, to take account of the impact of the economic downturn	2010	Fordhams Research
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment	An assessment of the viability of targets for affordable housing	2010	Fordhams Research

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Affordable Housing Viability Study			
Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study	An assessment of the function of retail centres across Wirral providing recommendations to inform the Local Development Framework	2009	Roger Tym and Partners
Wirral Unitary Development Plan	An old-style Development Plan adopted by the Council in February 2000, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework	2000	Wirral Council
Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework	An initial framework for the future development of the Birkenhead Dock Estate and its surrounding areas	2008	Turley Associates

28 Glossary

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
4NW		The Regional Leaders Board including Council leaders from across the North West of England responsible for preparing a wide variety of regional strategies and initiatives including the former Regional Spatial Strategy
Affordable Housing		Housing at a cost below that typically available in the open market including social rented and shared-ownership housing
Allocation		The identification of a specific piece of land for a specific type of development in a Development Plan Document or Unitary Development Plan
Annual Monitoring Report	AMR	A written report, published by the Council towards the end of each calendar year, setting out progress on the delivery of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved
Area Action Plan	AAP	A Development Plan Document setting out a more detailed programme of action within a specific location
Assisted Area		Area designated by the European Commission to receive additional Government funding to support employment and economic revitalisation

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Assessment Report

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Atlantic Gateway		A framework for collaboration between the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions to promote the economic regeneration of the wider area, including major projects such as 'Wirral Waters'
Biodiversity		A collective term for the full variety of biological life on earth including plants, animals and eco-systems
Birkenhead Dock Estate		The geographical area under the control of the port operator at Birkenhead previously designated under Policy EM10 of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral
Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	BREEAM	An assessment method which sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and measures a building's environmental performance
Broad Location		A general geographical area identified in the Core Strategy where a particular type of development is likely to take place
Brownfield Land		See 'Previously Developed Land'
Building for Life		A Government endorsed standard method for assessing the quality of new housing development. Sites are scored against a series of twenty criteria which can be viewed at http://www.buildingforlife.org/
Call for Sites		An exercise undertaken by the Council as part of the preparation of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, in which the public were invited to submit sites with potential for housing or employment uses
Category 1 Sites		Related to the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - a site capable of being developed for housing within five years
Category 2 Sites		Related to the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - a site capable of being developed for housing within five to ten years
Charging Schedule		Related to the Community Infrastructure Levy. A schedule setting out the details of the charge(s) to be applied to each category of development as a cost per unit or site area
Code for Sustainable Homes		A code which measures a new home against nine categories of sustainable design, using a one to six star rating system. The code is expected to become mandatory for all new housing development in future
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	CABE	A national public body that advises on best practice in architecture and urban design

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Communities and Local Government	CLG	The Government Department responsible for planning, building and the environment
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	A financial charge on new development which can be levied to pay for local infrastructure to be provided within the area
Comparison Goods		Non-food items including household goods, furniture, electrical goods and clothing
Conservation Area	CA	An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected and enhanced
Convenience Goods		Largely relates to perishable goods which are purchased on a regular basis. Some non-food goods are also classed as convenience such as newspapers, tobacco and alcohol
Core Strategy		A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and general strategy for the future development of the Borough
Decentralised Energy		A usually small scale energy supply from local renewable and/or low-carbon source which is not normally directly related to the national energy generation network
Design and Access Statement		A report accompanying a planning application that explains how the local context has influenced the design and how the full range of access requirements will be met
Developer Contributions		The provision of a payment or facility part or wholly funded by a developer to meet a specific planning requirement
Development Management		The function within the Council which processes and determines planning applications
Development Plan		The statutory Development Plan for the Borough is currently the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral adopted in February 2000, until the Unitary Development Plan has been replaced by the Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. Individual planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise
Development Plan Document	DPD	A Local Development Document with status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough
Dock Estate		An area of land owned and operated by a port operator
East Float		The geographical area of the Birkenhead Dock Estate between Duke Street and Tower Road

