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1 Introduction

1.1 This document is an extract from the Core Strategy for Wirral Preferred Options Report which reproduces the text of each of the Preferred Options without any additional commentary or assessment and without any of the additional explanatory footnotes. It is provided for reference purposes only.

1.2 A full copy of the Preferred Options Report and its accompanying documents can be viewed on the Council's on-line consultation portal at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal> or can be obtained on request from the address below.

1.3 Please remember that any comments, in writing, by questionnaire, letter, e-mail or fax or electronically on the Council's on-line consultation portal **must arrive at the address below no later than 17.00 hours on Friday 7 January 2011.**

For further information please contact:

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2 Preferred Options Extracts

Preferred Option 1 - Plan Period

Fifteen years from the estimated date of adoption of February 2012 - a plan period of April 2012 to March 2027.

Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

The main spatial implications of the Core Strategy will be presented through a series of Settlement Area Policies.

Settlement Area Policies will set out:

- the number, scale, type and broad location of new housing development
- the amount, scale, type and broad location of new employment development
- priorities for local infrastructure
- priorities for existing centres
- priorities for maintaining local distinctiveness
- priorities for green infrastructure and public access
- priorities for public safety
- priorities for tourism

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core will set out the main priorities for the New City Neighbourhood at Birkenhead and Wirral Waters.

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham will set out the main priorities for the industrial locations in Bromborough.

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area will set out the main priorities for the Green Belt and the rural economy.

Settlement Areas will be both named and numbered on the following basis:

Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	Settlement Area 7 - Heswall
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area

Preferred Option 3 - 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, health, 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 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; flood risk, waste management; carbon impact; local employment and production; and mitigation, adaption and resilience to climate change.

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.

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 listed in the Settlement Area Policies.

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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.

Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy

The Core Strategy will focus job, housing and population growth to areas in greatest need of social, economic and environmental regeneration. Elsewhere, the focus will be on targeting local improvements to benefit local residents and to enhance the environmental assets of the Borough.

Development will be used to promote urban regeneration; housing market renewal; and employment and population growth within the older urban areas of east Wirral. Housing and employment densities in these areas will be medium to high to make the most efficient use of land, investment, infrastructure and services and to deliver the scale of transformation necessary to support a self-sustaining programme of regeneration. No upper limit will be placed on the number of dwellings provided within these areas, to support a greater pace of regeneration, if the market can support it.

The focus for new jobs will be the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Bromborough; and existing employment areas within eastern and central Wirral, where they will be most accessible to the greatest number of residents. No upper limit will be placed on the number of jobs provided within these areas, to support the economic revitalisation of the Borough.

Borough wide services will be directed to the most accessible locations in Birkenhead. Secondary, district level services will continue to be directed to the larger existing centres of Liscard, Moreton, West Kirby and Heswall, which will be well served by public transport.

Land will continue to be set aside at the Ports to reflect their continued strategic importance for cargo handling and freight movements; the opportunity to maximise the potential for off-road transport; and contribute towards a sub-regional "SuperPort".

A lower proportion of homes and jobs will be directed to areas in and around existing centres and along transport corridors served by well-integrated, high frequency public transport services, where the development will maintain and improve local centres and neighbourhood services; reduce the need to travel; improve amenity; and provide local housing and employment to meet identified needs. Outside these areas, only small scale, lower density development will be permitted, to meet identified local needs and maintain local character and distinctiveness. A ceiling will be placed on the number of dwellings provided within these areas to ensure that regeneration continues to be supported within the regeneration priority areas.

Green Belt will not be released in the period to March 2027, in the absence of a full review of the Core Strategy and the adoption of a site-specific Development Plan Document. The focus within rural areas will be on re-using existing buildings; strengthening the agricultural economy; increasing local food production and food security; maximising the use of best and most versatile agricultural land; and providing for outdoor sport and recreation; while protecting local distinctiveness and preserving biodiversity, landscape, heritage and other local features of importance.

Tourism development will be targeted to deliver local improvements to benefit both local residents and visitors; support regeneration in Birkenhead; improvements within the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby and along the Mersey coastline; and improve access to the coast and countryside.

All new development will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute to addressing identified social, economic or environmental problems; reduce vacant property within the urban area; promote the re-use of previously developed land; improve housing and living conditions; promote environmental improvements; preserve local heritage, identity and distinctiveness; protect and provide a linked network of green infrastructure; reduce emissions; and meet identified local needs.

The local implications will be expressed through a series of Settlement Area Policies.

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Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets

The Borough wide target for new housing provision in Wirral will be 3,750 net additional dwellings over the fifteen year period from April 2012 to March 2027, including affordable and specialist housing.

