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# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This document is a working update of a Spatial Portrait for Wirral, which is intended to provide a more detailed description of the social, economic and environmental context of the Borough to accompany the publication of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy for Wirral.

**1.2** Earlier versions of the Portrait have been published on two previous occasions and made subject to public consultation, as part of the Spatial Options Report for the emerging Core Strategy in January 2010 and alongside the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy in November 2010. Some of the information included was also published as part of the separate public consultation on Draft Settlement Area Policies undertaken in January 2012<sup>(1)</sup>.

**1.3** This update takes account of many of the suggestions and comments received in response to previous consultation, as well as the findings of more up-to-date studies and evidence, where available.

**1.4** The information is provided in the same general format as in previous versions of the Spatial Portrait and is proposed to be kept under annual review as part of the ongoing monitoring of the Core Strategy, once it has been adopted.

**1.5** A final revised version of the Spatial Portrait may also be prepared to accompany the final Draft Core Strategy when it is submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.

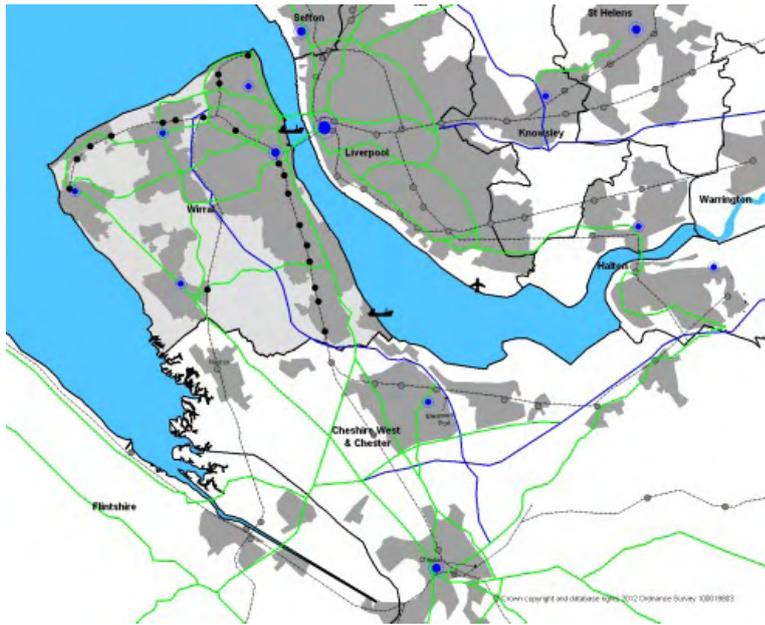
Further information on any aspect of the Core Strategy or this Spatial Portrait can be obtained from: Wirral Council, Regeneration, Housing and Planning Department, North Annexe, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED Telephone 0151 691 8225 Fax 0151 691 8188 Email: [lauramyles@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:lauramyles@wirral.gov.uk)

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1 Further details on the comments submitted at each stage can be found within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (November 2010); Report of Consultation on Preferred Options (December 2012); and the Report of Consultation on Draft Settlement Area Policies (December 2012)

## 2 Borough Profile

**2.1** Wirral is a large metropolitan area covering the northern 60 square miles of the peninsula between the Dee and Mersey Estuaries, well known for the high quality of its countryside and coast and transport links to Liverpool, Chester and North Wales. The Borough is an area of strong contrasts.



**Picture 2.1**

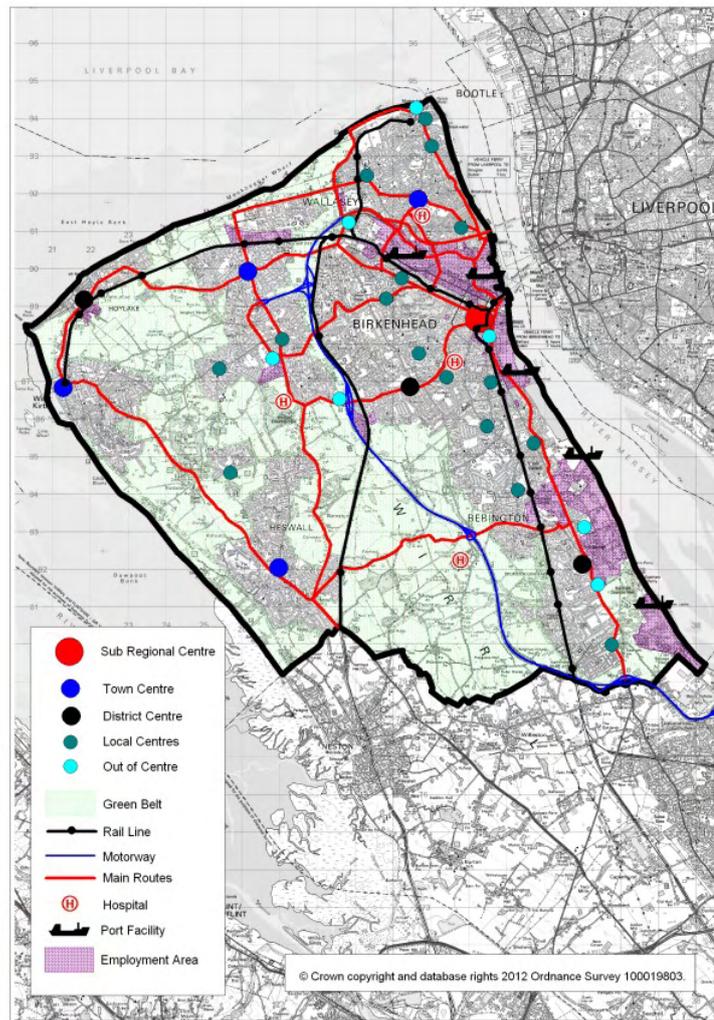
**2.2** The Borough is formed around two sandstone ridges stretching from Wallasey through Bidston and Storeton in the east and from West Kirby to Heswall in the west. The remaining land is boulder clay, drained by the rivers Birket and Fender in the north and by the Arrowe and Dibbin Brooks, further inland and to the west.

**2.3** The majority of the foreshores around the coastline are of national and/or international importance for nature conservation and the Borough's coastal resorts and recreation facilities provide a regular destination for visitors from across Merseyside and beyond. The deep narrow mouth of the Mersey has the second highest tidal range in the UK and the Dee Estuary is one of the top five sites in the UK for wintering and passage wildfowl.

**2.4** The predominantly built-up eastern area of the Borough, opposite Liverpool, forms part of the core of the Merseyside conurbation. Almost two thirds of the Borough's population lives within the urban area to the east of the M53 Motorway, between the coastal resort of New Brighton in the north to the entrance of the Manchester Ship Canal in the south. Birkenhead, located at the heart of east Wirral, is the largest town within the area, historically built around the maritime trades associated with the Mersey docklands.

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**2.5** The west of the Borough is characterised by a series of largely dormitory residential settlements surrounded by open countryside, of which over 60 percent is still used for farming<sup>(2)</sup>. The majority of the Borough's remaining open land has been designated as Green Belt, to prevent urban sprawl and to support the long-term regeneration of urban areas across Merseyside.



**Picture 2.2**

**2.6** Picture 2.2 shows the spatial distribution of the main settlements and retail centres, key transport routes, main employment areas including port facilities and the main hospitals, which are also major centres of employment.

**2.7** Picture 2.2 also shows the present boundaries to the Green Belt, designated in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral in February 2000, which replaced the Merseyside Green Belt Local Plan adopted by Merseyside County Council in 1983.

2 4,381 hectares (DEFRA, June 2010 Returns)

## Historic Context

**2.8** The Borough shows evidence of settlement since the middle stone age. The Borough's oldest buildings, such as Birkenhead Priory and Storeton Hall, date from 1150 and 1360. The majority of built heritage, however, dates from the Victorian and Edwardian periods associated with the expansion of Liverpool, the Mersey dock estates and the railway system. The current settlement pattern is, however, also largely the result of significant post war suburban growth in areas such as Leasowe, Moreton, Greasby, Pensby Woodchurch and Eastham.

**2.9** Before the industrial revolution, Wirral contained only a collection of small farmsteads and fishing villages. During the 19th Century Birkenhead grew to a sizeable town, closely related to the growth of Liverpool. The introduction of steam powered boats across the Mersey made Birkenhead and the surrounding countryside attractive to wealthy commuters and high quality residential developments initially spread out around Birkenhead, close to the ferry terminals or up the hills of Clifton Park, Oxtan Hill and Mountwood, where the views were more expansive and the air cleaner.

**2.10** The establishment of William Laird's boiler works and shipyard on Wallasey Pool in the 1820s and their later transfer by John Laird to the Mersey waterfront in the mid-1850s, the construction of the inland dock estate at Birkenhead, the establishment of Price's Candle Works at Bromborough in 1854 and the Levers Soap Works at Bebington in 1888, opened up Wirral's eastern coast for industrialisation, with a reliance on chemicals and port-related heavy engineering. Wirral's first railway, in 1840, encouraged further growth and the opening of the Mersey Railway Tunnel in 1886 enabled residential development to move away from the ferry terminals. Many of Wirral's most distinctive and attractive residential areas originate from this period.

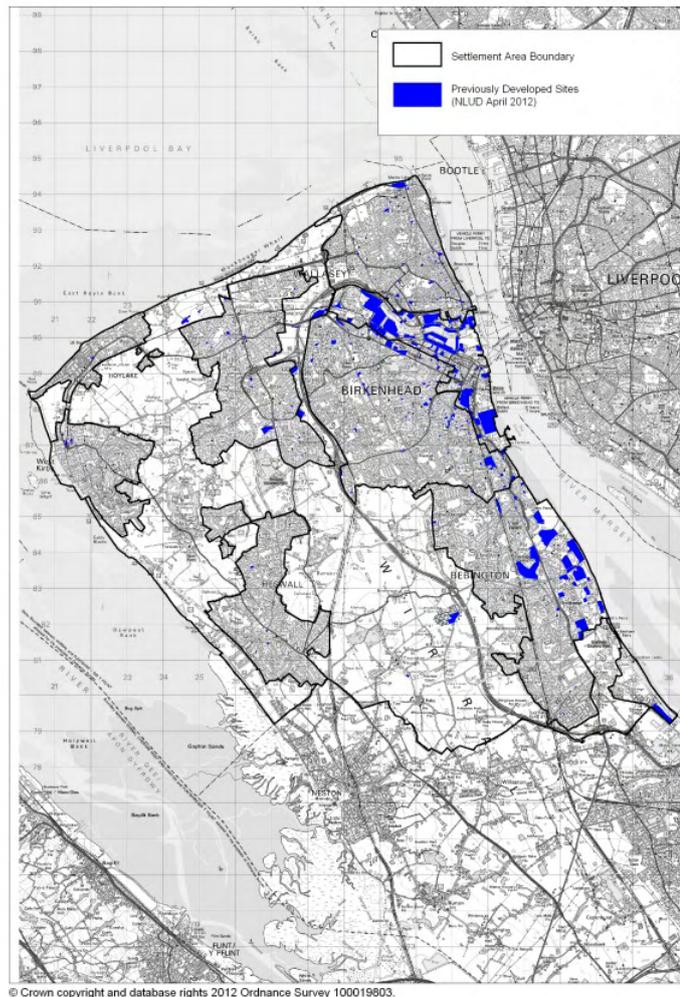
**2.11** Most of Wirral's oldest settlements, including the early workers village at Bromborough Pool, the early commuter settlements and merchant estates at Oxtan, Rock Park, and the later residential settlements at Caldy, Heswall, Hoylake and Mountwood, have been designated as Conservation Areas. Hamilton Square, Birkenhead Park and Port Sunlight are of national significance. The Liverpool waterfront, on the opposite bank of the Mersey, is a World Heritage Site.

**2.12** Following a peak in growth during the 1960s, there has been a slow decline in jobs and population and the older eastern parts of the Borough have been the subject of a series of national regeneration initiatives including the Inner Area Programme; the Merseyside Development Corporation; City Challenge; Single Regeneration Budget; the Merseyside Objective One Programme; and more recently the Housing Market Renewal Initiative.

**2.13** Today, key sectors include retail, distribution, public administration, education, health and social care. In manufacturing, which now accounts for only 10 percent of local employment, the Borough is still strongest in chemicals, marine engineering, food and drink.

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**2.14** The Borough continues to have a legacy of vacant and underused previously developed land, the majority of which is focused within the older urban areas in east Wirral, around Birkenhead and the docks and the industrial areas of Bromborough.



**Picture 2.3**

## Economic Context

**2.15** Revitalising the economy is a key objective of the Sustainable Community Strategy, prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership<sup>(3)</sup> and the Wirral Council Investment Strategy, prepared in consultation with local businesses<sup>(4)</sup>.

**2.16** Economic output in Wirral, measured by GVA per head, continues to lag behind national, regional and sub-regional averages. Job densities and VAT registrations are also well below national and regional averages and average wages are lower than the surrounding areas.

3 Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous (Wirral Partnership, 2009)

4 the latest update is provided in Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2015

**2.17** The gap in performance has been attributed to low productivity, low rates of enterprise and a lack in the quantity and quality of available business space<sup>(5)</sup>. Over 40 percent of Wirral's stock of business floorspace dates from before 1960.

**2.18** The Borough's economy provided only 105,800 jobs in 2009 for 190,900 residents of working age. The number of jobs is currently forecast to decline to 104,200 by 2015 before recovering to 106,800 by 2025<sup>(6)</sup>.

**2.19** Less than two thirds of residents in employment work within the Borough. Of those who travel to work outside Wirral, just under half travel to Liverpool, providing approximately 8 percent of the Liverpool workforce. Approximately 11 percent travel to Chester, providing just over 7 percent of the Chester workforce; and 10 percent to Ellesmere Port, providing just over 14 percent of the workforce in the former borough of Ellesmere Port and Neston. A further 7 percent travel to North Wales.

**2.20** Work journey patterns also increasingly involve longer distances, to areas such as Warrington and Manchester, with implications for traffic, emissions and climate change. The largest flows are from the western and south eastern fringes of the Borough<sup>(7)</sup>.

**2.21** Large parts of central and eastern Wirral are also national Assisted Areas that qualify for special financial assistance on the basis of their need for employment and economic revitalisation.

**2.22** Since the onset of recession in 2007, the annual average take-up of employment land has reduced to 4.2 hectares, compared to 11 hectares over the previous 15 years. Over 120 hectares of designated employment land remains available for development. An additional 105 hectares of land is available for development within the port estates at Birkenhead and Eastham. Over 80 percent of this future land supply is to the east of the M53 Motorway.

**2.23** The Borough has two Strategic Regional Sites at the Birkenhead Docklands and at Wirral International Business Park in Bromborough<sup>(8)</sup>. The nationally designated Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone now also provides additional financial incentives in the dockland areas between Tower Road and Wallasey Bridge Road.

## Social Context

**2.24** The Borough's social context is closely related to the economic fortunes of the wider sub-region.

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

6 Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts (Cambridge Econometrics, January 2012)

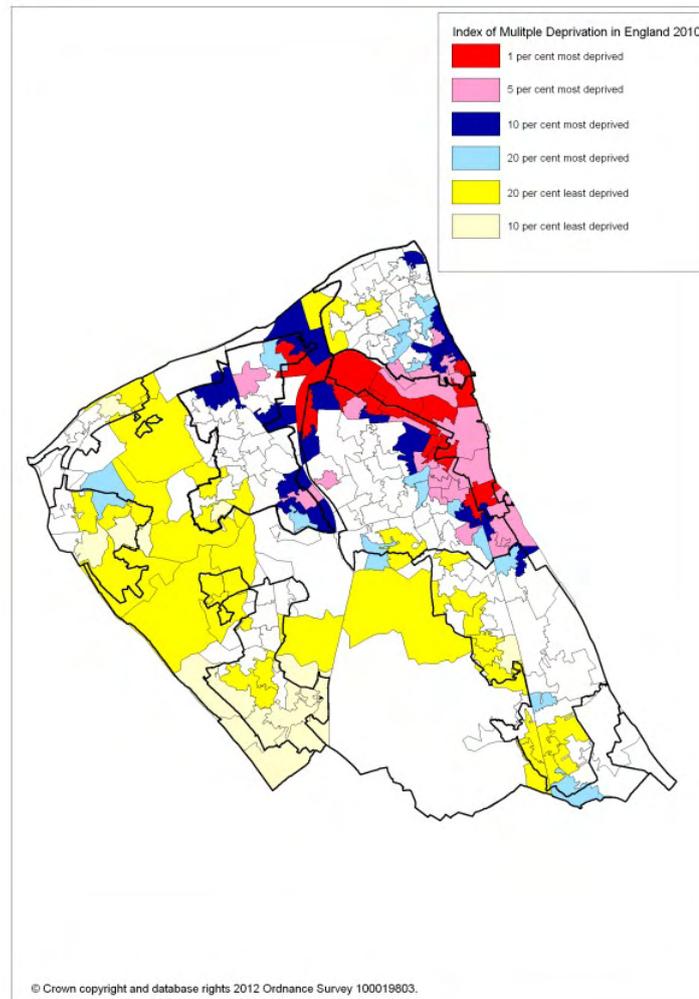
7 ONS 2001 Census and ONS Commute APS 2008

8 designated by the former North West Development Agency

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**2.25** While the proportion of people of working age, particularly of younger adults, is highest in the central and inner areas of east Wirral, where housing is cheaper and jobs and services are more easily accessible, the proportion of older age groups is generally larger in the west. The proportion of children is also higher in east Wirral.

## 2.26



**Picture 2.4**

Although parts of the Borough are relatively wealthy, with average household incomes amongst the highest in Merseyside, other parts are not.

**2.27** Almost a third of the population lives within areas with some of the greatest social, economic and environmental needs in England and 41,170 people or nearly 22 percent of the working age population were claiming key benefits in February 2012<sup>(9)</sup>.

9 Wirral is ranked the tenth worst of 354 English districts for employment-based deprivation in the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England 2010

**2.28** Picture 2.4 shows the main concentrations of social, economic and environmental need from the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England 2010. A wide range of other socio-economic indicators including: employment; economic inactivity; worklessness; benefit dependency; educational attainment; health; life expectancy; infant mortality; teenage conception; mental illness; drug and alcohol abuse; fuel and child poverty, also mirror these spatial patterns. There is, for example, an eleven year gap in life expectancy for males between parts of east and west Wirral.

**2.29** Work-related migration had previously led to a disproportionate loss of younger age groups and to an ageing population. The Borough now, however, appears to be in a period of transition.

**2.30** Although the population in the Borough had steadily declined from 355,800 in 1971, initial figures from the 2011 Census showed that Wirral's population had increased by 2.4 percent since 2001 to 319,800 and was now significantly higher than the previous national mid-year estimate of 308,800<sup>(10)</sup>. The number of households recorded in 2011, at 147,000, was also higher than the latest sub-national household projections which had previously projected the number of households to increase to 144,000 by 2033<sup>(11)</sup>.