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Environment Agency	EA	A government body that aims to control and prevent a wide variety of harmful impacts on the environment
European Sites		Sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation
Evidence base		Information and data gathered to support the policy approach set out in Local Development Documents
Government Office North West	GONW	A government body responsible for national policies and initiatives within Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside
Green Belt		Land designated for protection to prevent urban sprawl and to safeguard surrounding countryside from further encroachment
Greenfield		Land that has not been previously developed. Includes land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes; and undeveloped land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments and gardens
Green Infrastructure	GI	Networks of public and private green spaces and habitats
Growth Point		An area identified by the Government in which an accelerated level of housing delivery will be promoted
Gross Value Added	GVA	A measure of the performance of the local economy.
Gypsies and Travellers		People of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including those who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently
Habitats Regulations Assessment	HRA	An assessment of the impact of emerging policies and proposals on European Sites
Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area	HMRI	An area defined by the Secretary of State as a focus for public action to restructure the local housing market, also known as the Newheartlands Pathfinder, which in Wirral includes parts of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Bidston and Liscard
Index of Multiple Deprivation	IMD	A nationally calculated index which combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for local neighbourhoods in England
Infill Village		A village area in the Green Belt where small scale infill development will be permitted, which is designated in the Development Plan

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Infrastructure		Assets, services or facilities required to serve a new development such as new roads or drainage
Interim Planning Policy		A policy document adopted by the Council, following public consultation, which sets out the Council's policies for the location of new housing development until an appropriate Development Plan Document is adopted
Key Diagram		A summary plan used to illustrate the broad location for future development and/or protection
Liverpool City Region		The Liverpool City Region comprises of Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.
Local Area Agreement	LAA	A formal agreement by the Council and other local service providers to meet a set of specific targets for the delivery of selected local services
Local Development Document	LDD	A document prepared as part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough
Local Development Framework	LDF	The overall name for the collection of adopted Local Development Documents for the Borough
Local Distinctiveness		The main features of an area which contribute to its unique character and sense of place
Low Carbon Energy		Power that comes from sources that produce fewer greenhouse gases than traditional means of power generation
Major Developed Site		A developed site in the Green Belt where limited development will be permitted, which is designated in the Development Plan
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point		An area, with the same boundary as the HMRI Pathfinder, which was designated as a New Growth Point in December 2008 to increase the national delivery of new housing
Mersey Dee Alliance	MDA	A partnership between the local authorities of Cheshire West and Chester, Denbighshire, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, the Welsh Assembly Government and Merseytravel
Merseyside		The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.
Merseyside Waste Partnership		A partnership between the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and the local councils of Knowlsey, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Mobility Housing		Housing which has been specifically designed or can be easily adapted to take wheelchairs
National Land Use Database	NLUD	A database of all previously developed land and buildings within England that may be available for development
New City Neighbourhood		A newly constructed neighbourhood including a wide range of uses which is intended to lead to the commercial transformation of the older urban area
Newheartlands		One of ten nationally designated Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Areas, which in Merseyside includes parts of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, which are designed to tackle low demand and housing market failure in areas of greatest need
NOMIS	NOMIS	A database of official labour market statistics, run on behalf of the Office for National Statistics
Northbank		The area of the land running along the northern bank of the East Float within the Birkenhead Dock Estate at Wirral Waters
North West Development Agency	NWDA	A public body set up to promote economic development within the North West Region
'Option 1' figure		The number of additional dwellings being proposed for each local authority area prior to the publication of the final Regional Spatial Strategy
Permitted Development		Development that can be undertaken without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission
Planning Policy Guidance Notes	PPG	The previous name for a Planning Policy Statement
Planning Policy Statement	PPS	Documents produced by the Government to provide guidance to local authorities and others on national policy and the operation of the planning system
Preferred Options		The stage at which the development options preferred by the Council, for inclusion in a Development Plan Document, are published, alongside an explanation of why they have been chosen
Previously Developed Land	PDL	Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The full definition is set out in national advice published by the Secretary of State. Also known as 'brownfield' land