The target for April 2012 to 2017 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.
The target for April 2017 to 2022 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.
The target for April 2022 to 2027 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.

The Core Strategy will set a target for each Settlement Area for each five year period to deliver the distribution of housing set out under Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing based on the findings of the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Annual targets within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point will be minimum targets, which it will be acceptable to exceed to prevent urban regeneration being held back were the housing market to recover more quickly. Annual targets within the remaining areas of the Borough will be maximum targets, which should not be exceeded in the interests of promoting urban regeneration in areas where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest.

The mix of housing will be sought in line with the proportions set out in the Council's latest local housing needs assessment. Affordable housing and specialist housing will be sought in line with the proportions set out under Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing.

Housing development will be phased across the plan period in accordance with Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development and Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference to ensure that previously developed brownfield land is developed before previously undeveloped greenfield land.

The scale and pace of delivery against Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets will be assessed on a regular basis within the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing

The broad distribution of new housing to deliver the Council's spatial objectives for urban regeneration; housing market renewal; and housing growth will be:

Settlement Area	Percentage Distribution	Implied Annual Target (Net Additional)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	7%	18
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	45%	112
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	23%	58
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	18%	45
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	1%	3
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	2%	5
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1%	3
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	3%	6
Total	100%	250

The Core Strategy will set a target for each Settlement Area to deliver the broad distribution of housing set out above based on the findings of the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Land allocations for new housing development will be contained within a site-specific Development Plan Document.

Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development

The Core Strategy will phase housing development across the Borough as a whole in support of Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy and to maximise the reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land.

The phasing of the release of housing land for development will be operated in line with Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference and the need to ensure that any adverse impact on European Sites is avoided.

Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference

The Council's preferred order of preference for phasing housing land will be:

1. Urban brownfield land in identified regeneration priority areas
2. Urban brownfield land in east Wirral
3. Urban brownfield land in west Wirral
4. Rural brownfield land in east Wirral
5. Rural brownfield land in west Wirral
6. Urban greenfield land in east Wirral, subject to an assessment of the need for open space and other forms of green infrastructure within the locality
7. Urban greenfield land in west Wirral, subject to an assessment of the need for open space and other forms of green infrastructure within the locality

Land in a lower category will only be released where land of a higher category is shown to be inadequate to meet a five year supply of housing land as shown in the Council's latest Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report when assessed against the overall Borough-wide targets set out under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets.

The Borough wide target for the re-use of previously developed land will be at least 80 percent.

Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing

A third of the future housing land supply set out under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets, should be set aside for the development of specialist housing.

The long-term aspiration will be to move towards a Borough wide requirement to provide up to 40 percent affordable housing as part of new market housing developments, subject to site specific viability.

To begin with, a Borough-wide target of 20 percent affordable housing will be applied alongside a target of 10 percent within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, to reflect current market conditions. The Core Strategy will, however, include a provision to re-consider these targets on a regular basis to take account of national published data for house prices, building costs and alternative use values.

The provision of affordable housing will need to be considered and secured on any site that will provide five or more dwellings, subject to site specific viability. A commuted sum will be sought where affordable housing is not to be provided on-site.

85 percent of any affordable housing provided should be secured for social renting with the remaining 15 percent secured as intermediate housing. The affordable housing secured should reflect the mix of house types for affordable housing set out in the latest local housing needs assessment.

The housing needs assessment and viability assessment will be periodically updated to ensure that the most appropriate type and proportion of affordable and specialist housing is being secured.

For land allocations, specific requirements will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

Preferred Option 10 - Gypsies and Travellers

The Core Strategy will set out criteria for the determination of planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The criteria are likely to include:

- evidence of need and demand, including travelling patterns
- highway access
- access to and impact on local services
- impact on local character and amenity
- other environmental considerations

Further advice on the application of these criteria will, where necessary, be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment

The Core Strategy will seek to secure the equivalent of up to 177 hectares of additional development land for new employment-related development during the plan period to March 2027.

The Council will resist the loss of designated employment land and premises to non-employment uses unless a Borough wide employment land review has identified them as no longer viable and surplus to requirements.

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The broad distribution of new employment development will be:

- Commercial Core - 50 percent
- Bromborough - 40 percent
- Other estates and centres - 10 percent

To enable new and existing businesses to grow successfully, the supply of suitable, available and fully serviced employment land should not fall below a ten year supply at past rates of development.