**2.31** Previous projections had expected a continued decrease in the 35-59 year age group; the proportion of people over 65 years of age to rise to over a quarter of the population; the number of people aged over 85 to double; and single person households to rise to over 40 percent. While the number of younger people below 29 and above 75 years of age is very close to the previous mid-year estimate in 2010, the most recent Census results show a significantly higher retention of people within the 30-59 year age group, implying that migration assumptions will also need to be revised.

**2.32** In terms of overall education, a higher than national average proportion of residents are educated to degree standard or above and only 10.2 percent of residents had no qualifications in 2011. Most Wirral schools have been assessed by Ofsted as good or outstanding and nine out of ten 16 year olds stay on in school or college or go into employment. Almost half of 18 year olds go to university and attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (GCSE) is consistently higher than the national average. The averages attained in Birkenhead and Wallasey (including Leasowe and Moreton) are, however, still below those attained in south east and west Wirral.

**2.33** Wirral has a generally low crime rate. The majority of complaints relate to youths causing annoyance and drink related anti-social behaviour.

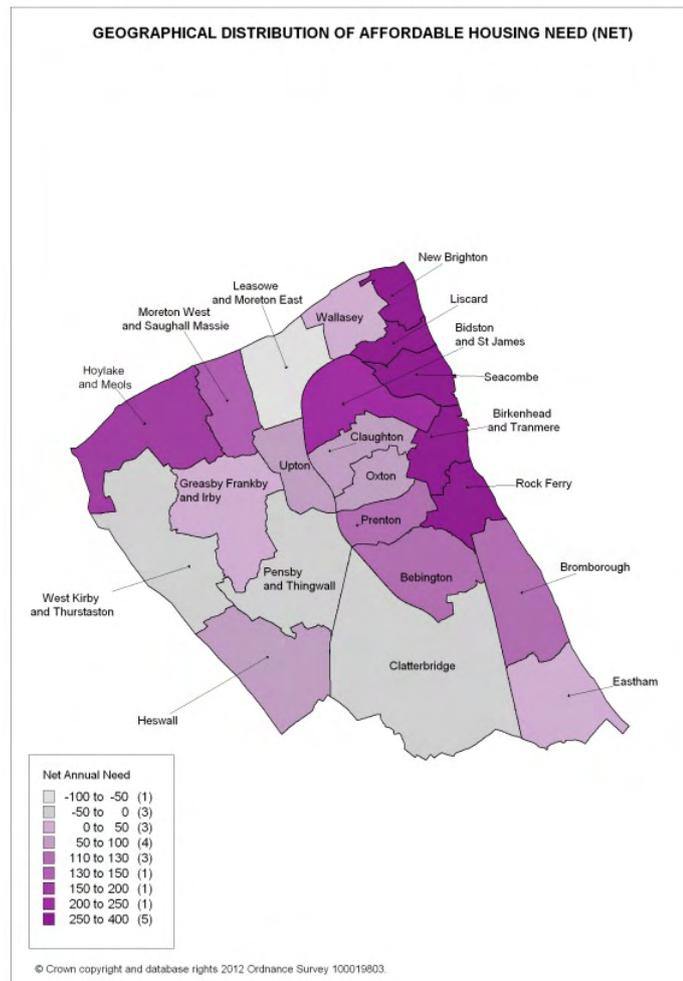
10 ONS 2010 Mid-Year Estimate (September 2011)

11 CLG 2008-based household projections (November 2010)

## Housing Context

**2.34** Wirral has many areas of attractive high quality housing, some amongst the best in Merseyside, but large concentrations of poorer stock remain, particularly associated with the older urban core in east Wirral. Median house prices in 2010/11 varied from £76,000 in Birkenhead to £311,000 in Heswall.

**2.35** There is a significant concentration of social housing in east and central Wirral. Allocation policies mean that these areas often correlate closely with areas of greatest socio-economic need but significant areas of need also extend into the private owned and private rented sector housing surrounding the older urban core.



**Picture 2.5**

**2.36** A fifth of the Borough's housing stock was built before 1919 and a further quarter between 1919 and 1944. Approximately 10,953 households are considered to be living in unsuitable housing. Over a third of these households contain residents with mobility or health problems. Approximately 29,700 households are considered

to contain residents with special needs. The number of households living in unsuitable housing within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area is approximately double the figure for the rest of the Borough<sup>(12)</sup>.

**2.37** The latest housing market assessment for Wirral, updated to take account of the recession, indicated that the need for affordable housing had increased by 58 percent since 2007. The greatest needs were in Birkenhead and Tranmere, Liscard, New Brighton, Rock Ferry and Seacombe and for single non-pensioner and lone-parent one-child households.

**2.38** Almost a third of market demand was from couples without children and almost a quarter from single non-pensioners. Just under a fifth of total demand was for 1-bedroom dwellings, 37 percent for 2-bedroom dwellings and 44 percent for 3-bedroom dwellings. There was a small negative requirement for dwellings of larger size.

**2.39** The introduction of affordable rents and Welfare Reform is expected to have a significant impact on the future pattern of housing need.

**2.40** A large part of the older urban area in the east of the Borough was previously designated as part of a national housing market renewal initiative, alongside similar areas in central Liverpool and south Sefton, to target investment to reverse the loss of population, tackle vacancy and low demand, improve the environment, diversify the housing stock and support the development of more sustainable communities.

**2.41** Housing market renewal has been supported by restricting new housing development on greenfield sites and outside identified regeneration priority areas, to meet the spatial priorities set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, leading to a significant increase in the proportion of new housing development delivered within the older urban areas since 2003.

**2.42** The national housing market renewal programme, originally intended to run for up to 30 years, closed prematurely at the end of the March 2011 as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. Funding for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, designed to further accelerate housing delivery in these areas alongside parts of north Liverpool and support economic revitalisation at the core of the conurbation, also ceased in March 2011. Transition Funding of £2.7 million is now being used to support the completion of previous priorities in Birkenhead, Rock Ferry, Tranmere and Wallasey, in partnership with the Council's preferred regeneration partners Keepmoat and Lovell.

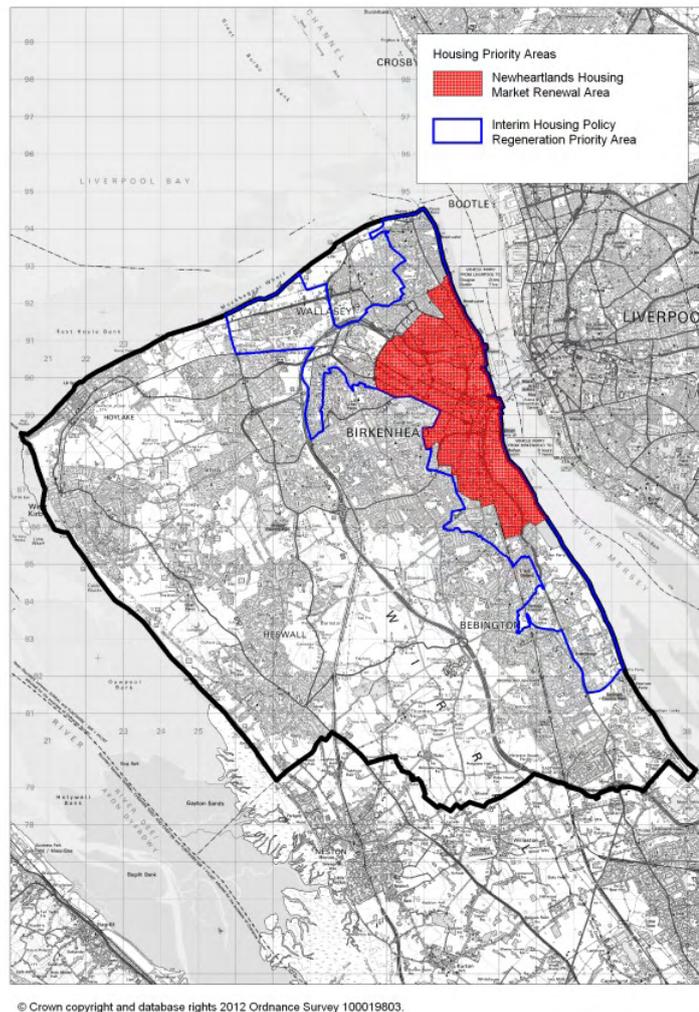
**2.43** The national recession has had a significant effect on the local housing market. Housing delivery peaked at 820 dwellings gross in 2007/08 but had declined to 272 in 2010/11 and 268 in 2011/12. The restrictions of the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development were removed in October 2012.

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12 Wirral Housing Market Need Assessment (Fordham Research 2007 and 2010 Update)

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**2.44** A high level of demolitions has significantly suppressed the net gain in new dwellings since 2002. Ongoing renewal activities and the re-development activities of Wirral Partnership Homes, to remove poor quality obsolete stock, is expected to continue to remove poor quality and obsolete stock keep demolitions high, at least over the next five years.



**Picture 2.6**

**2.45** The Council's latest housing land assessment shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings across the Borough as a whole at April 2012. The majority of potential sites were located in the east of the Borough<sup>(13)</sup>.

13 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012. A list of sites by Electoral Ward can be viewed at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13212&path=12848,13202>

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(14)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(15)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(16)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(17)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(18)</sup>
Whole Borough	3,250	1,214	2,432	5,539	603

## Town Centres

**2.46** Retailing, including wholesale and motor trades, currently provides just over 15 percent of the Borough's employee jobs. Birkenhead is the main town centre for the area. The main centres, outside Birkenhead, are at Liscard, Moreton, West Kirby and Heswall.

**2.47** There is good local provision for food retailing but there is a large leakage of spending to centres outside the Borough for non-food items. Liverpool City Centre and Chester, which are the principal centres within the wider sub-region, are also significant destinations for visits to restaurants; pubs, bars and nightclubs; museums and art galleries; and theatres and concerts. Spending outside the Borough is lowest in the inner urban areas of east Wirral and highest from the settlements in the west and south east of the Borough.

**2.48** The majority of recent non-food retail floorspace has been developed outside existing centres, albeit mainly at established locations rather than wholly new sites and the Borough's largest out-of-centre facility at Croft Retail and Leisure Park in Bromborough is now the second most popular non-food retail destination, outside Birkenhead.

**2.49** Vacancy within existing centres currently averages at around 12 percent but is higher within the older urban areas in east Wirral. The most significant town centre development opportunities are within Birkenhead, with a number of smaller sites available in other centres. Public consultation has continued to show concern about the impact of out-of-centre retail development on existing centres.

**2.50** The Council's latest assessment of town centres identified twelve centres showing some signs of weakness; and four centres, at New Ferry, New Brighton (Seabank Road), Laird Street and Seacombe (Poulton Road), in need of major intervention.

## Environmental Context

**2.51** Wirral is generally considered to offer a high quality of life. A recent national survey indicated that over 80 percent of residents were happy to live within the area. Wirral's historic and natural environment is highly valued.

18 sites below 0.4 hectare

17 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

16 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

15 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

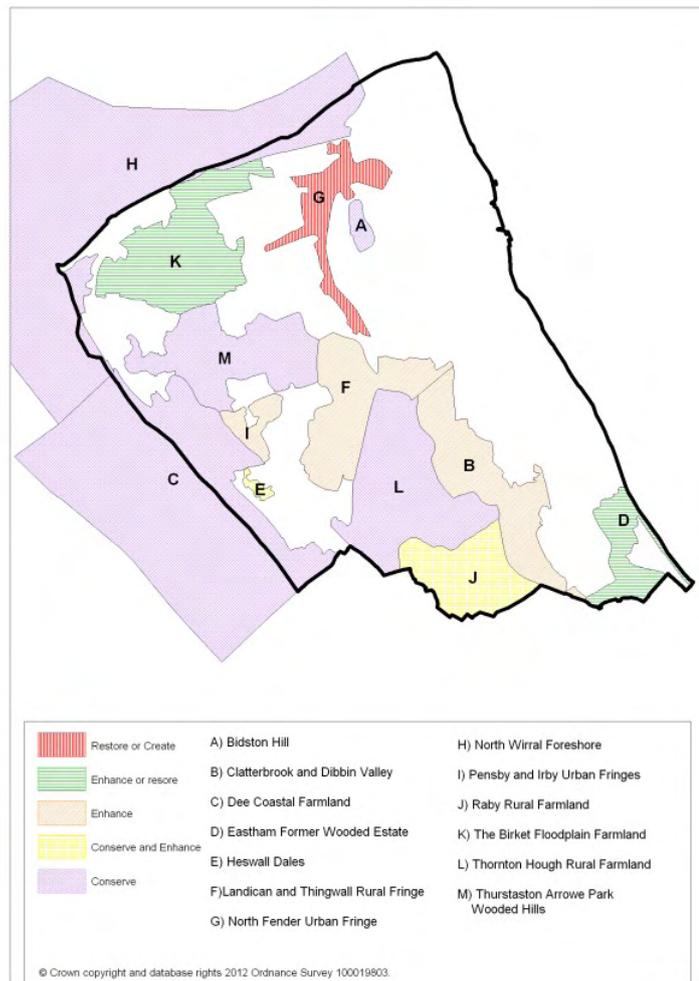
14 sites with planning permission in April 2012

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**2.52** Almost 5 percent of the Borough's land area is designated as a Conservation Area, Scheduled Ancient Monument or Historic Park or Garden. The Cheshire Gardens Trust has identified an additional list of over 20 un-designated garden sites for further investigation.

**2.53** Particular concern has been expressed at perceived threats to local distinctiveness, including the loss of un-designated assets, particularly related to protecting the character of the coastal resorts and established residential areas, including those dating from the Victorian and Edwardian period. A Wirral Heritage Strategy was adopted in November 2011.

**2.54** The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment identifies areas of landscape that should be conserved, restored or enhanced in line with a series of place-specific landscape guidelines for each of the areas shown on Picture 2.8 below:

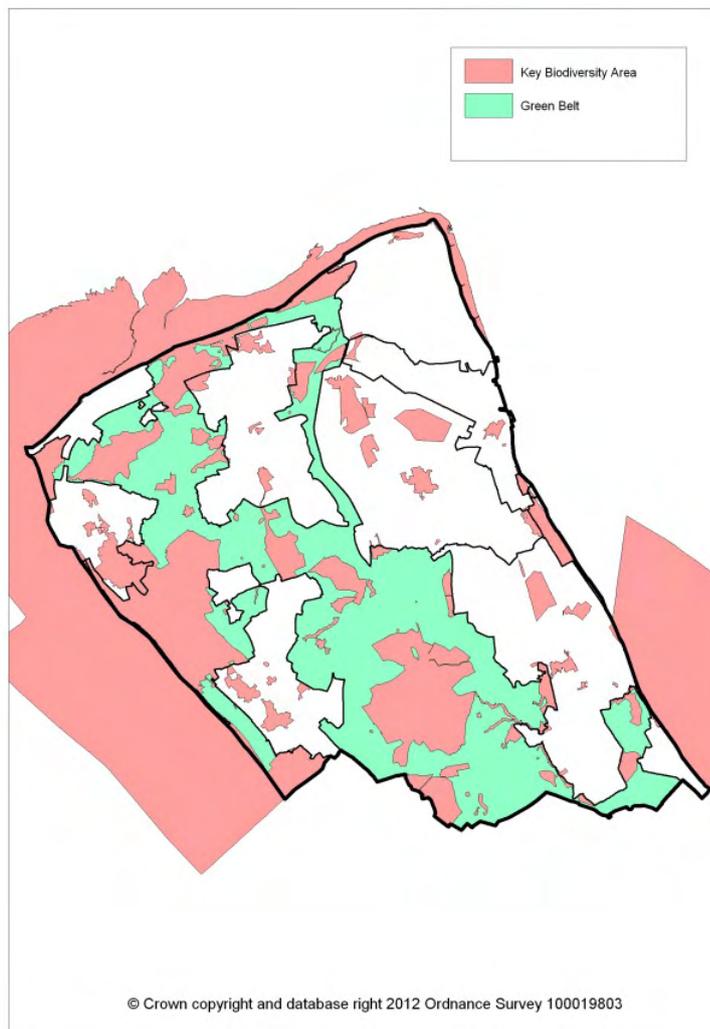


**Picture 2.7**

**2.55** Large areas of the Borough also have significant value for wildlife and nature conservation.

**2.56** Almost a third of the administrative area is designated as part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The majority of the coastline is also of international importance for nature conservation, which the Council are under a legal duty to keep in good condition, alongside any supporting habitats.

**2.57** Picture 2.7 shows the Key Existing Biodiversity Areas identified in the Wirral Biodiversity Audit 2009:



**Picture 2.8**

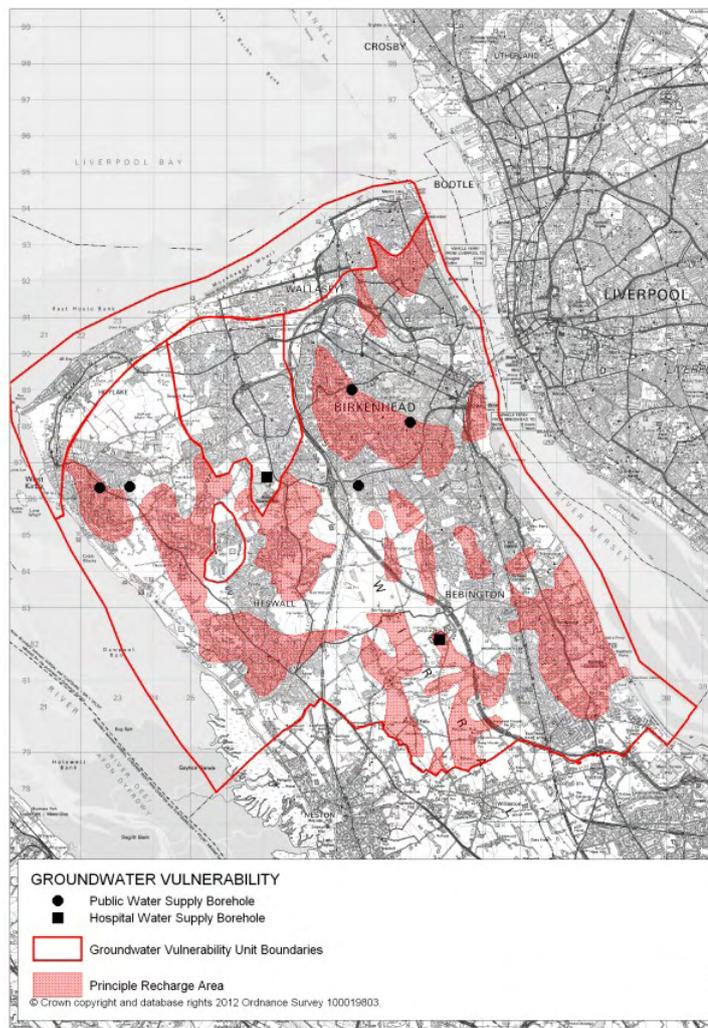
**2.58** The Dee and Mersey Estuaries are designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as Special Protection Areas under the EC Wild Birds Directive. The Dee Estuary including the North Wirral Foreshore is also designated as a European Special Area of Conservation and the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore is a potential Ramsar and Special Protection Area. These sites form part of the wider network of Natura 2000 sites, where minimising the disturbance to bird species will be an important consideration for future development proposals.