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Proposals Map		An annotated map showing the areas of land where the policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan or contained within in a Development Plan Document will apply
Regional Economic Forecasting Panel	REFP	A panel of senior representatives from the business, academic and public sectors advising on the economic prospects of the North West
Regional Planning Guidance	RPG13	An old-style document published by the Secretary of State to guide the preparation of local Development Plans which has now been replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West
Regional Spatial Strategy	RSS	A statutory document, issued by the Secretary of State, setting out the vision and priorities for future development within the North West Region, which previously had status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough but which was formally revoked in July 2010
Registered Social Landlord	RSL	An organisation registered as a provider of social housing to meet the needs of people unable to afford to own their own home
Renewable Energy		Energy that is generated from resources which can be naturally replenished such as wind, sunlight, rain, tides, geothermal heat and waste
RSS Inner Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the boundary of the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area
RSS Outer Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway outside the Inner Area
RSS Rural Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the areas to the west of the M53 Motorway
Secretary of State		The person appointed by the Prime Minister to have overall responsibility for the operation of the national planning system, currently the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Settlement Area		A geographical area used by the Council to represent one of the eight main groups of settlements within the Borough
Site-Specific Development Plan Document		A Development Plan Document which identifies and allocates specific areas of land for new development

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Section 106 Agreement		A legal agreement between the Council and a developer to ensure that certain specified works will be undertaken if planning permission is granted for a particular development
Secure by Design		A crime prevention initiative focusing on the design, layout and construction of new development
Spatial Objective		An objective which can be applied to a specific geographical area
Spatial Planning		A general process to achieve the most efficient use of land by balancing competing demands within the context of sustainable development, to enable the Council and other organisations to co-ordinate their activities to achieve agreed geographical objectives
Spatial Vision		A brief statement of the main aspirations for the future development and wellbeing of the Borough
Specialist Housing		Any form of purpose-designed housing or communal establishment such as sheltered, supported, extra care or wheelchair standard housing which caters for people who are unable to live independently in ordinary housing
Stakeholder		A person or organisation with an interest in the future planning and development of the Borough
Statutory		A document or process which has a special legal status, as set out in national law
Strategic Allocation		An area of land allocated in the Core Strategy for a specific type of development that is considered to be essential to delivery of the vision and spatial strategy for the area
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	SHLAA	A document which examines potential sites for housing across the Borough and assesses them in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	SHMA	A document which examines the key features of Wirral's housing market, including housing need, supply and demand
Strategic Regional Site	SRS	An area of land identified by the North West Development Agency as a priority location for the promotion of new business development
Supplementary Planning Document	SPD	A Local Development Document which provides additional information to assist in the delivery of an adopted policy within a Development Plan Document (or an adopted policy in the Unitary Development Plan until that policy has been replaced)

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	A written appraisal of the likely social, economic and environmental impact of the proposals contained within a Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document
Sustainable Community Strategy	SCS	A strategy setting out the overall vision for the improvement of the area prepared under the Local Government Act 2000 by the Local Strategic Partnership
Sustainable Development		The idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations
The Mersey Partnership	TMP	A sub-regional public/private sector partnership to promote economic development, investment and tourism across the Liverpool City Region
Twelve Quays		A former dockland area along the Mersey waterfront between the ferry terminals at Seacombe and Woodside to the east of Birkenhead Road, Tower Road and Canning Street which was previously identified as a Strategic Regional Site
Unitary Development Plan	UDP	An old-style Development Plan, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework
Wirral International Business Park		A designated Strategic Regional Site in Bromborough to the east of the A41 extending across the area between the watercourse at Bromborough Pool and Eastham Country Park
Wirral Planning Applications Checklist		A checklist, prepared following public consultation, that sets out the type of information that must be submitted as part of an application for planning permission
Wirral Waters		A project to create an internationally recognised city waterfront, focused upon the East Float of the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock system, together with a distinctive leisure and retail destination at Bidston Dock, now designated as part of a Strategic Regional Site