The following priorities for locations, uses and activities will be contained within Settlement Area Policies:

- Land at Twelve Quays, West Float, Cammell Lairds and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham will be reserved for port-related requirements and activities
- Land at Bromborough will primarily be reserved for large and medium scale industrial and campus-style office developments
- Small and medium scale commercial and industrial activities will be directed to the dockside hinterlands at Poulton, Seacombe and the Cleveland Street Corridor in Birkenhead; Priory Industrial Estate and the A41 Corridor in Tranmere; Tarran Industrial Estate and the employment complexes at Pasture Road and Reeds Lane in Moreton; Carr Lane Industrial Estate in Hoylake; Arrowe Brook Road, Upton; North Cheshire Trading Estate in Prenton and Cross Lane Industrial Estate in Wallasey
- Wirral Waters and the areas immediately surrounding Birkenhead Town Centre will be promoted for larger scale commercial, office and service activities
- Smaller, more locally based office and service activities will be directed to other existing centres

Precise locations and boundaries will be determined by a site-specific Development Plan Document.

The Council will, wherever possible and feasible, also negotiate with developers to provide training and job opportunities for the local community, in the demolition and construction phases of new developments as well as their subsequent operation. Relevant agreements will, where appropriate, be secured in line with Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network

The Borough's shopping centre network will comprise the following types of centre, to support community regeneration and a sustainable distribution of shops and services:

Sub-Regional Centre - Birkenhead will function as the Borough's main comparison shopping destination and the focus for retail, office, leisure, service, cultural and tourist facilities, and other main town centre uses of Borough wide significance.

Town Centres - are second tier centres which function as important convenience and comparison retail and service centres below the Sub-Regional Centre. The objective will be to improve the environment and support investment to achieve a mix of uses (with retail as the principal use) to ensure the centres will continue to meet the needs of the local communities within the catchments that they serve.

District Centres - will provide the focus for district level shops, services and community facilities at a level above local neighbourhoods. The objective will be to improve the environment and support investment to achieve a mix of uses (with retail as the principal use) to ensure the centres will continue to meet the needs of the local communities within the catchments that they serve and to support diversification and specialisation where this can be shown to contribute to the overall vitality of the centre.

Local Centres - will be the focus for neighbourhood level shops and services to serve everyday needs. The objective will be to improve the environment and maintain the current level of investment and the range of neighbourhood services within these centres.

The Council will use the following network of centres to guide the distribution of town centre uses:

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

Initial priorities for each centre including the approach to upper floor and residential uses, will be included in the relevant Settlement Area Policies.

The boundary to each of these centres will be defined in a site-specific Development Plan Document. In defining the boundaries to these centres, consideration will be given to:

- the need to provide a strong focus within each centre
- the function of the centre
- the location of potential development sites
- the range of shops and services
- transport accessibility
- the findings of a Local Centre Implementation Plan

Site-specific Development Plan Documents will also specify floorspace thresholds for the scale of any edge-of-centre and out-of-centre development that should be subject to an impact assessment under national planning policy; the areas to which these thresholds will apply; and any locally important impacts that should be assessed.

Preferred Option 13 - Retail Growth

Convenience Shopping Floorspace

There is no quantitative need for additional convenience floorspace in the Borough to 2026. Proposals for convenience retail floorspace which are intended to address a demonstrated local qualitative deficiency in provision will first be 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. Any retail development at Wirral Waters including convenience floorspace should support the objectives of the Council's integrated regeneration study for Birkenhead and Wirral Waters.

Comparison Shopping Floorspace

New comparison floorspace will be provided in line with the phasing set out up to a ceiling of 121,814 square metres gross by 2026. New floorspace will first be directed to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network and then to Wirral Waters, having regard to considerations of scale and impact on existing centres. Any retail development at Wirral Waters should support the objectives of the Council's integrated regeneration study for Birkenhead and Wirral Waters.

Preferred Option 14 - Decentralised Energy

The Core Strategy will include a general policy to encourage energy efficiency and the use and development of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy.

The New City Neighbourhood identified under Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations, will be identified as a priority zone for the possible implementation of a district heating scheme.

Opportunities to use tidal power in the River Mersey will be encouraged subject to appropriate environmental controls including a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to select the most suitable design and location and assess the impact of construction and operation.

Specific requirements for individual land allocations will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

Preferred Option 15 - Better Design

The Core Strategy will include an overarching design policy that will promote the maintenance and enhancement of local distinctiveness and sustainable construction and design.

Local requirements will be based on an assessment of the character of the assets identified under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies.

Detailed requirements will be based on additional guidance contained within separate Supplementary Planning Documents and design guides.

Design requirements for land allocations will be set out in a site-specific Development Plan Document. Major developments may be supported by a site-specific Supplementary Planning Document.