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**2.59** The Dungeon in Heswall is a site of national geological importance.

**2.60** Local designations for sites of biological and earth science importance are shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The Council has reviewed these sites in association with the Local Wildlife Partnership and Cheshire RIGS Group and has agreed amended lists of locally important wildlife and geological sites. Site boundaries and the reasons for their designation can be viewed on the Council's [website](#). There are relatively few designated sites within the urban areas of east Wirral.

**2.61** The Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework identifies opportunity areas for habitat creation, enhancement and restoration, which could help to provide better connections with existing sites and create more sustainable ecological networks.



**Picture 2.9**

**2.62** The majority of the Borough is an aquifer, which places limits on filtration drainage systems. Picture 2.9 illustrates the main areas of vulnerability.

**2.63** Groundwater provides around 13 percent of Wirral's water resources. The rest of Wirral's water supplies come from the River Dee, which could have implications for European Sites within the wider river catchment.

**2.64** Water quality within the Dee and Mersey Estuaries has improved substantially over recent years. The Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans show that the Dee Estuary, which includes the European designated bathing beach at West Kirby, currently has good biological status which is expected to be maintained at 2015. The rivers on Wirral are, however, categorised as having poor<sup>(19)</sup> or bad<sup>(20)</sup> ecological status or potential, well below the status required by the Water Framework Directive.

**2.65** The latest UK Climate Projections expect North West sea levels to rise by an annual average of 2.5mm between 1990 and 2025<sup>(21)</sup> but climate change is also expected to lead to warmer wetter winters; warmer dryer summers; more storm disruption, tidal surges and flooding; and drought conditions with heightened water stress; with implications for biodiversity, landscape, agriculture, flood risk and the capacity and resilience of local infrastructure.

**2.66** The Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Management Plans show that the majority of Wirral falls within an area where flood risk is already being managed effectively but further action may be needed to keep pace with climate change, for example to store water or manage run-off in response to more frequent and intense storms. Current flood risk is managed through channel maintenance, raised defences and pumping stations. Environment Agency Flood Warning Areas operate at Bidston, Meols and Moreton in north Wirral; Pacific Road and Shore Road in Birkenhead; and at Upton Bridge.

**2.67** Picture 2.10 illustrates the areas that could potentially be liable to tidal and river flooding, representing approximately 11 percent of the Borough's land area<sup>(22)</sup>. The levels of risk in each area are shown in the Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

**2.68** Tidal and river flooding is an issue in the areas protected by the Wallasey Embankment; along the valleys of the Birket and Fender; along the Arrowe Brook and the Dibbin catchments; and along the waterfronts at Birkenhead, New Brighton and West Kirby. Localised sewer flooding is an issue in Leasowe; Arrowe Hill, Upton; and Grange (West Kirby).

**2.69** Parts of the Borough have a high surface water flood risk, following either high intensity storm events or heavy rain, and others, including the coastal fringes to the east and north east and much of north west Wirral, are also shown on Environment Agency Maps as at risk from rising groundwater levels, which require

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19 Dibbinsdale Brook

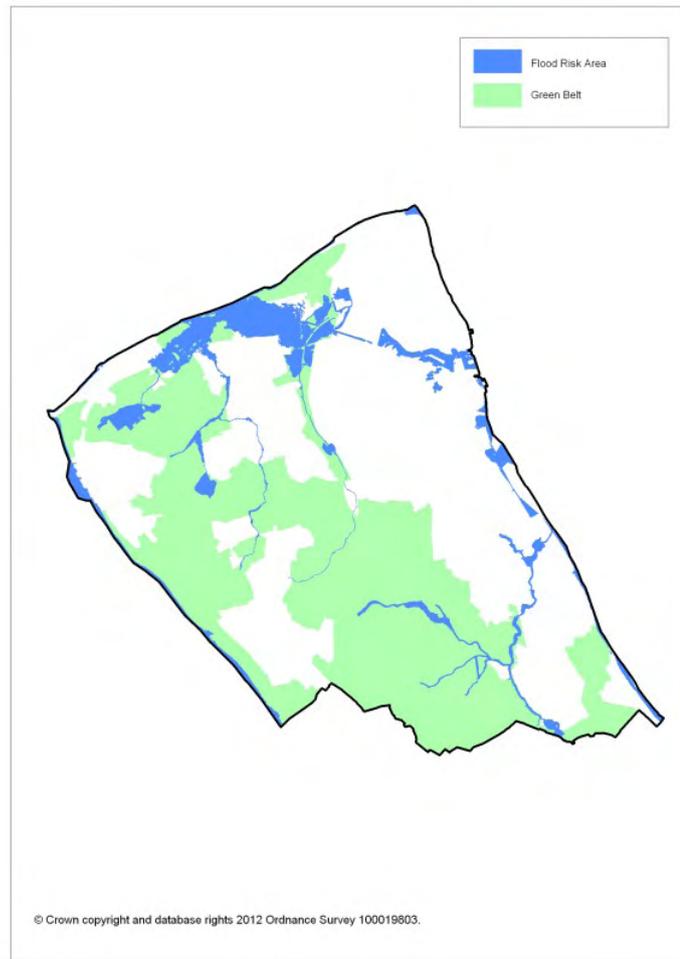
20 the Fender, Birket and Arrowe Brook

21 DEFRA 2009

22 areas falling within the Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3

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further investigation. The main areas affected are identified in the Council's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for all sources of flooding, prepared under the national Flood Risk Regulations.



**Picture 2.10**

**2.70** In terms of coast protection, the North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates that the residual life of existing coast defences is likely to extend beyond the period for the Core Strategy, with the potential for coastal squeeze against hard defences due to sea level rise over the longer term. The overall approach is one of maintaining existing defences, except for sections of the undeveloped Dee coast and at Eastham. Natural processes will be allowed to continue along the Dee, where the main risk beyond the plan period will be erosion not flooding at Thurston Cliffs.

**2.71** A significant amount of renewable energy is being generated from off-shore wind energy within Liverpool Bay, some of which connects to the National Grid at Bidston. New installations are planned at Gwynt y Mor, the second biggest offshore wind farm in the world, and at Burbo Bank, with potential for further turbines out at sea.

**2.72** The Liverpool City Region has been recently designated as the first west coast Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering, following a submission put together by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Cammell Lairds, Peel Ports and Wirral Council.

**2.73** The latest available data indicates that carbon dioxide emissions from Wirral fell by 16 percent from 1,952 kilo tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005 to 1,629kt in 2009. Over 40 percent of local emissions arise from the domestic sector, with a third from industry and commerce and a quarter from transport sources. The largest output is currently from domestic gas at 421kt followed by commercial electricity at 406kt.

**2.74** To play its part in achieving the national targets for reducing carbon pollution, Wirral would need to cut emissions to 1,289kt by 2020 and to 449kt by 2050, to reach the UK target to reduce carbon pollution from 1990 levels by at least 34 percent by 2020 and by at least 80 percent by 2050.

**2.75** The Council was an early signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2001. The initial Wirral Climate Change Strategy, which is currently under review, has concentrated on initiatives based on awareness, adaption, energy and transport. An initial target to achieve a 20 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2010 was achieved at the end of 2007. The revised headline targets are to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60 percent by 2025 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

**2.76** In September 2011, the Council approved investing £2.8 million in a Solar Photovoltaic PV Installation Project, to take advantage of the Feed in Tariff Scheme introduced by the Government in 2010, with an operating capacity of up to 640kWp<sup>(23)</sup>.

**2.77** National figures show that there were just nine domestic photovoltaic installations in Wirral in June 2010 but that this had risen to 555 installations by March 2012. The number of cavity wall and loft installations has also steadily increased since 2008, as a result of the Warmer Wirral Free Insulation Scheme.

**2.78** The percentage of households in Wirral living in fuel poverty began to decrease between 2009 and 2010 although local fuel poverty, at 20.5 percent, was still more than four percentage points ahead of the national average.

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23 killowatt peak is the optimal point of power that the solar panel is capable of generating in optimum conditions

**2.79** Wirral does not have any designated Air Quality Management Areas but DEFRA noise mapping shows a number of locations affected by noise from road, rail and industrial sources<sup>(24)</sup>.

## Tourism

**2.80** The Wirral Visitor Research Study 2011 showed that tourism was currently worth over £265 million to the Wirral economy; had increased by a substantial 15 percent over the previous five years; and provided over 4,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Nine out of ten current visitors would recommend the Borough as a place to visit. The countryside, coast and food were key attractions.

**2.81** Wirral's beaches are consistently among the cleanest in the North West, which include four out of the North West's eight Marine Conservation Society recommended beaches in 2012, a recommendation only given to beaches that meet the highest European standard for water quality on the basis of regular testing by the environment Agency. The beaches at Meols, Moreton and Wallasey are expected to achieve the classification of 'excellent' and the beach at West Kirby the classification of 'good', when the higher standards required by the Bathing Water Directive are applied in 2015.

**2.82** Golf continues to be important, highlighted by the Ricoh Women's British Open in 2012 and the return of The Open Golf Championship in 2014 and attracts a broad range of regional, national and international visitors.

**2.83** The Merseyside Rural Economy Action Plan identifies the development of further rural destinations as a strategic priority for Wirral, alongside the potential for new destinations, attractions and accommodation related to the coastal resorts of Hoylake and West Kirby.

## Agriculture

**2.84** Approximately 40 percent of the Borough's open land is classified as best and most versatile agricultural land<sup>(25)</sup>. Approximately a third of the land devoted to agriculture was used for crops. DEFRA has estimated that the total income from farming, including non-agricultural activities such as further processing and tourist activities was, however, only £1 million in 2010.

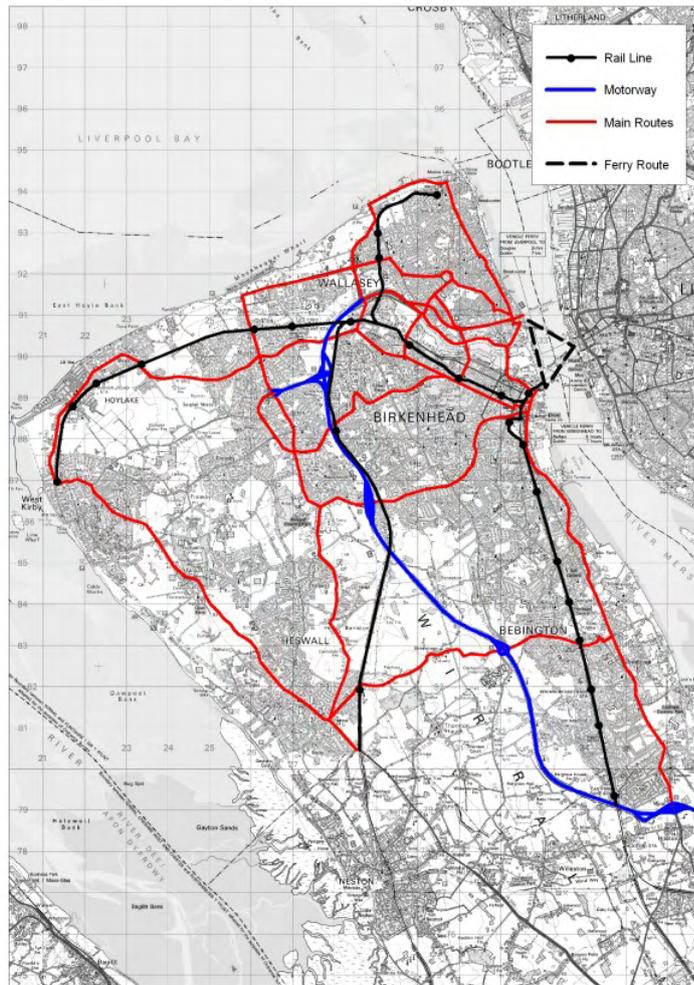
## Transport Context

**2.85** Principal transport routes focus on Birkenhead with radial routes to Liverpool, New Brighton, West Kirby and Chester, mirrored by the high-frequency passenger rail system run by Merseyrail Electrics linking to Main-Line rail services at Liverpool

24 interactive mapping can be viewed at <http://services.defra.gov.uk/wps/portal/noise>

25 2,657 hectares, based on the Merseyside Agricultural Land Classification Map 1986, which may now need to be re-confirmed by site specific survey

and Chester. Wirral Line services provided for over 2.77 million trips during 2009/10, up by a quarter since the mid-1990s. Rail capacity on the Chester line will, however, be constrained until 2024, following a reduction from four tracks to two.



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Picture 2.11

**2.86** The Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line, which runs an hourly diesel service through Upton and Heswall, has potential for an enhanced frequency of service with provision of additional stations and improved links to jobs in Liverpool and North Wales. Discussions are ongoing between Merseytravel, Network Rail, Arriva Trains (Wales), Taith and other local authorities along the route to upgrade the track and trains, with possible electrification or an enhanced diesel service but funding is still to be identified.

**2.87** Consultation has identified the need to improve accessibility at some stations.

**2.88** High frequency bus services follow the principal radial routes running out of Birkenhead to outlying settlements. Patronage has, however, fallen since the mid-1990s. Consultation has highlighted poor accessibility between these routes and many cross-Borough journeys can require an interchange at Birkenhead.

**2.89** The Mersey Ferries provide an additional link to Liverpool from Woodside and Seacombe, accommodating over 680,000 trips in 2009/10, a third of which were commuter trips.

**2.90** The cost of public transport fares is, however, still an obstacle to travel for some people. A recent survey of people without a car found that a third have difficulty travelling to their local hospital, 16 percent find access to supermarkets difficult and 18 percent find meeting family and friends a problem.

**2.91** Cycling increased by 14 percent between 2006/07 and 2009/10 and a 35-mile Wirral Circular Trail for walkers and cyclists was officially launched in 2011.

**2.92** The Mersey road tunnels at Birkenhead and Wallasey provide direct access to Liverpool City Centre and the M53 Motorway connects the docks at Birkenhead to the national motorway network. The Motorway narrows to two lanes outside the Borough at Ellesmere Port where it is close to capacity at peak times and further studies are being undertaken by Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Highways Agency.

**2.93** The heavily trafficked A41 is the main arterial road to Ellesmere Port and Chester through the urban areas in east Wirral. The A540 is the main road though the west of the Borough between Hoylake and Chester.

**2.94** The M53, the Kingsway Road Tunnel and the roads associated with the Birkenhead Docks also form part of the strategic freight network. There is potential to reintroduce rail-freight facilities to Birkenhead Docks and to the Ship Canal at Eastham.

**2.95** Liverpool John Lennon Airport is within 30 minutes by road from Birkenhead and Manchester Airport is an hour away via the M53 and M56.

**2.96** The Merseyside Local Transport Plan identifies the potential for large and problematic rises in car based travel. Car ownership is rising and the number of locally registered licensed vehicles continues to grow.

**2.97** Department of Transport Traffic Master Tracking Data shows a number of areas along main routes where journey times during the morning peak are more than twice free flow journey times, particularly on routes out of the Borough and to and from the Motorway during the morning and evening peaks<sup>(26)</sup>. Consultation has shown a continued dissatisfaction with the impact of traffic on local communities.

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26 Travel in Merseyside (Merseyside Transport Partnership, 2010)

**2.98** Transport modelling shows a number of areas where existing infrastructure will need to be improved<sup>(27)</sup>. Public funding to 2015 will, however, be significantly less than recent years, placing a greater reliance on spatial issues such as the location of new development, the use of existing public transport infrastructure and an increasing role for walking and cycling.

## Community Facilities

**2.99** Wirral has an extensive network of community facilities including libraries, community centres, youth centres, children's centres, social centres, sports centres, public halls and museums. Like schools, the reduction in population over time has reduced the ability to support these facilities leading to places of worship, social centres and sports clubs being closed or rationalised.

**2.100** The Council has also recently reassessed the provision of publicly funded community facilities for cultural and leisure services as part of a Strategic Asset Review agreed in January 2009. A number of facilities are being transferred to community ownership and management. Nine facilities have already been transferred, eleven more have been approved and a further three facilities are still under consideration.

**2.101** Wirral has a good supply of recreational open space, although there are local shortfalls in parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspace, amenity greenspace, allotments and playing fields, particularly within the older urban areas of eastern Wirral. Indoor recreation is also generally well provided for following a rapid expansion in sports halls and artificial turf facilities since 2000.

**2.102** Public opinion is strongly resistant to the loss of Green Belt and open space and levels of maintenance are an ongoing concern. An initial quality assessment, undertaken during July and August 2008, showed average quality scores, based on the general range, condition and overall impression of the facilities and physical infrastructure provided, consistently below 50 percent<sup>(28)</sup>.

**2.103** Nine secondary schools and one primary school have recently been rebuilt or remodelled under a Private Finance Initiative which operates until 2031. Woodchurch High School has been rebuilt as part of the Building Schools for the Future Pathfinder scheme.

**2.104** Birkenhead High School for Girls, a fee-paying independent school became Wirral's first Academy in September 2009, with funding to refurbish and restructure. A further University Academy has now also been established on the site of the former Park High School.

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27 Assessment of Wirral Core Strategy Transport Impacts (Mott MacDonald, August 2012)

28 Wirral Open Space Assessment Update (Wirral Council and Strategic Leisure, December 2012)

**2.105** A rolling review of primary school places has so far resulted in ten fewer maintained schools across Wirral since 2003 but also secured funding for replacement primary school buildings in Poulton and Pensby. A number of schools have also received significant investment to replace temporary mobile accommodation with new and refurbished buildings. A review of Wirral's special school provision is also underway, which may include co-location with mainstream schools.

**2.106** Capital funding for schools is currently subject to national budget constraints.

**2.107** Wirral Metropolitan College has progressively centralised its main facilities in and around Birkenhead Town Centre.

**2.108** Access to General Practitioners is generally good across the Borough, enhanced by the recent construction of a series of new medical centres. Consultation has, however, identified that access to main hospitals is more limited for some people, especially to people without access to a car.

## Strategic Infrastructure

**2.109** Strategic pipelines connect Tranmere Oil Terminal to the refineries at Eastham and Stanlow and Wirral lies along the route of the high pressure gas main between Liverpool and Ellesmere Port. A cross country energy pipeline is also proposed from Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway to Bromborough.

**2.110** The majority of the Borough's electricity is provided via National Grid's high voltage electricity overhead transmission 275kV line from Capenhurst and underground cables from Liverpool to Prenton. Energy generated by the wind farms in Liverpool Bay also connect to the grid at Birkenhead. Overall, there is currently more than 40MVA spare capacity in Scottish Power's 132kV network. Work to construct a trans-national high-voltage cable from Scotland, via the Irish Sea and Liverpool Bay, to Hoylake and Connah's Quay is expected to begin in 2013

**2.111** The majority of the Borough's public water supply is abstracted from the River Dee at Heron Bridge and transferred to Sutton Hall in Ellesmere Port, which is the main pumping station supplying water to Wirral. A minor quantity of water is supplied from the Integrated zone via the Hapsford feed with additional supplementary boreholes at Prenton, Grange and Newton. Generally, abstraction headroom is adequate with no supply issues other than where local network reinforcement may be required as new development take place.

**2.112** The Borough's waste water drains to treatment works at Birkenhead, Bromborough, Meols and Heswall. United Utilities have indicated that capacity issues could emerge before 2020 within the catchment of the Birkenhead Waste Water Treatment Works, subject to the pace and scale of development at Wirral Waters and may also emerge over the longer term within the catchment for the Meols and Bromborough treatment works. Local enhancements may also be required, dependent on the timing and location of individual development sites.

**2.113** The Hospitals at Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge provide specialist sub-regional health services. Arrowe Park delivers a full range of emergency and acute services for adults and children, plus maternity services, while Clatterbridge undertakes the majority of the Trust's planned surgical services and some specialist rehabilitation services. The Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology is one of the largest cancer centres in the UK providing radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment services.

## Waste Management

**2.114** The Borough currently produces approximately 130,000 tonnes of household waste each year. The amount recycled and composted has more than doubled over recent years, significantly reducing the amount that needs to go to landfill. There are currently thirty-nine existing licenced facilities, including the Materials Recycling Facility operated by the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority at Bidston, which is also used by districts outside Wirral.

**2.115** Many of the issues related to planning for waste are subject to a separate Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton, which was submitted to public examination by an independent Planning Inspector in February 2012.

**2.116** A new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, prepared by the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership, was subject to consultation in October 2010, to set new targets and objectives for how waste is dealt with in Merseyside and address issues related to future service delivery.

## Minerals

**2.117** Mineral activities in Wirral have historically been limited to small quarries for local sandstone and winnable brick clay reserves, most of which are now reclaimed or subject to designations for nature conservation. While substantial quantities of marine-won sand from Liverpool Bay are landed at Bromborough, land-based mineral activity is now limited to only one site for winnable brick clay reserves, from which extraction is only intermittent.

## Key Issues

**2.118** The key issues identified for the Borough as a whole include:

- Promoting sustainable economic growth and revitalisation
- Providing for adaption to and the mitigation of climate change
- Closing the gap between social, economic and environmental conditions and opportunities
- Prioritising the re-use of vacant previously developed land
- Providing for affordable and specialist housing needs and for an ageing population
- Supporting the re-configuration of social, community, health and education services
- Providing for the retention of non-food comparison retail spending

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

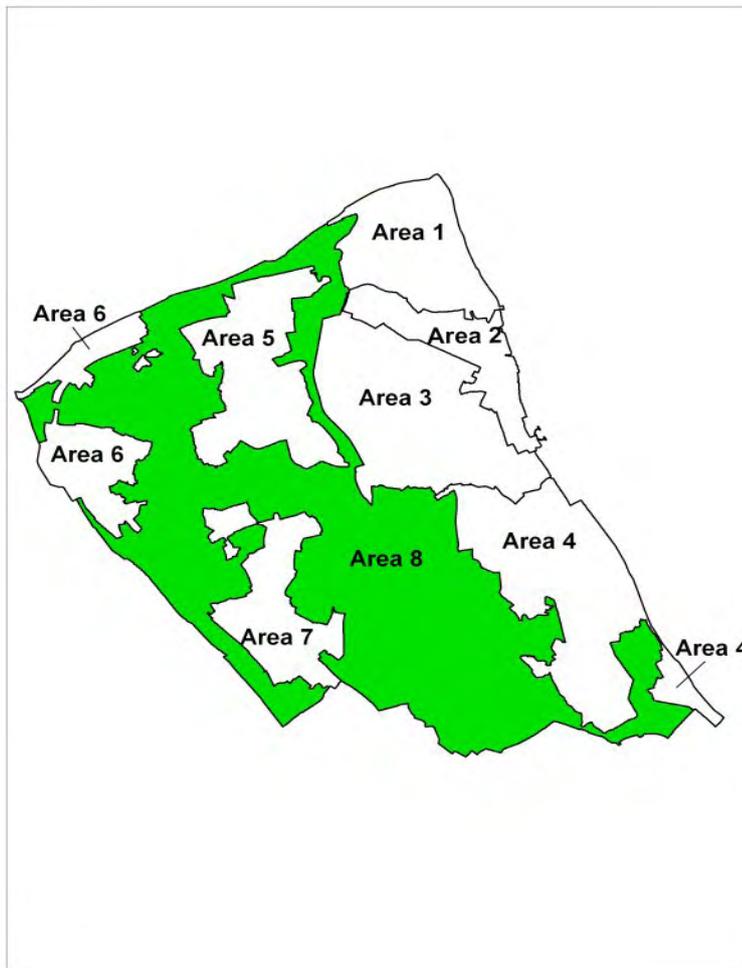
- Protecting and enhancing locally distinctive assets such as landscape, countryside and coast, heritage, areas of importance for nature conservation and areas of high quality housing
- Improving the accessibility of employment, education and healthcare
- Reducing the impact of traffic and congestion along radial routes into and out of Birkenhead and on main routes into and out of the Borough and promoting a more sustainable pattern of transport and travel
- Promoting improvements to the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Addressing localised shortfalls in the quantity, quality and distribution of green infrastructure including linkages and corridors for wildlife
- Securing additional resources to improve and maintain the public realm
- Minimising the potential impact of flooding from all sources
- Increasing the contribution of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy
- Securing sustainable waste management
- Addressing potential limitations in the capacity of wastewater treatment

## Wirral - Key Statistics

Administrative Area - 25,110 hectares (97 square miles)
Borough Land Area - 15,560 hectares (60 square miles)
Coastline - 41km (26 miles)
Urban Area - 8,507 hectares (55% of total land area)
Green Belt - 7,053 hectares (45% of total land area)
Designated Employment Areas - 1120 hectares (7% of total land area)
Available Employment Land - 203 hectares (87 sites) (April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 326 hectares (341 sites) (April 2012)
Residential Properties - 147,300 (August 2012)
Social Housing Properties - 23,200, 16 % of total housing stock (April 2012)
Vacant Residential Properties - 6,000 (4%) (April 2012)
Population - 308,800 (Mid-2010) - 319,800 (2011 Census)
Economically Active Population - 142,900 (September 2011)
Total Jobs - 105,800 (2009) - Employee Jobs - 96,400 (2008)
Average Household Income - £33,172 (2010)
Average Residential Property Price - £116,400 (2012)
Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 94,900 (30% of Wirral)
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 60,100 (20% of Wirral)
Recreational Open Space - 2,640 hectares (8.6 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 1,384 hectares (4.5 hectares per 1000)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest - 7,216 hectares (12 Sites) (including inter-tidal areas)
Conservation Areas - 25 Areas (714 hectares)
Listed Buildings - 710 List Entries (1771 buildings or structures)
Scheduled Ancient Monuments - 9 Monuments (5.7 hectares)
Historic Parks and Gardens - 4 sites (114 hectares)
Area Potentially Liable to Tidal and River Flooding - 1,164 hectares (Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 in 2012 )

## 3 Settlement Area Profiles

3.1 The Council has divided Wirral into eight broad Settlement Areas based on the main groups of settlements within the Borough:



Picture 3.1

3.2 A key to the areas included within each of the Settlement Areas is provided below:

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 for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

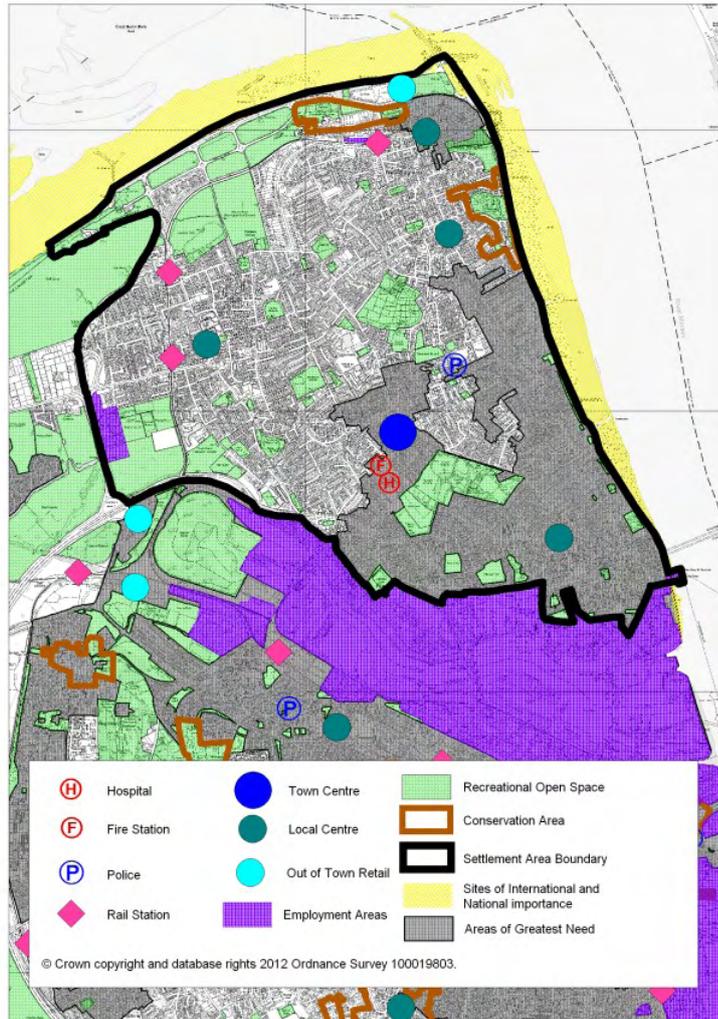
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	Bidston, Beechwood, Claughton, Oxton, Noctorum, Prenton, Mountwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Rock Park
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	New Ferry, Bebington, Port Sunlight, Brookhurst, Raby Mere, Poulton, Spital, Eastham and Bromborough Pool
Settlement Area 5 - 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.

**3.3** Settlement Area 8 is equivalent to the extent of the Green Belt shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map adopted in February 2000.

**3.4** Details on each of the Settlement Areas identified are provided in the following sections:

## 4 Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey

4.1 Settlement Area 1 includes the urban settlements of Wallasey including New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Poulton and Wallasey Village.



Picture 4.1

4.2 The Settlement Area is well located with access to Liverpool via the Kingsway Tunnel, Seacombe Ferry Terminal and three train stations at Wallasey Village, Wallasey Grove Road and New Brighton; to Birkenhead via Tower Road, Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road; and to the M53 Motorway from the Docks Link and Wallasey Link Roads.

### Socio-Economic Background

4.3 The Wallasey Settlement Area was home to 58,200 people in mid-2010, of which 37,100 or 64 percent were of working age.

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

**4.4** The age profile broadly follows the Borough average, with a slightly higher proportion of younger adults and a slightly lower proportion of retired people.

**4.5** At a more local level, the profile is more mixed, with a higher proportion of young adults in Seacombe and Liscard and a higher proportion of older and elderly people in Wallasey and New Brighton. Seacombe has one of the highest proportions of children under 15 years of age in the Borough.

**4.6** Social housing accounts for just over 12 percent of homes. Just over 5 percent of residential properties were registered as vacant in April 2012 and 47 sites (approximately 10 hectares) were registered as vacant previously developed land.

**4.7** Approximately 40 percent of the population lives within an area of greatest need, where worklessness is also over 25 percent. This is the second highest concentration of need in the Borough, representing almost a quarter of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**4.8** Areas of higher value housing in parts of Wallasey Village fell within the highest 20 percent of the national Index in 2010.

**4.9** The Settlement Area generated over 5,700 journeys to work to destinations outside the Borough in 2001, almost two thirds to Liverpool. Almost a third of these journeys were generated from the north and western part of the Settlement Area. Liscard and Seacombe, where over 40 percent of households did not have access to a private car, generated some of the lowest numbers of journeys outside the Borough for work.

## Housing

**4.10** The majority of higher density terraced housing is located in Seacombe, a legacy of the historic relationship with employment in the adjacent dockland areas. These older areas have been subject to ongoing housing market renewal activities.

**4.11** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 1 at April 2012<sup>(29)</sup>:

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(30)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(31)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(32)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(33)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(34)</sup>
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	628	161	189	125	97

29 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

34 sites below 0.4 hectare

33 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

32 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

31 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

30 sites with planning permission in April 2012

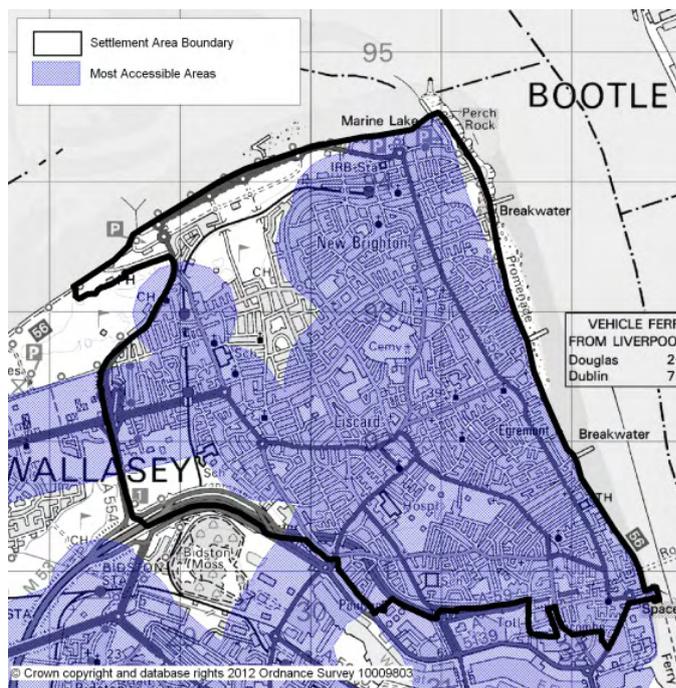
## Local Heritage

**4.12** The National Heritage List for England contains forty-seven entries including seventy-three separate structures, representing 4 percent of the Borough total. Three entries are listed as Grade II\*.

**4.13** There are Conservation Areas at Magazine Promenade and at Wellington Road, which includes the original cliff top villas at New Brighton. Fort Perch Rock and Lighthouse are also prominent landmarks on the New Brighton waterfront. Fort Perch Rock is included on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

## Transport Accessibility

**4.14** The majority of the Settlement Area is highly accessible by public transport. There is existing traffic congestion through Wallasey Village and on routes to Liscard and the Kingsway Tunnel. Traffic noise has also been identified as a problem on routes between Seacombe and New Brighton and on routes to Liscard and Wallasey Village.



Picture 4.2

**4.15** Merseytravel have identified the need for improvements to Liscard Bus Station.

**4.16** The public coastal promenades between Seacombe Ferry and the North Wirral Coastal Park are of Borough-wide significance and provide part of National Cycle Route 56.

## Town Centres

**4.17** Liscard is the main shopping and service centre for the Settlement Area. The whole of the Settlement Area is within 20 minutes of the centre by public transport. The Cherry Tree Shopping Centre and the pedestrianised Liscard Way form the core of the shopping area. Two main supermarkets now serve the Settlement Area, Asda at Liscard and Morrisons at New Brighton.

**4.18** Key indicators suggest that the long-term decline of Liscard Town Centre has continued. The centre has experienced significant slippage in the national retail rankings; the comparison retail offer is at the value end of the spectrum; the vacancy rate is above the UK average; retail rents have generally been static; operator requirements are limited; and anti-social behaviour and vandalism have been highlighted as additional problems. There is limited scope for a substantial town centre development scheme over and above the existing planning permission to extend the Cherry Tree Centre.

**4.19** The Central Liscard Area Residents Association (CLARA) are currently preparing neighbourhood planning proposals for Central Liscard.

**4.20** The secondary centres at Victoria Road, Seabank Road (New Brighton), King Street, Poulton Road, and Wallasey Village provide more local facilities. All have experienced decline in their role as convenience shopping centres and have seen rising levels of vacancy, despite some investment, for example Tesco Express at Poulton Road.

**4.21** Victoria Road and Seabank Road in New Brighton have also benefited from regeneration funding. Victoria Road also serves the evening economy, including visitors to the New Brighton Floral Pavilion and is expected to benefit from the completion of the recent regeneration activities along the waterfront.

**4.22** Wallasey Village comprises of two distinct clusters of activity separated by residential development. There is a reasonable convenience offer but comparison retail is more limited. The frontages are predominately service based but the bank has closed.

**4.23** Poulton Road, Seacombe is no longer considered to be a viable centre in its present form because of the high level of vacancy. A strategy for the King Street/Brighton Street corridor at Egremont encourages a focus away from retail uses.

## Employment

**4.24** The Area currently provides approximately 13,100 jobs.

**4.25** Cross Lane Industrial Estate is the only dedicated industrial estate within the Settlement Area. Only a small number of plots remain, mostly held for the expansion of existing businesses. The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study concluded that the Estate provided good local employment opportunities and should be retained.

**4.26** The Study also recommended that a small industrial area adjacent to New Brighton railway station at Alexandra Road should also be retained for local employment uses unless it can be shown that the site is no longer marketable for industrial or office use.

## **New Brighton**

**4.27** The coastal resort of New Brighton has traditionally provided the majority of open space, leisure and recreation facilities for the Settlement Area but had been subject to continued decline since its post-war heyday.

**4.28** A major private sector re-development has now been completed along the waterfront. Phase 1 incorporated redevelopment of The Floral Pavilion theatre and conference centre which re-opened in December 2008. Phase 2 has provided a refurbished marine lake, model boating lake, supermarket, hotel, cinema, casino, restaurants, bars and public realm improvements. The feasibility of further improvements, including the re-construction of a pier is now also being explored<sup>(35)</sup>.

## **Community Facilities**

**4.29** Public facilities include the swimming pools and sports hall at Guinea Gap Recreation Centre. Sports halls are also provided at the secondary schools at Weatherhead, Mosslands, Oldershaw and Weatherhead; and a smaller hall at St Joseph's RC Primary. Floodlit artificial turf pitches are provided at Weatherhead and Oldershaw. There is also a private indoor soccer facility at Birkenhead Road.

**4.30** The Grosvenor Ballroom, Vale House, and the community centre at Liscard have been approved by the Council for transfer to community ownership and management. The transfer of New Brighton Community Centre is still being considered.

**4.31** Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance services and Victoria Central Hospital are located at the edge of Liscard Town Centre. Council services are located at Wallasey Town Hall in Seacombe. The RNLI currently operates two facilities in New Brighton at either end of Kings Parade but is seeking to relocate to a single site following the regeneration of the resort and to gain easier access to a slipway.

**4.32** Secondary schools within the Settlement Area have all recently been remodelled or redeveloped and further work is currently underway at Mossland School.

**4.33** A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of Poulton Primary School. The re-construction of Park Primary School was completed at the end of March 2011. Remodelling and refurbishment work is planned at St Georges Primary School and at Sommerville Primary School.

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35 Brand New Brighton Pier Feasibility Study (Faber Maunsell/AECOM, March 2009)

## Open Space and Nature

**4.34** The coastal promenade from Seacombe Ferry to New Brighton and the North Wirral Coastal Park are major features of the Settlement Area.

**4.35** The largest public open space is Central Park in Liscard. There is a shortage of allotments, natural and semi-natural greenspace and outdoor sports facilities. The availability of playing fields is significantly constrained and almost a third of football teams and a number of cricket teams travel outside the Settlement Area for home fixtures.