Preferred Option 16 - Development Management

The Core Strategy will set out a list of the main issues that will need to be addressed when considering the appropriateness of any new development proposal or land allocation. The list of main issues will include:

- contribution to the delivery of Spatial Vision
- contribution to the delivery of Spatial Objectives
- compliance with the Broad Spatial Strategy
- impact on local distinctiveness
- impact on protected sites and species
- impact on mitigation, adaption and resilience to climate change
- impact on the reuse of buildings and previously developed land
- impact on transport, access and servicing
- impact on sustainable travel choices
- impact on public safety
- impact on the capacity of local infrastructure and services
- impact on design and amenity
- impact on wider environmental requirements
- the results of community consultation

The requirements of Preferred Option 16 - Development Management will be applied in accordance with national planning policies, guidance and best practice.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions

The Core Strategy will require new development to contribute to new or replacement facilities where they are needed to serve the development proposed or to mitigate its impact. The types of provision likely to be required will include:

- transport
- water services
- public realm
- affordable housing
- green infrastructure
- local employment and training opportunities
- education
- health
- community services
- sustainability considerations
- measures to avoid and mitigate an adverse impact on European Sites

A full list of the key infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of the Core Strategy will be included alongside an indication of the Settlement Area and uses to which they will apply. The levels of contribution and the uses and thresholds against which they will be applied will be contained in a separate Supplementary Planning Document.

Any requirements will be applied in accordance with an assessment of the viability of the development proposed.

For land allocations, site-specific requirements will be set out in a Development Plan Document.

The mechanisms used to secure provision, in payment or in kind, could include planning conditions, Section 106 legal agreements, agreements under the Highways Acts, the Community Infrastructure Levy or other development-based tariffs.

The funding raised and the facilities provided will be published for public scrutiny.

Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure

The Core Strategy will set Borough-wide standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of parks and gardens; natural and semi-natural greenspace; outdoor sports facilities including playing fields, bowling greens and tennis courts; amenity greenspace; provision for children and young people; and allotments.

A hierarchy of provision will differentiate between Borough wide, district and local facilities.

The Borough-wide standards will be used to protect existing features and facilities; identify priorities for improvements; and to support new provision. Requirements will include the protection and maintenance of natural features; hard and soft landscaping; and facilities for recreation, sport or play. Contributions for new or improved provision arising from the demands of new development will be sought under Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

The implications for local areas will be included in Settlement Area Policies, which will set out local priorities and characteristics including issues related to natural features; trees and woodland; soils and geology; coastal character and influences; landscape and heritage; habitats and species; corridors and linkages; public rights of way; formal and informal recreation; water courses and drainage.

All development proposals and land allocations will be assessed against their contribution to:

- the standards set out under Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure
- the priorities for the Settlement Area(s) concerned
- the delivery of the Council's overall Strategy for Green Infrastructure
- the delivery of any other related initiatives and strategies
- the avoidance and mitigation of an adverse impact on European Sites

Site-specific requirements for land allocations; including land allocations for green infrastructure, will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

This approach will, where necessary, be supported by additional background information and mapping provided in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Preferred Option 19 - Minerals

The Core Strategy will indicate the intention to safeguard an area to prevent incompatible development from sterilising the existing mineral reserve at Carr Lane in Moreton. The area of search will be shown as a symbol on the Core Strategy Key Diagram. A more detailed boundary will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

The Core Strategy will also include additional criteria for development management to take account of specialist issues related to the design, construction, operation, restoration and aftercare of mineral sites.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Preferred Option 20 - Waste Management

The Core Strategy will support provision for sustainable waste management solutions to promote the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste and to minimise the need for residual landfill, subject to the requirements of Preferred Option 16 - Development Management.

New waste management facilities will primarily be directed to industrial and commercial locations away from residential properties.

A Joint Waste Development Plan Document will include site-specific proposals for sub-regional, district and smaller scale facilities; and additional criteria for development management to take account of specialist issues related to the location, design, operation, impact, restoration, aftercare and monitoring of waste management facilities.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations

The Core Strategy will identify the area of Birkenhead and Wirral Waters with a symbol on the Core Strategy Key Diagram as a broad location for the development of a New City Neighbourhood.

The Core Strategy will indicate the intention to prepare a series of Area Action Plans for the remaining areas in the surrounding Partnership Neighbourhoods.

Settlement Area Policies will set out the main priorities for the industrial locations in Bromborough and the Wirral International Business Park.

Precise locations and boundaries will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document, specifying timescales for delivery.