**4.36** Wallasey Golf Course is internationally recognised as the home of the Stableford scoring system and was a Final Qualifying course for the Open Championship when it returned to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course in Hoylake in 2006, which is expected to be repeated in 2014.

**4.37** Biodiversity value is mainly limited to the coast. The North Wirral Foreshore is nationally and internationally significant and the Mersey coastline is nationally designated. Wallasey Golf Course and the remnant dune areas associated with the North Wirral Coastal Park are also locally significant for nationally rare species and breeding birds. The sandstone outcrop at Red and Yellow Noses at New Brighton is a site of local importance for earth science.

## Other Infrastructure

**4.38** United Utilities operate a major pumping station at Scotts Field Seacombe, detention tanks at Coastal Drive and Tower Grounds in New Brighton and a reservoir at Gorsehill Road. The whole of the Area drains to the wastewater treatment works at Birkenhead.

**4.39** A number of locations have water pressure and connectivity issues. Reinforcement and local upgrades are expected to be required. The capacity of the local sewer network is also limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges.

## Coast and Flooding

**4.40** The majority of the Settlement Area is protected from the sea by the Wallasey Embankment but there is still a risk of flooding if the Embankment was breached or over-topped. Approximately 35 hectares of land associated with the adjacent north Wirral coast and the Fender Valley is, therefore, liable to potential tidal or river flooding, which could affect the edge of Wallasey and New Brighton.

**4.41** Surface water and sewer flooding is also recorded in the lower-lying peripheral areas of the Settlement Area, with potential for flooding from the Birket and its tributaries at Cross Lane.

## Key Issues

4.42 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 1 include:

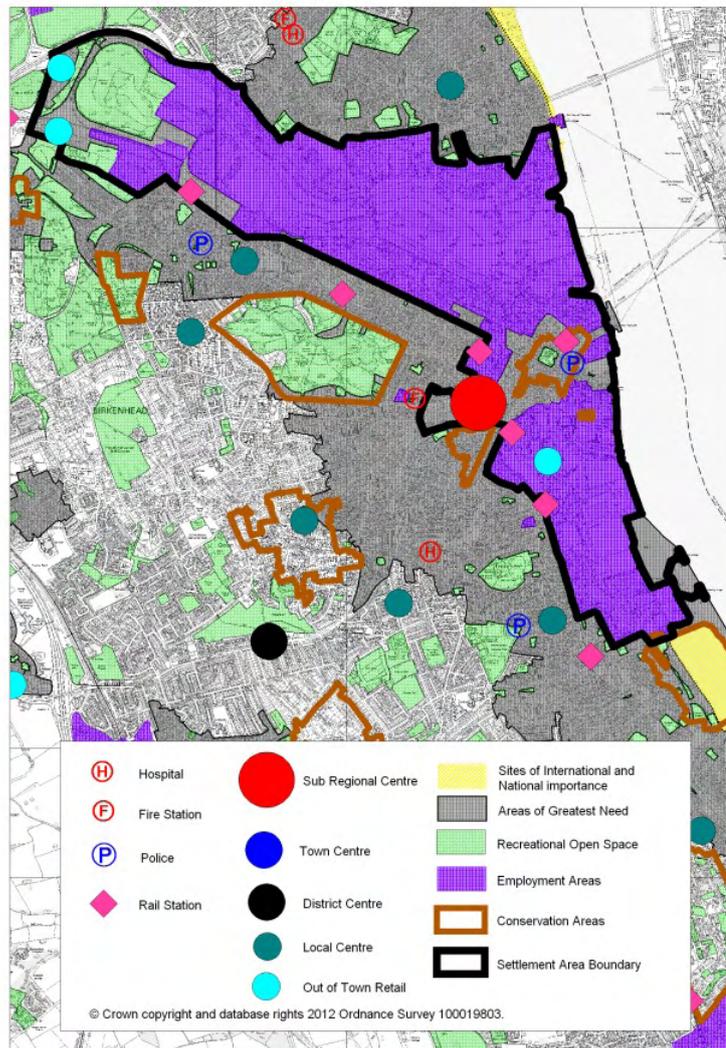
- Consolidating the continued regeneration of New Brighton
- Addressing the decline of Liscard Town Centre
- Safeguarding employment uses at Cross Lane Industrial Estate
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Seacombe and Liscard
- Maintaining the attractiveness, recreation value and biodiversity of coastal facilities
- Promoting a more sustainable pattern of journeys to work
- Addressing local limitations in water supply and wastewater treatment

### Settlement Area 1 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 1,021 hectares (15% of Wirral land area)
Urban Coastline - 6.5km (4 miles)
Population - 58,200 (mid-2010) 19% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 28,000 (19% of Wirral stock April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 27
Social Housing Properties - 3,280 (12% of Area 1)
Vacant Residential Properties - 1,500 (5%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 727 (12% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 198 (7% of Wirral)
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 8.49 hectares (628 units) 19% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Liscard Town Centre - 335 Retail Units - 51 Vacant (15%) (June 2011)
Designated Employment Areas - Cross Lane Industrial Estate (7.0 hectares), Alexandra Road, New Brighton (1.3 hectares)
Other Designated Centres - Wallasey Village; New Brighton (Victoria Road); New Brighton (Seabank Road); Seacombe (Borough Road/Poulton Road).
Available Employment Land -2 sites (0.24 hectares, April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 47 sites (9.91 hectares) 3% of Borough Total
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 22,500 (38% of Area 1)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 3,000 (5% of Area 1)
Recreational Open Space - 191 hectares (3.3 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space -135.28 hectares (2.3 hectares per 1000)

## 5 Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core

**5.1** Settlement Area 2 is the historic industrial and commercial heart of the Borough at Bidston, Seacombe, Birkenhead and Tranmere, centred around Birkenhead Town Centre and the coastal and inland docks system constructed in the early to mid 1800s.



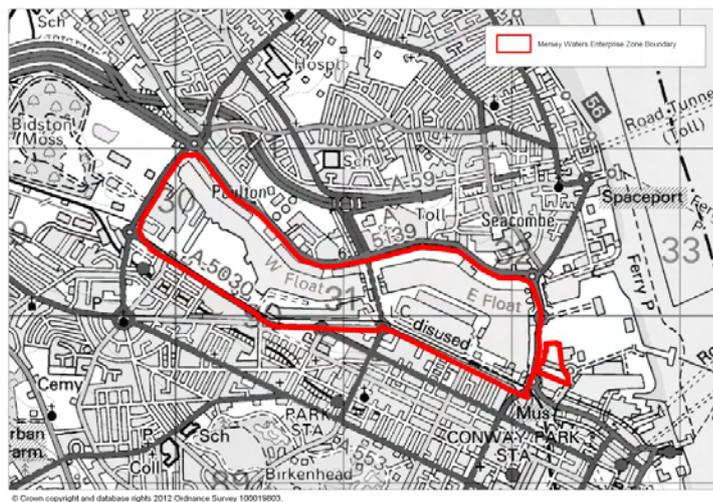
Picture 5.1

### Socio-Economic Background

**5.2** The Commercial Core was home to only 1,700 people in mid-2010 but lies at the heart of some of the most concentrated areas of need in England, scoring very poorly across a wide range of social and economic indicators. Worklessness is over 25% and a high concentration of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training. Social housing accounts for around 41 percent of residential properties within the Area.

**5.3** Although densely developed, the Area has the highest concentration of vacant previously developed land in the Borough (103 sites, 155 hectares). Nearly 9 percent of residential properties and almost 20 percent of the 510 hectares set aside for employment uses were classified as vacant or under-used in April 2012.

**5.4** Twelve Quays had been a Strategic Regional Site since December 2001. A new Strategic Regional Site in the Birkenhead Docklands was approved by the former North West Development Agency in August 2010 and the dockland area between Twelve Quays and Bidston Dock, shown on Picture 5.2, has now been designated as part of the national Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone to support economic revitalisation and offer incentives to new and expanding businesses.



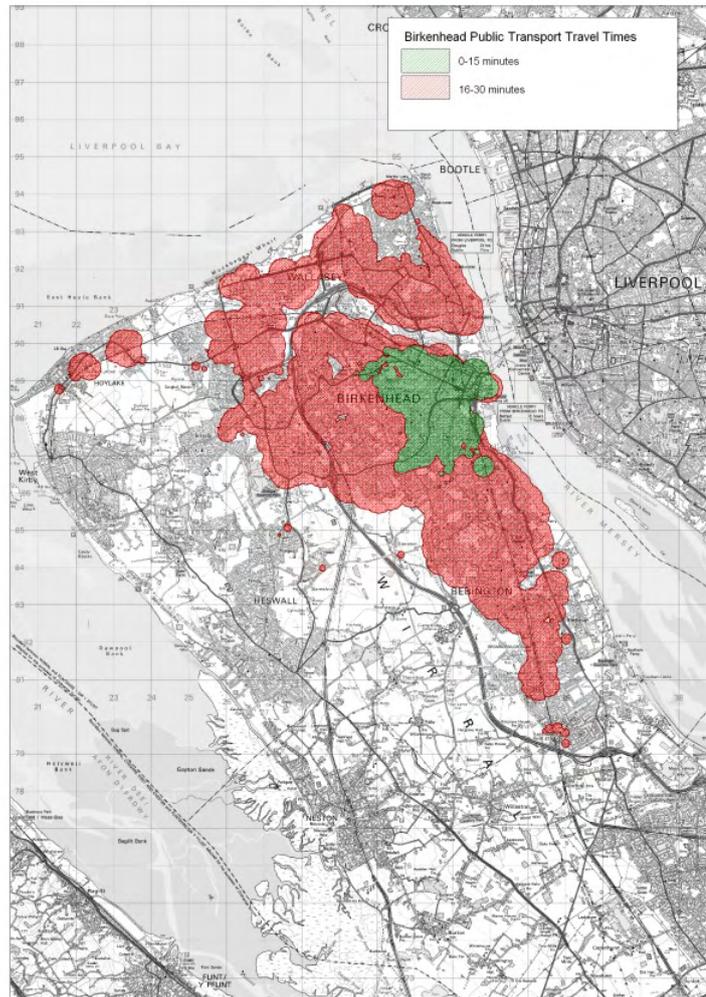
Picture 5.2

## Transport Accessibility

**5.5** The Settlement Area is by far the most accessible in the Borough, with good access by road, bus, rail and ferry. Picture 5.3 highlights the areas falling within 30 minutes travel time of Birkenhead Town Centre by public transport. All but the western coastal fringes of the Borough are within 20 minutes of the Town Centre by car.

**5.6** Main road in and out of the Settlement Area include major through routes from across the Borough; the road tunnels to Liverpool; the Docks Link Road to Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; three routes across the docks system at Tower Road, Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road; and the A41 south to Chester and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway.

**5.7** The majority of the Borough's principal highways, radiate out from the Town Centre, providing high frequency bus services to all the Borough's main settlements. High frequency, electrified, passenger rail services run through the Town Centre to Liverpool, New Brighton, West Kirby, Ellesmere Port and Chester. An hourly diesel service runs, with connections to Birkenhead, from Bidston to Wrexham in North Wales. The Mersey Ferries connect Woodside to Liverpool and Seacombe.



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**Picture 5.3**

**5.8** Merseytravel have identified the need for rail station and bus interchange improvements; park and ride scheme improvements; the protection of public transport, freight and rail alignments; the need for land to be protected at the toll plazas at the Kingsway and Queensway road tunnels; and the potential for greater use of the Bidston- Wrexham railway line is also under consideration. A new park and ride facility is currently under construction at Birkenhead North railway station.

**5.9** There is existing traffic congestion on routes through Birkenhead Town Centre, the approaches to the road tunnels and cross-dock routes. Traffic noise has been identified as a problem in Birkenhead Town Centre and on road and rail routes towards Bidston and the docks. There is a need for a long-term maintenance strategy for the cross-dock bridges. Air quality is also being closely monitored along the A41 at Tranmere. Improvement work has recently completed on the the Bidston Moss Viaduct which connects with the M53 Motorway.

**5.10** A disused freight line runs from Bidston through the docks and across Birkenhead Town Centre (in cutting) to Mollington Street in Tranmere. Proposals to reinstate the link from Bidston to the docks in Beaufort Road are being investigated as part of the transport strategy for Wirral Waters and the alignment at Bidston Curve, from Birkenhead North Depot to Duke Street and from Rock Ferry to Canning Street will need to be safeguarded.

**5.11** There is limited provision for cycling with a need to link East Float to Leasowe and Wallasey and to provide safe cycle links across the docks.

## Employment

**5.12** Industrial dock-related facilities dominate the character of the Area. The Area currently provides approximately 16,000 or just under 20 percent of the Borough's employee jobs and is still the Borough's most significant destination for journeys to work (16%) and the largest contributor to the Borough's economic output (19% of total GVA).

**5.13** The Twelve Quays Roll-on Roll-off Ferry Terminal operates from the waterfront opposite Liverpool. Other significant waterfront facilities include Cammell Lairds, which is a major marine engineering and ship repair centre for the UK west coast. The nationally important Shell Oil Terminal at Tranmere feeds the upstream refinery facilities at Stanlow, in Cheshire West and Chester, with up to 10 million tonnes of crude oil each year.

**5.14** The majority of the waterfront facilities at Woodside were redeveloped for offices, business units and housing as part of regeneration programmes during the 1980s and 1990s.

**5.15** The docks hinterland in Seacombe and North Birkenhead are an important source of local employment, providing for a wide range of small and medium sized companies, mainly in light engineering, trade and distribution, of which a limited number are still port-related. The majority of the Borough's waste treatment facilities are also located in and around this hinterland.

**5.16** The Council has begun the process of promoting economic regeneration by clearing areas of housing to the north of the railway in North Birkenhead, to allow employment-related redevelopment as part of the housing market renewal process.

**5.17** The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study concluded, despite obvious signs of demand, that only a limited number of poorly located smaller sites were currently available in and around Birkenhead Town Centre and that occupiers, including major office uses, were increasingly being lost to more modern premises with car parking in outlying areas, including Bromborough. The Study recommended that the Council should establish a designated office quarter for small and medium sized businesses, alongside a programme of land assembly and environmental improvements.

## Town Centres

**5.18** Birkenhead Town Centre is identified as a sub-regional centre in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West. Assessment against health check indicators nevertheless suggest a continuing decline in overall vitality and viability, demonstrated by a fall in the national retail rankings, low rents compared to similar centres in the North West, a reduction in footfall, predominance of "value" fashion retailers, a single Department Store, high vacancy rates, a sub-standard physical environment on approaches to and within the Town Centre and a poor food and drink offer.

**5.19** A new Asda superstore has been completed but operator interest is still limited and many of the shop units in the Grange shopping centre do not satisfy modern market requirements. Some of the flyovers associated with the entrance to the Birkenhead road tunnel were removed during the 1990s to improve the image of the Town Centre but others remain, dividing the Town Centre from areas in the south. There is also a significant concentration of out-of-centre retail development within the surrounding area, including Rock Retail Park; Junction 1 Retail Park<sup>(36)</sup> and Tesco's at Bidston<sup>(37)</sup>.

## Local Heritage

**5.20** The Area has a rich historic heritage with 75 entries on The National Heritage List for England, relating to approximately 180 individual structures or approximately 10 per cent of the Borough total. Six entries are listed at Grade I and five at Grade II\*.

**5.21** The historic commercial area to the north of Birkenhead Town Centre at Hamilton Square is a nationally significant Conservation Area, containing the largest collection of Victorian Grade I Listed Buildings outside London. Landmark features such as Hamilton Square Railway Station and the former Birkenhead Town Hall are also located within this Area. James Gillespie Graham's original grid iron layout is still evident in the area outside the Conservation Area to the west, and some of the historic dock-related buildings and structures are prominent Listed Buildings in the docklands areas to the north.

**5.22** Despite extensive improvements during the 1990s, a lack of private sector investment and increasing levels of vacancy has placed Hamilton Square on the national Heritage At Risk Register alongside the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Birkenhead Priory, which is believed to be the oldest range of surviving buildings in Merseyside. Works necessary to remove the Priory from the Register are currently underway.

<sup>36</sup> the third largest destination for comparison spending behind Birkenhead Town Centre and Croft Retail Park

<sup>37</sup> which is one of the top three supermarkets for turnover in the Borough

## Housing

**5.23** Small pockets of housing in the Settlement Area include areas of older terraces associated with the docks and some newer stock associated with attempts to diversify the area around Hamilton Square during the early 1990s. The Settlement Area currently has the lowest average number of people per dwelling, at just over one. The age profile is dominated by young adults.

**5.24** The whole of Settlement Area 2 has been identified as a regeneration priority area since December 2003.

**5.25** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 2 in April 2012<sup>(38)</sup>:

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(39)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(40)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(41)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(42)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(43)</sup>
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	45	63	469	3,213	67

**5.26** There is additional potential to provide up to 15,200 new dwellings within the Birkenhead Docklands at Wirral Waters, of which up to 7,340 could be delivered before 2028.

## Community Facilities

**5.27** Public facilities of Borough wide importance include the swimming pools and fitness suite at Europa Pools in Birkenhead Town Centre and the indoor tennis centre, sports hall, fitness suite, playing fields and floodlit artificial turf pitch at the Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre at Bidston.

**5.28** Wirral Metropolitan College, Fire and Rescue, Police, Magistrates, Probation and Council services are located in and around Birkenhead Town Centre. The Borough's main Police Custody Suite is adjacent to the docks. The Magistrates Courts may also seek to relocate to more modern premises within the plan period.

**5.29** A recent review of publicly funded cultural and leisure services had identified Birkenhead Town Hall, Pacific Road Arts Theatre, Taylor Street Museum and Wirral Tramway and Shore Road Pumping Station for possible transfer to community ownership but final proposals are still to be agreed.

38 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

43 sites below 0.4 hectare

42 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

41 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

40 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

39 sites with planning permission in April 2012

**5.30** There are no secondary or primary schools within the Settlement Area, which is served by various schools within the wider area. A children's outreach centre is located at the Lauries Centre in central Birkenhead.

**5.31** Funding for a partnership between Wirral Metropolitan College and Chester University, to form a wider "knowledge hub" alongside existing facilities at Twelve Quays, was withdrawn following the Governments Comprehensive Spending Review.

**5.32** The Maritime and Engineering College North West<sup>(44)</sup> has operated since 1998 as a centre of vocational excellence for maritime, engineering, manufacturing and related sectors. Facilities include a 6,500 square metre riverside premises next to the Cammell Laird Shipyard at Monks Ferry with its own operational dry dock. A £60,000 electrical training facility has recently been added, to assist firms employing electrical engineers.

## Open Space and Nature

**5.33** The only significant open spaces within the Settlement Area, outside the coastal footways associated with the Mersey waterfront, are the formal gardens at Hamilton Square in the east and the reclaimed landfill site at Bidston Moss in the west, which has recently been landscaped to provide community woodland and enhance the entrance to the Area from the M53 Motorway. Bidston Moss is now a proposed site of biological importance, providing an excellent habitat for birds.

**5.34** The legal agreement associated with the approval of the proposals at Wirral Waters makes provision for additional green infrastructure to be established at East Float. A £1.4 million tree planting project, to provide up to 600 street trees, a rejuvenated park and other environmental improvements within the areas immediately surrounding Wirral Waters, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills through the Forestry Commission's Newlands programme, will be delivered by The Mersey Forest over the next three years, beginning in winter 2012.

## Other Infrastructure

**5.35** The high-pressure gas main for the Borough runs into the Settlement Area along the M53 Motorway, to serve the gas holders at Dock Road and Hind Street. Electricity from the wind turbines in Liverpool Bay runs from the north Wirral coast to a transformer at the edge of the Dock Estate.

**5.36** The gasholders at Dock Road and Hind Street and the Shell Oil Terminal are registered COMAH sites, where statutory controls apply to protect public safety.

44 formerly known as the Laird Foundation and now part of the Mersey Maritime Group

**5.37** Other key infrastructure includes the Borough's main wastewater treatment works at Shore Road, the Great Culvert Pumping Station and the Materials Recycling Facility operated by the Mersey Waste and Recycling Authority at Wallasey Bridge Road.

**5.38** Parts of the Area, particularly around the docks, have low water resource availability and network reinforcement and upgrading is expected to be required. Sewer network coverage is also limited and affected by pumping stations and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. Wirral Waters will require the provision of additional water supply infrastructure across the network and there is the potential for limited waste water capacity at Shore Road, which is currently being investigated by United Utilities.

## Development Opportunities

**5.39** There are four main development opportunities within Settlement Area 2:

### Birkenhead Dock Estate and Wirral Waters

**5.40** The Dock Estate operates under permitted development rights granted by Acts of Parliament as part of the Port of Liverpool. Part of the area operates as a Freeport. Continued port use is increasingly limited by the capacity of the historic inland docks system, as vessels increase in size over time. The main focus for larger vessels is now the successful Roll-on, Roll-off Ferry Terminal at Twelve Quays. Bidston Dock was filled during 2002 and approximately 49 hectares of the Dock Estate now lie vacant.

**5.41** Policy EM10 was deleted from the Unitary Development Plan in September 2007 as a first attempt to to promote the wider regeneration of the area, now known as 'Wirral Waters'.

**5.42** An initial assessment of the area was subject to public consultation in 2008<sup>(45)</sup>. The assessment demonstrated that a high density mixed use development, could be capable of accommodating up to 15,000 new dwellings and providing an estimated 30,000 new jobs, to deliver up to £4.5 billion of private sector-led investment over a 30 to 50 year time span.

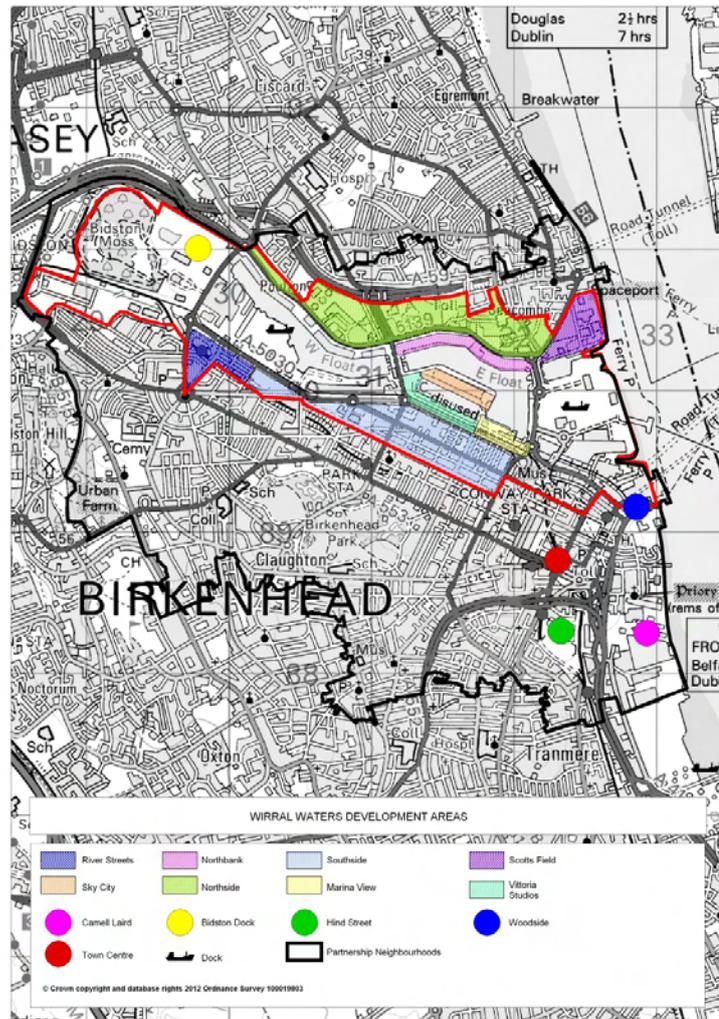
**5.43** The initial assessment showed the retention of the deep water river berth at Twelve Quays and the inland dock system between Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road (West Float) for port-related activities. Vacant areas in the north, between Tower Road and Duke Street (East Float) were identified for the early phases of a mixed-use high-density residential and commercial development (Northbank). Over the longer term, this type of development would extend south to include high-density mixed-use developments at Vittoria Dock (Sky City and Vittoria Studios) and at Cathcart Wharf (Marina View) to provide a modern strategic office and business

45 Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework Baseline Study (March 2008)

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

location to meet the aspirations of the Wirral Investment Strategy and act as a catalyst for wider regeneration of the area. The former Bidston Dock was identified as an opportunity for a major mixed-use development.

Created with Limehouse Software Publisher Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait



Picture 5.4

**5.44** A separate Integrated Regeneration Study demonstrated how these development opportunities could be linked to benefit the regeneration of the surrounding areas<sup>(46)</sup>.

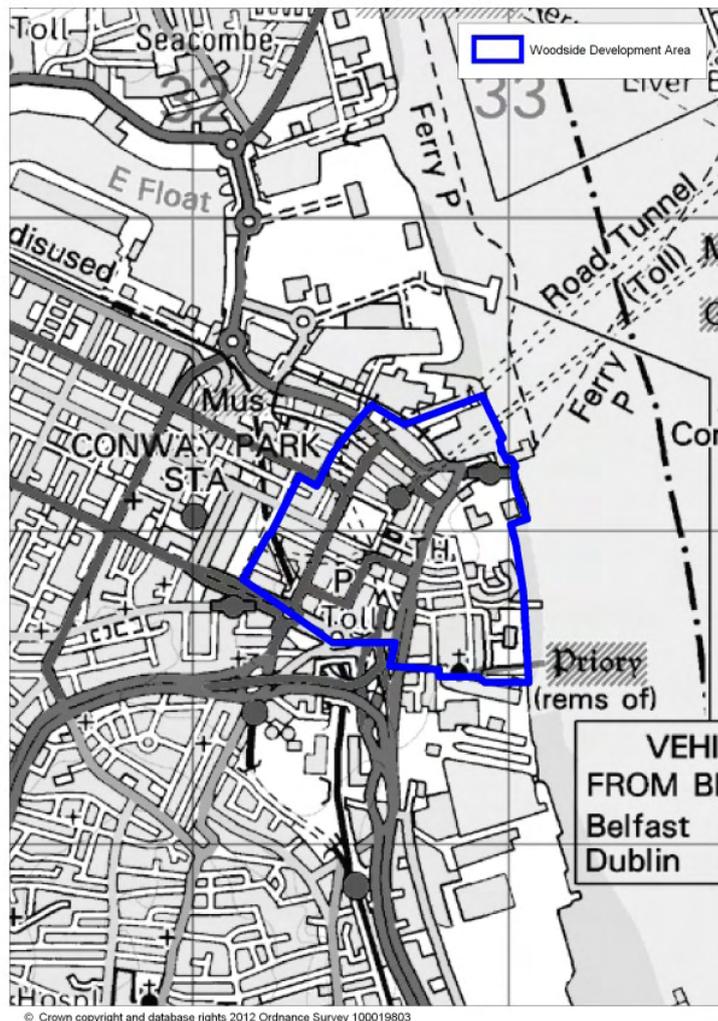
**5.45** Wirral Waters and the surrounding Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area were designated as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point in December 2008 as part of a wider vision for mixed-use private sector regeneration at the core of the Liverpool City Region, which includes complementary proposals

46 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, July 2010)

along the Liverpool waterfront at Liverpool Waters. National Growth Point funding ceased in March 2011 but the areas on both sides of the river now form part of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone.

**5.46** Planning permissions for residential development at North Bank East, a hotel and restaurant at Tower Quay, a large scale high-density mixed-use development on the remaining waterside areas between Duke Street and Tower Road (East Float) and a 228,300 square metre International Trade Centre at Beaufort Road on the south bank of the West Float have been granted. Site preparation works for the first phase of the International Trade Centre are now underway, following the securing of private sector investment finance and the award of Regional Growth Fund.

## Woodside Development Area



Picture 5.5

**5.47** Woodside is the area on the waterfront opposite Liverpool City Centre, between Priory Wharf and Woodside Business Park, including the Ferry Terminal, the former Woodside Hotel, Woodside Bus Station, the 1990s public sector office developments at Woodside Approach and the area up to Hamilton Square Railway Station.

**5.48** Land next to the residential development at Priory Wharf was allocated as a Housing Development Site in the Unitary Development Plan in February 2000 but remains undeveloped. The remainder of the area is used by a mix of primarily industrial and commercial businesses. The western parts of the area fall within the setting of Hamilton Square Conservation Area.

**5.49** Woodside is directly served by the A41 and is already an inter-modal terminus for bus, rail and ferry services but is poorly utilised and contains a number of vacant sites and a bus layover. The busy A41 also acts as a barrier to pedestrian movements between the train station and the ferry terminal.

**5.50** A masterplan for the area, which was subject to public consultation in 2006, identified the potential to accommodate a mix of residential, office, hotel and ancillary leisure floorspace. A larger site could be assembled, if the A41 was diverted. It would also be possible to exploit the change in level as the land dips towards the River. A Tall Buildings Study and Conservation Area Appraisal was undertaken to address the capacity for tall buildings to complement the high rise buildings along the Liverpool waterfront, take best advantage of views to Liverpool and provide a more distinct and defined urban character to the central commercial area of Birkenhead.

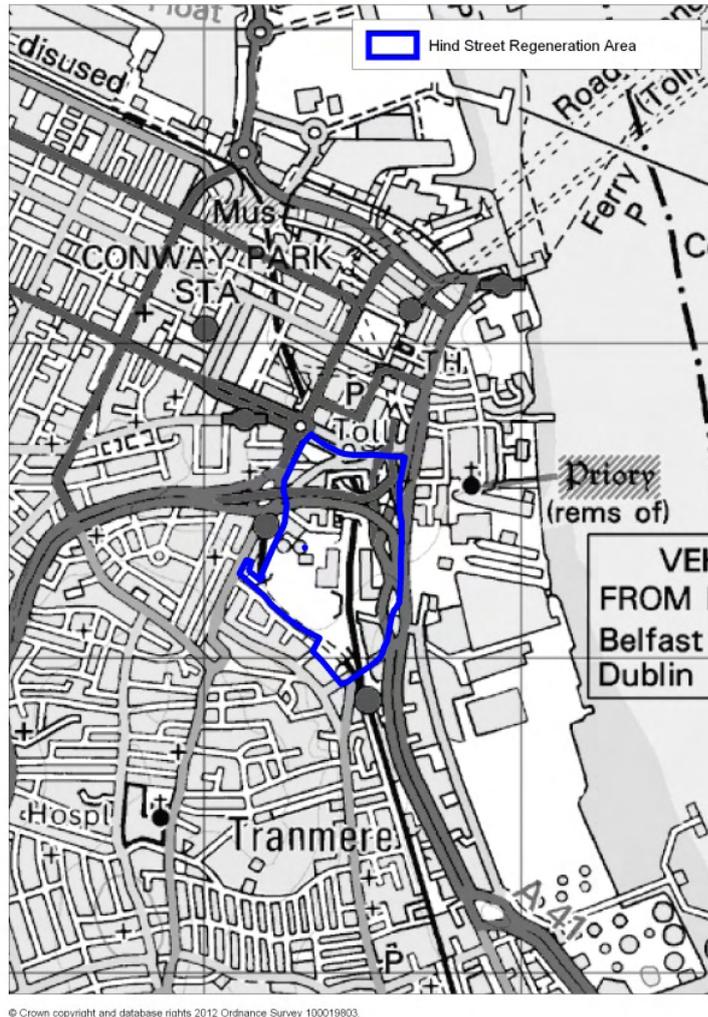
## **Hind Street Regeneration Area**

**5.51** Hind Street is a large under-utilised area to the immediate south of Birkenhead Town Centre and to the west of the A41, well served by public transport including direct rail links to Liverpool and Chester. The area includes operational gas holders, a former gas depot, a former car showroom, a disused railway station and other under-utilised areas associated with the tunnel marshalling yards. It is physically separated from the Town Centre by a series of flyovers. Highway access to the majority of the area is also physically constrained.

**5.52** A study, funded by public sector partners in 2001, concluded that the area could provide an appropriate location for town centre uses.

**5.53** A large part of the southern part of the area, including the land controlled by public sector investment agency HCA, has outline planning permission for non-food retail, office, trade sales, restaurant/public house, car showroom and a creche, including the provision of a new access to Birkenhead Town Centre from the south.

**5.54** A successful office development at Queens Gate, to the immediate north of the area, highlights the potential for high quality development and investment and a revised masterplan is being considered to provide a more integrated approach to future development opportunities.



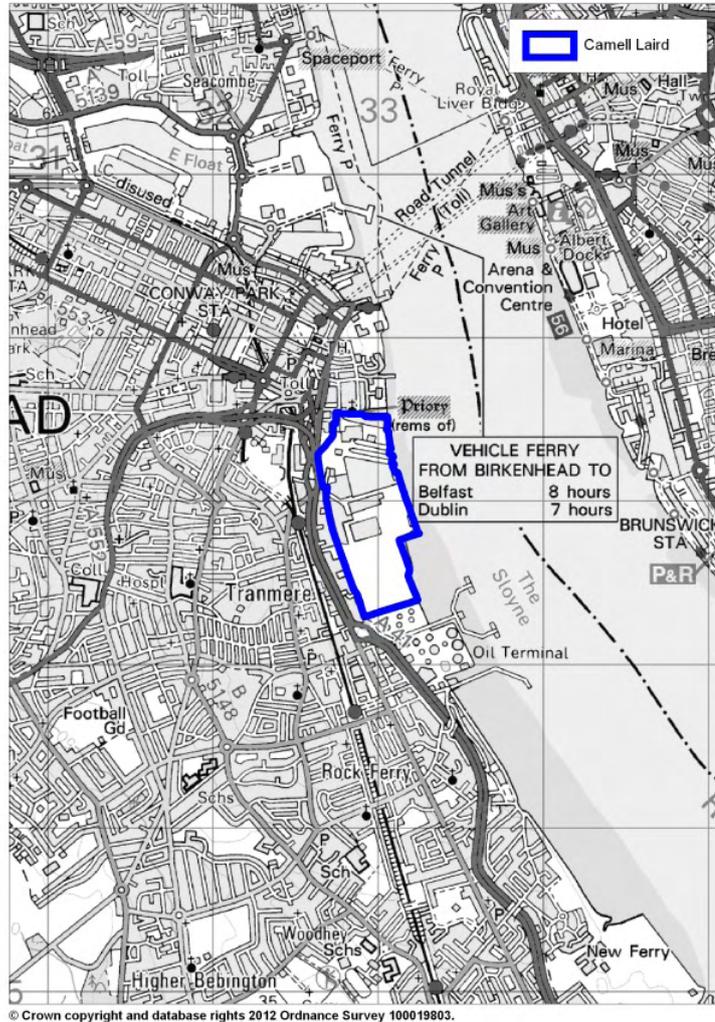
Picture 5.6

## Cammell Lairds

**5.55** The Cammell Lairds Shipyard has been a significant feature of the sub-regional economy since 1856 and contains one of the few sites in the North West that would be capable of providing an additional deep water berth.

**5.56** The site is now owned by the operator of the Port of Liverpool and provides a major marine engineering and ship repair facility, which is crucial to the continued viability of the Port of Liverpool. An associated facility is also operated from the inland dock system at Beaufort Road.

**5.57** The open land to the south of the ship repair facility is currently in use for the assembly and construction of off-shore wind turbines and other associated equipment and has the potential to become a major supply and construction centre for the offshore renewable energy industry.



**Picture 5.7**

## Coast and Flooding

**5.58** There is a risk of flooding within the Birkenhead Docks, at Woodside and to a lesser extent at Cammell Lairds, which will need to be taken into account as the re-development of these areas progresses.

## Key Issues

**5.59** Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 2 include:

- Providing for the continued economic revitalisation of Birkenhead, including the re-development of large areas of vacant and underused land and the future development of key waterfront locations
- Supporting the delivery of Wirral Waters and the International Trade Centre and the integration of the proposals with the surrounding area
- Supporting the re-establishment of Cammell Lairds as a major centre for heavy and marine engineering

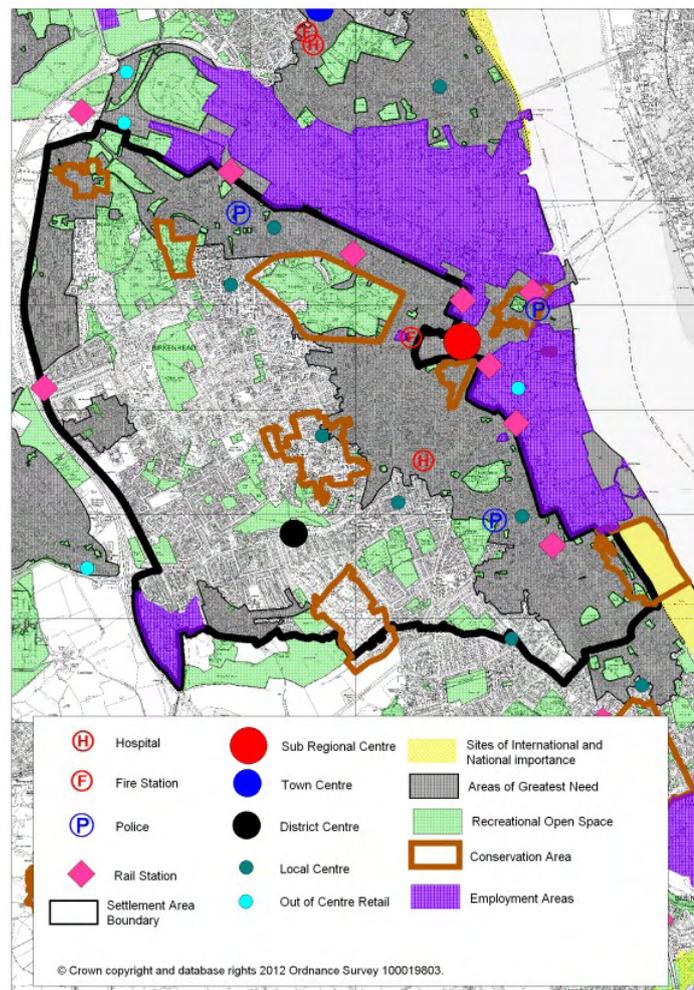
- Defining the future role of Birkenhead Town Centre
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of central Birkenhead
- Securing continued environmental improvements within the older urban areas
- Addressing the lack of appropriate 'quality' employment land, particularly for offices, in the most accessible locations
- Establishing a transport strategy to manage the impact of traffic and congestion on the Town Centre
- Preventing the further deterioration of air quality along the A41 corridor at Tranmere
- Addressing the significant lack of open space and green infrastructure
- Addressing local limitations in water supply and wastewater infrastructure, to maintain the pace of regeneration within the area

## Settlement Area 2 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 1,433 hectares (9% of Wirral land area)
Urban Coastline - 4km (2.5 miles)
Population - 1,700 (mid-2010) 0.6% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 1,400 (Approx 4% of Wirral stock, April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 0.9
Social Housing Properties - 570 (41% of Area 2)
Vacant Residential Properties - 120 (9%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 378 (6% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 444 (16% of Wirral)
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 0.2 hectares (46 units) 1% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Birkenhead Town Centre - 250 Retail Units - 32 Vacant (13%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - Junction 1 Retail Park; Rock Retail Park; Tesco, Bidston, Designated Employment Areas - Twelve Quays (21.4 hectares), Dock Estate (158.5 hectares), Dock Road Corridor, Seacombe (79.9 hectares), Cleveland Street Corridor, Birkenhead (68.8 hectares), Beaufort Road (5.6 hectares), Valley Road Industrial Estate (19.1 hectares), Woodside Approach (3.6 hectares), A41 Corridor, Tranmere (147.2 hectares).
Available Employment Land - 36 sites (80.75 hectares) 40% of Wirral Supply
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 103 sites (155 hectares) 48% of Borough Total
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 1,700 (100% of Area 2)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - none
Recreational Open Space - 50 hectares (29.2 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 43 hectares (25.4 hectares per 1000)

## 6 Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead

**6.1** Settlement Area 3 includes the densely developed older terraced housing built during the early 1900s surrounding the Birkenhead Dock Estate and the central commercial areas in Birkenhead and Tranmere; the high quality lower density Edwardian and Victorian settlements along the Noctorum Ridge at Bidston, Claughton, Oxtan and Prenton; and the more densely developed, modern, outer suburbs at Beechwood, Noctorum and Prenton.



**Picture 6.1**

### Local Heritage

**6.2** The Area has a strong built heritage, with over two hundred entries on The National Heritage List for England, of which five are Grade II\*. Seven Conservation Areas include:

- Bidston Village - one of the earliest settlements in the Settlement Area, dating back to medieval times, which still retains the character and appearance of a traditional English village;
- Birkenhead Park - the first publicly funded park in Britain, which provided the inspiration for the design of Central Park in New York and for the Victorian “Public Parks Movement”, which is also registered a Grade 1 Historic Park and Garden;
- Clifton Park - a residential area to the immediate south of the main commercial centre, developed in the 1840s by Captain William Sharp to a layout by the architect Walter Scott;
- Flaybrick Cemetery - a fine example of a formal Victorian cemetery, containing the graves of many people prominent in the early growth of Birkenhead, which is also registered as an Historic Park and Garden;
- Mountwood - a popular residential area for wealthy businessmen during the late 1800s and early 1900s which still ranks as one of the most affluent areas of the Borough;
- Oxton Village - an early Victorian commuter settlement developed over the summit of Oxton Hill, which currently accommodates Merseyside's only Michelin Star restaurant; and
- Rock Park - a purpose built residential estate formed by Liverpool merchants, sited to be near a former cross river ferry terminal.

**6.3** The former Bidston Observatory and Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, on the crest of the wooded open space at Bidston Hill, overlooking the M53 Corridor, is also a prominent local landmark.

**6.4** The Conservation Areas at Clifton Park, Flaybrick Cemetery and Rock Park are on the national Heritage at Risk Register. The Mersey Coastal Park Strategy will seek to repair and restore the esplanade at Rock Park for public access and improve the condition of the Conservation Area as part of a wider proposal to provide a new coastal footpath between Rock Ferry and Eastham and to develop the area for watersports, leisure and tourism.

**6.5** Devonshire Park Residents Association consulted on the first draft of a proposed Neighbourhood Plan to preserve the heritage and character of Devonshire Park, in February 2012.

## **Socio-Economic Background**

**6.6** The Area was home to 83,000 people in mid-2010 and has a generally younger age-profile than other areas of the Borough, with a higher than average proportion of children and young adults and a lower than average proportion of retired people.

**6.7** Over half of the population live within an area of greatest need. This is by far the largest concentration of need in the Borough, representing almost half the Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**6.8** Although the area has one of the highest proportions of people of working age (63 percent) in the Borough, especially amongst younger age groups, worklessness is over 25 percent and a high proportion of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training.

**6.9** Fertility rates in Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry are amongst the highest in Wirral. Bidston and Tranmere have some of the highest proportions of children under 15 years of age. Bidston also has one of the highest proportions of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training and the former Council estate at Beechwood ranks among the worst in England for child poverty.

**6.10** The Area provides almost half the Borough's social housing, accounting for almost a quarter of the homes within the Settlement Area but also includes some areas within the highest 20 percent of the national Index in 2010.

**6.11** The Area currently provides approximately 16,500 jobs and has the highest proportion of residents who remain in Wirral for work. The Settlement Area generated approximately 6,100 journeys to destinations outside the Borough to work in 2001. Over half travelled to Liverpool and over a third to Cheshire West and Chester. Half the households in Birkenhead, Bidston and Tranmere did not, however, have access to a private car. These areas generated some of the lowest numbers of journeys to work outside the Area, of which the majority travelled to Settlement Area 2 and Settlement Area 4.

**6.12** Just under 5 percent of residential properties and 117 previously developed sites (29 hectares) were registered as vacant in April 2012. The main development opportunities are related to the completion of sites assembled to support housing market renewal activity in north Birkenhead and Tranmere and a large number of smaller infill sites in Rock Ferry, Tranmere, Oxtton and Prenton.

## Housing

**6.13** Large parts of the Settlement Area were designated as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, where land values are low. These areas also have one of the highest concentrations of neighbourhoods where average house prices are still below the previous stamp duty threshold of £125,000.

**6.14** New housing was specifically focused into this and adjoining Settlement Areas in December 2003. This was re-focused to include only the northern and eastern parts of the Settlement Area in October 2005, where the proportion of the Borough's new houses built within the Settlement Area increased from 18 percent in 2000/01 to 49 percent in 2008/09. The number of new houses completed has decreased across the Borough in response to the recession but 40 percent of the Borough's new housing was still completed within Settlement Area 3 during 2011/2012.

**6.15** A four-year, £1million scheme to provide free loft and cavity wall insulation to residents in private rented or owner occupied properties began in Claughton, Oxtton, Prenton and Rock Ferry during 2010/11.

**6.16** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 3 at April 2012<sup>(47)</sup>:

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(48)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(49)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(50)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(51)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(52)</sup>
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,522	397	312	372	231

## Town Centres

**6.17** Prenton functions as the main district centre within the Area. It is a busy centre with several large convenience supermarkets but has a limited comparison retail offer. Two vacant derelict sites detract from the appearance of the centre.

**6.18** A number of smaller more local centres operate at Grange Road West/Oxton Road; Laird Street; Claughton Village; Oxton Village; Old Chester Road; Church Road; Borough Road (Prenton Park); and Dacre Hill.

**6.19** Grange Road West/Oxton Road has a limited convenience offer. The comparison sector is limited to bulky goods, charity shops and some specialist retailers linked to Birkenhead. A large number of businesses are in the food and drink sectors. Vacancy rates are high and environmental quality is poor and declining.

**6.20** Laird Street has a reasonable convenience offer with good supermarket representation, but a limited comparison offer and some service uses. The centre is dominated by vacant units (40 percent of the total) and the physical environment is poor but a new medical centre has recently been constructed.

**6.21** Claughton Village primarily provides a local day-to-day service and convenience shopping role including a Tesco Express. There is a very limited comparison offer. The centre is generally clean and well-maintained.

**6.22** Dacre Hill serves a convenience shopping and limited comparison and service role, anchored by Tesco Metro. The centre has one of the lowest vacancy rates in the Borough.

**6.23** Old Chester Road has seen significant redevelopment and consolidation as part of the Tranmere Urban Village Initiative. The centre now performs a convenience and service role to meet the day-to-day shopping needs of local residents with a significantly improved image.

47 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

52 sites below 0.4 hectare

51 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

50 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

49 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

48 sites with planning permission in April 2012

**6.24** Church Road is scheduled for contraction and redevelopment, in a manner similar to Tranmere Urban Village, as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder.

**6.25** Borough Road (Prenton Park) has a limited convenience and comparison retail offer with some service uses but lacks a post office. While vacancy rates are low, there is scope for environmental improvement.

**6.26** Oxtton Village performs a convenience shopping role, with some comparison and service retailers and a number of restaurants, including Merseyside's only Michelin Star restaurant. Physical quality is high, although the former bank site is awaiting redevelopment.

## Employment

**6.27** Outside these centres, the only significant designated employment area is the North Cheshire Trading Estate at Junction 3 of the M53 Motorway. The Estate is popular, almost fully occupied and only small infill plots are now available.

**6.28** The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 recommended that smaller employment areas at Stanley Road, Craven Street, Moorcroft Road and Railway Road should be re-designated as primarily residential areas. No recommendation was made at Holborn Square as the units were fully occupied.

## Community Facilities

**6.29** There is good provision for indoor recreation throughout the Area. Sports facilities include the public sports halls at Beechwood Recreation Centre and private facilities at the Birkenhead and Shaftesbury Youth Clubs. Sports halls are also available at secondary schools at Park and Prenton and smaller halls at the primary schools at Christchurch and Rock Ferry. Private health club facilities including a swimming pool and indoor running track are also available at Total Fitness in Prenton.

**6.30** Grange Road West Recreation Centre has been transferred to community ownership to provide a dedicated gymnastics centre and the Turntable Building, off Laird Street, is now occupied by the Merseyside Model Railway Society. Byrne Avenue Recreation Centre and Noctorum Community Centre have also transferred to community ownership and management. A transfer has also been approved at Buccleuth Street. Transfers for Beechwood Recreation Centre and Beechwood Community Centre are still under consideration. The Council has also committed £1.3 million to refurbish the Williamson Art Gallery at Slatey Road.

**6.31** Birkenhead School in Oxtton is now the only remaining private secondary school within the Settlement Area following the closure of Pershore House, Highfield School and the conversion of Birkenhead High School for Girls to a new-style Academy for girls aged 3 to 19.

**6.32** Prenton High School has recently been re-modelled as part of a Private Finance Initiative. An £11.7 million scheme to remodel and refurbish the Birkenhead High Girl's Academy commenced in February 2011. The University Academy of Birkenhead also opened in January 2011 to replace Park High School and Rock Ferry High School.

**6.33** Recent reviews of primary school places have led to the amalgamation of Hillside Infant and Junior School; Prenton Infant and Junior School; and Vyner Primary School and St Oswald's CE Primary School to form Bidston Village CE Primary School. The Dell Primary School in Rock Ferry was closed and has been sold for re-development.

**6.34** Extensive refurbishment at Cathcart Primary School was completed in September 2011, including the provision of a new satellite Children's Centre at the former St Lawrence's school building nearby. Townfield Primary School has had mobile classrooms replaced to provide a hearing base with specialist one-to-one speech and language therapy room and funds have been allocated to provide a library and learning resource facility at Our Lady's and St Edwards Primary School. A possible future scheme at Wirral Hospital School is also under consideration.

**6.35** Bedford Drive Primary School and Ridgeway High School, which includes a City Learning Centre to provide enhanced ICT based learning, have also been subject to successful bids to the Priority School Building Programme.

**6.36** The independent Sixth Form College operates from a re-modelled campus adjacent to Birkenhead Park in Claughton. St Anslem's College has academy status and has links with the independent primary school at Redcourt.

**6.37** A new University Technical College, sponsored by Mersey Maritime and Cammell Laird, is due to open on part of the site at the former Rock Ferry High School to prepare the students for employment and further and higher education in engineering.

**6.38** A major redevelopment has recently provided replacement medical facilities at St Catherine's Hospital at Derby Road, Tranmere.

**6.39** The feasibility of developing a Wirral Youth Zone in Birkenhead to provide an iconic, modern state-of-the-art centre for young people is also being explored.

## **Open Space and Nature**

**6.40** Although the Area contains the major open spaces of Birkenhead Park and Bidston Hill, supplemented by smaller parks at Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Oxton and Prenton, the majority of open space is already intensively used and there is limited provision of natural and semi-natural green space. Outside these areas, open space is often provided at a series of small poorer quality sites. Private open spaces are, therefore, also significant.

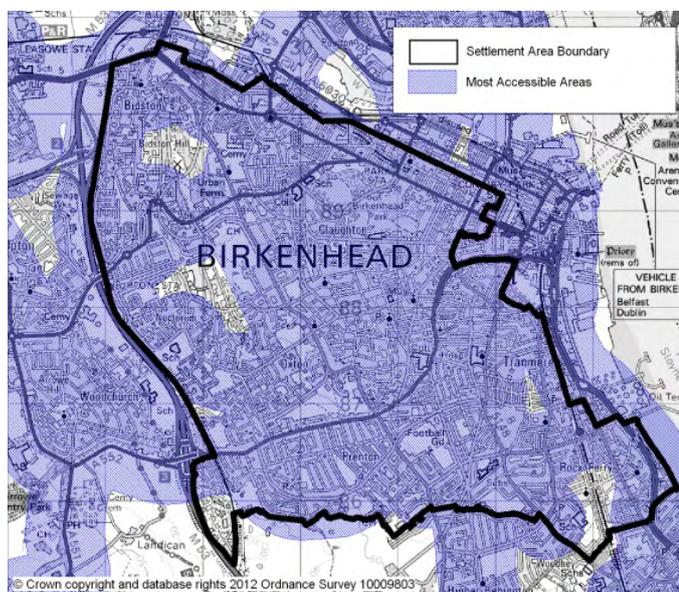
**6.41** There is high demand for playing pitches. Existing local facilities are all intensively used and over half the local football teams travel outside the Area for home fixtures.

**6.42** The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment identifies Bidston Hill as an area for landscape conservation, where key features such as wooded hills, key landmark buildings, heathland and woodland should be managed with little urban encroachment.

## Transport Accessibility

**6.43** Areas along radial routes to Birkenhead Town Centre are generally highly accessible by public transport. Main routes in and out of the Settlement Area include the Kingsway and Queensway Road Tunnels to Liverpool; the A41 south from Birkenhead to Chester and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway; the A553 (Laird Street) west to Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; the A552 west to Junction 3 of the M53 Motorway; and the A5027 west to Upton, Woodchurch and West Kirby.

**6.44** High frequency bus services already operate along all these routes but there is existing traffic congestion and high levels of traffic noise on the A552 between Birkenhead and Junction 3 of the M53 Motorway. Opportunities to improve bus services are being considered to assist in managing traffic flows and to reduce journey times.



**Picture 6.2**

**6.45** High frequency electrified rail services run along the northern edge of the Settlement Area between Liverpool, Birkenhead, New Brighton and West Kirby and along the eastern edge of the Settlement Area between Liverpool, Birkenhead and Chester. Consultation has identified the need for improvements to accessibility at some of these stations and Merseytravel has identified the need for rail station and park and ride improvements.

**6.46** A more limited diesel service runs along the western edge of the Settlement Area along the Fender Valley, in the M53 Corridor, between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales. The Unitary Development Plan identified the opportunity to enhance accessibility and expand number of rail passengers by constructing new stations at Beechwood and Woodchurch Road. The scheme is still identified as a local priority but funding has not yet been approved.

**6.47** National Cycle Network Route 56 runs along the western edge of the Area through Beechwood with links to Woodchurch, Bidston and Wallasey. There is, however, a need to improve cycle linkages throughout the Area, particularly to key destinations or attractions, such as Birkenhead Park and existing centres.

## Other Infrastructure

**6.48** The Borough's principal electricity substation is located at the urban edge at Prenton Dell. There is a water abstraction borehole at Prenton and a reservoir on the sandstone ridge at Flaybrick. The north of the Area drains to the waste water treatment works at Birkenhead and parts of the south and east of the Area to Bromborough.

**6.49** The sewer network is limited by pumping stations and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. The western part of the Area has low water resource availability, with pressure issues, where local upgrades will be required.

## Flooding

**6.50** Besides the short area of coast at Rock Park and up to 10 hectares of low-lying land along the Fender Valley, which could affect properties at the edges of Noctorum, Prenton and North Birkenhead, the main risk of flooding is from surface water.

## Key Issues

**6.51** Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 3 include:

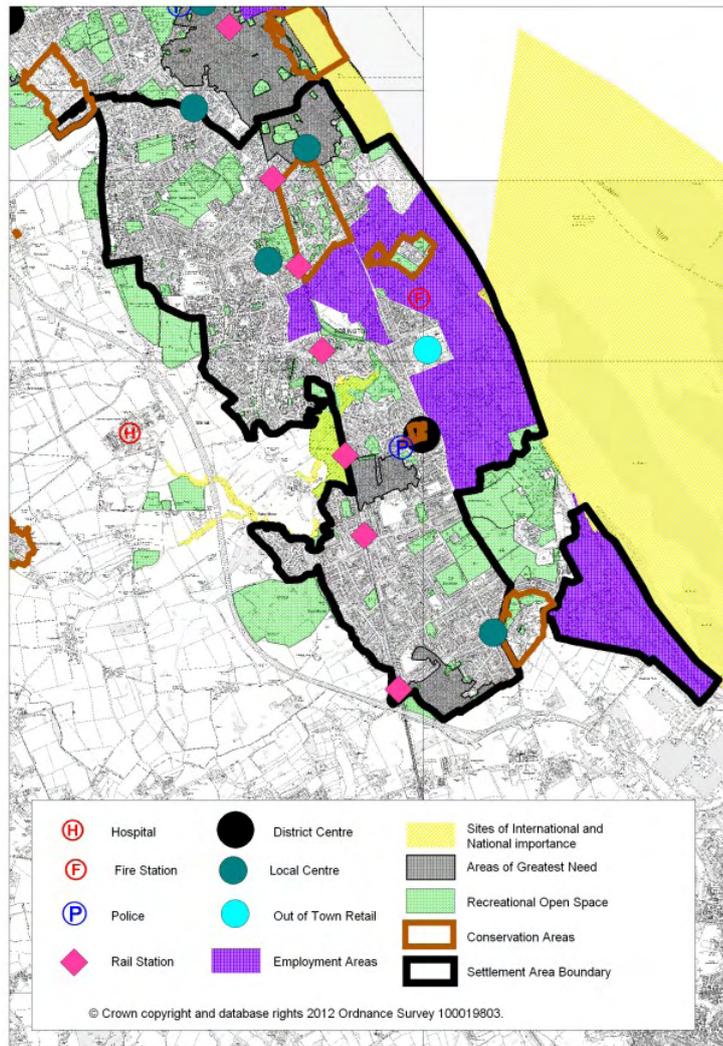
- Continuing the promotion of housing market renewal and environmental improvements within the older urban areas to the north and east
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Beechwood, Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry
- Protecting and enhancing the limited supply of biodiversity, quality open space and playing fields.
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion and improving cycle linkages
- Providing for the enhancement and protection of local heritage
- Preserving the attractiveness of high quality residential areas along the Noctorum Ridge at Bidston, Noctorum, Claughton, Oxton and Mountwood
- Safeguarding employment uses at North Cheshire Trading Estate
- Providing for the electrification and improvement of the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Addressing local limitations in water supply and wastewater drainage

## Settlement Area 3 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 1,806 hectares (12% of Wirral land area)
Urban Coastline - 0.85km (0.5 miles)
Population - 82,500 (mid-2009) 27% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 41,800 (28% of Wirral stock April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 23
Social Housing Properties - 10,200 (24% of Area 3)
Vacant Residential Properties - 2,100 (5%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 2298 (38% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 1785 (64% of Wirral)
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012 ) - 33.3 hectares (1,522 units) 47% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Prenton - 60 Retail Units - 8 Vacant (13%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - Grange West Road/Oxton Road; Prenton (Borough Road); Tranmere (Old Chester Road); Claughton Village; Laird Street; Dacre Hill; Church Road; Oxton Village.
Designated Employment Areas - North Cheshire Trading Estate (29.7 hectares), Holborn Square (0.6 hectares), Craven Street (0.8 hectares), Stanley Road (2.4 hectares), Railway Road (1.5 hectares), Moorcroft Road (1.2 hectares)
Available Employment Land - 8 sites (1.8 hectares, April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 117 sites (29 hectares) 9% of Borough Total
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 45,000 (55% of Area 3)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 1,500 (2% of Area 3)
Recreational Open Space - 341 hectares (4.11 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 221 hectares (2.7 hectares per 1000)

## 7 Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham

7.1 Settlement Area 4 includes the urban areas of Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham.



Picture 7.1

7.2 The Settlement Area contains some of the Borough's most significant economic assets and facilities and provides half the Borough's designated employment land. The Area is also the Borough's second most significant destination for journeys to work (9 percent) and is the second largest contributor to the Borough's economic output (12 percent of GVA).

7.3 The Manchester Ship Canal deals with up to 8 million tonnes of cargo each year and approximately a third of the workforce at Vauxhall Motors, located just over the border in Cheshire West and Chester, live in Wirral.

## Socio-Economic Background

**7.4** The Area was home to 54,500 people in mid-2010, of which 33,200 or 61 percent were of working age. The population has a slightly older than average age-profile, with a slightly lower proportion of children and young adults and a slightly higher proportion of people of retirement age.

**7.5** Just over 10 percent of the population live within areas of greatest need, where worklessness is also over 25 percent. Social housing accounts for almost 12 percent of homes.

**7.6** There is, however, a marked contrast between the north and south of the Settlement Area.

**7.7** Parts of the northern area, at New Ferry, demonstrate similar socio-economic needs to areas undergoing major clearance and re-development further north in Settlement Area 3. The former Council Estates at Acre Lane, Bromborough and at Mill Park, Eastham also show some of these needs but with fewer signs of stress.

**7.8** Almost 40 percent of the population, with some of the highest skills and incomes in the Borough, live in areas of higher value housing towards the western fringes of the Area at Higher Bebington, Poulton, Spital and Brookhurst, which are some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside. These areas accommodate almost 20 percent of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the highest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**7.9** The Area currently provides approximately 18,000 jobs but almost a third of the Area's residents in employment work outside the Borough.

**7.10** Together with the rural settlements to the west, over 7,200 journeys were made to places of work outside the Borough in 2001. This represented almost a quarter of all journeys to destinations outside the Borough and was split almost equally between Liverpool and Cheshire West and Chester.

**7.11** Vacant previously developed land was mainly concentrated within the industrial and dockland areas (38 sites, 85 hectares) and nearly 3 percent of residential properties were registered as vacant in April 2012.

**7.12** The majority of this Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new house building to support development in the regeneration priority areas, since December 2003.

**7.13** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 4 in April 2012<sup>(53)</sup>:

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(54)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(55)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(56)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(57)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(58)</sup>
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	472	247	703	329	50

## Local Heritage

**7.14** Settlement Area 4 also has a wealth of historic assets, with 236 entries on The National Heritage List for England, three of which are Grade II\*.

**7.15** The older historic settlements at Bromborough Village and Eastham and the innovative early planned settlements for factory workers at Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool are designated as Conservation Areas. Port Sunlight is of national significance and contains just over the half the Borough's Listed Buildings. Bromborough Pool Conservation Area also contains over fifty Listed Buildings.

**7.16** The site of the former Bromborough Court House in the industrial area at Pool Lane and the Pre-Conquest Cross at St Barnabas Parish Church at the centre of Bromborough Village are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Bromborough Court House moated site and fishponds is on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

## Wirral International Business Park

**7.17** The International Business Park at Bromborough, a designated Strategic Regional Site, is one of the Borough's most successful business locations. Easily accessible to areas of need along the A41 corridor, the Park has accommodated over half the Borough's new employment floorspace since the Unitary Development Plan was adopted in February 2000, at an annual average of 4.5 hectares.

**7.18** The Business Park has been a focus for significant grant-aided investment in land reclamation and infrastructure since the late 1980s. Highway, drainage, cycling and junction improvements were carried out during the 1990s, with designed-in capacity for future growth and a masterplan, commissioned by NWDA in 2002, included development briefs for every available plot within the Park.

**7.19** The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study confirmed that the Business Park is one of the Borough's flagship business locations. Almost 60 hectares still remain undeveloped, with large areas controlled by public sector investment agencies such as the HCA. Additional electricity supply up to 5MVA has recently been secured with an additional transformer at the southern end of the Business Park.

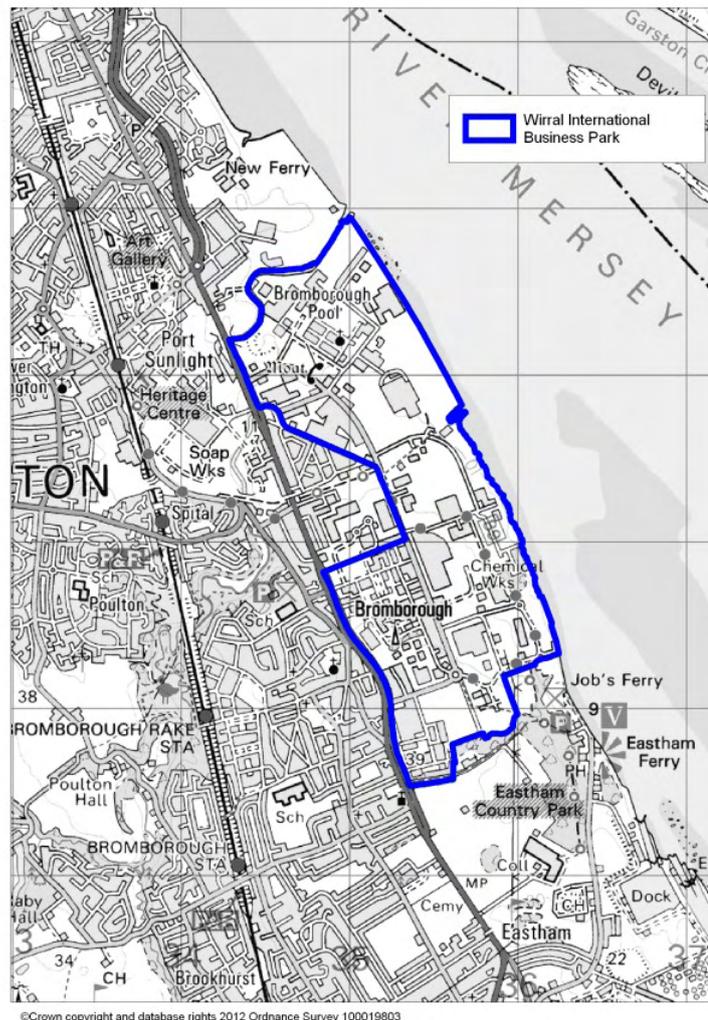
58 sites below 0.4 hectare

57 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

56 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

55 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

54 sites with planning permission in April 2012



**Picture 7.2**

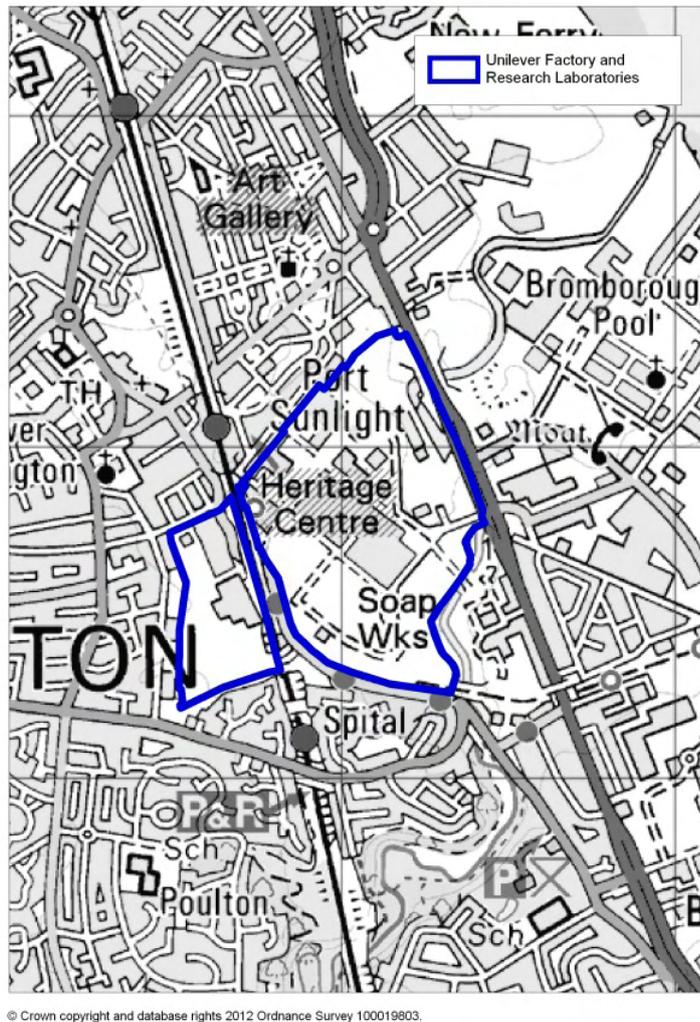
**7.20** A small port facility at Mersey Wharf handles both bulk and general cargo. Sand from Liverpool Bay is also landed at Riverbank Road.

**7.21** The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study concluded that the reuse of the underused secondary industrial areas to the north of the Dibbin Brook, which can only be accessed through the residential areas at Bolton Road East would not have serious consequences to Wirral's economy or property market. Housing development has already begun and outline planning permission has also recently been granted for the redevelopment of the Port Sunlight Golf Centre.

### **Unilever Port Sunlight Factory and Research Laboratories**

**7.22** The Unilever factory and adjacent Research Laboratory at Port Sunlight is still one of the largest private sector employers in the Borough.

**7.23** Almost a third of the factory complex is now vacant, including the former dockside facilities adjacent to New Chester Road. A redundant area to the east of the Dibbin Brook has recently been re-developed for housing.



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**Picture 7.3**

## Manchester Ship Canal, Eastham

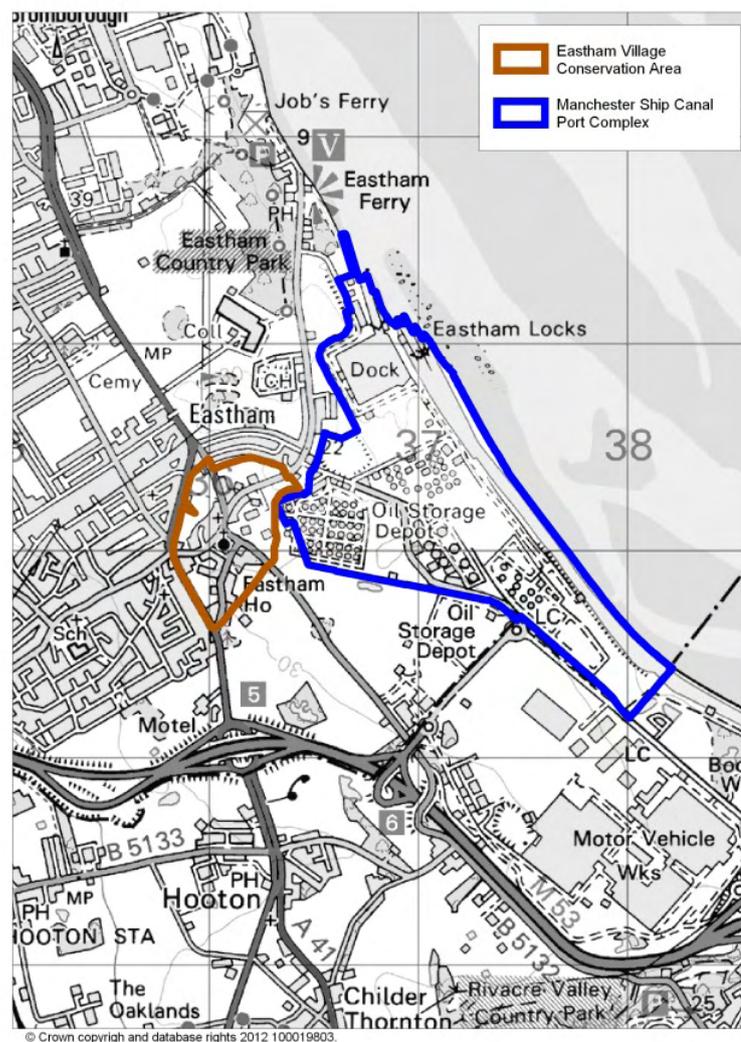
**7.24** The Manchester Ship Canal is a regionally important facility with links to Stanlow, Runcorn and Manchester, operated under development rights granted by Act of Parliament.

**7.25** A large area adjacent to the Canal entrance accommodates a series of port and refinery related and chemical storage compounds with direct access to Junction 6 of the M53 Motorway and handles over 8 million tonnes of cargo each year. Over 21 hectares is currently vacant but there is also potential for further land to be made available.

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

**7.26** The port operator has aspirations to further exploit the potential of the Canal for inter-modal freight transfer by water, road and rail, and major initiatives, such as the Atlantic Gateway and SuperPort, have confirmed this as a key project for the Liverpool City Region, as part of a scheme known as Port Wirral.

**7.27** The Mersey Ports Master Plan proposes the phased re-location of out-dated port facilities from Ellesmere Port Docks in adjacent Cheshire West and Chester, identifies potential to improve access to the dock and canal system through the provision of new lock gates from the QE2 Dock and potential to increase waterborne and rail-based freight traffic to deliver modern port and port-centric facilities.



**Picture 7.4**

**7.28** There are continuing concerns about the environmental impact of port and industrial operations on Eastham Village, particularly from industrial traffic and emissions, which will also need to be dealt with as part of the Mersey Ports Master Plan.

## Town Centres

**7.29** Bromborough Village and New Ferry are designated as Key Town Centres in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral.

**7.30** Bromborough Village is beginning to show signs of decline through an increase in vacant shops. The retail offer is limited in scale and diversity and there is limited scope for additional development.

**7.31** The shopping area in New Ferry is in serious decline, despite an earlier substantial public sector regeneration initiative. The convenience sector meets a localised catchment. The comparison and service sector is very limited and oriented to the value end of the market. Despite previous contraction, the vacancy rate remains high. There may be scope for further reduction in the size of the centre, despite the presence of niche businesses such as a renowned butchers and the major asset of a popular Farmers Market.

**7.32** The traditional suburban centre of Lower Bebington has a limited convenience and comparison offer and is mainly dominated by service providers. The centre is in good condition with low vacancy rates and benefits from the proximity of a Civic Centre complex.

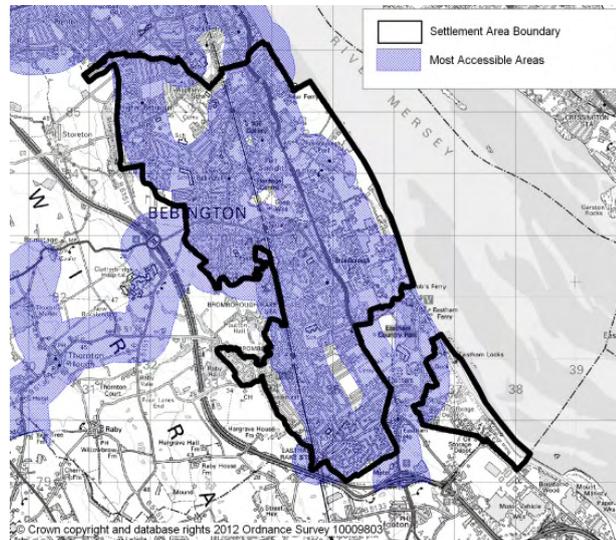
**7.33** Shopping parades at Allport Road, Cross Lane, Town Lane, Spital, and Eastham Rake/Mill Park Drive serve more local catchments.

**7.34** The Croft Retail and Leisure Park, to the east of the A41, has become the second most important comparison shopping destination within the Borough (by turnover). Only half of this turnover comes from the immediate area. The leisure area, providing food and drink, cinema, bingo and health and fitness, is in common ownership and investment has been made to improve parking and circulation and to provide better facilities for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

## Transport Accessibility

**7.35** The majority of the Area is highly accessible by public transport. High frequency public transport services run along the A41 and the electrified passenger railway line provides links to Liverpool, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Chester. Merseytravel have identified the need for park and ride improvements at Bebington and Spital.

**7.36** Main routes into and out of the Settlement Area include the heavily trafficked A41, running between Birkenhead and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway, which is a significant barrier to pedestrian movements; and the similarly busy B5137 running west to Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway. In the absence of more sustainable travel choices, there are likely to be significant highway capacity issues along these routes over the life time of the Core Strategy.



**Picture 7.5**

**7.37** There is existing traffic congestion along Spital Road and the A41. Traffic noise has been identified as a problem along the A41.

**7.38** Cycle routes link Port Sunlight with the Wirral International Business Park and Eastham Country Park and the A41 to Eastham Rake Railway Station. Increasing the links between the railway stations and the Wirral International Business Park and increasing public access to and along the Bromborough coastline and to the urban areas further north are future aspirations. Consultation has also indicated a need for improved cycle links to the Business Park.

**7.39** The southern parts of the Settlement Area are affected by the flight paths associated with the operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

## Community Facilities

**7.40** The majority of the Settlement Area is well-served by a wide range of open spaces and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

**7.41** Facilities of Borough-wide importance include the Bebington Oval Sports Centre, with a public swimming pool, sports hall, fitness suite, athletics track, playing fields, floodlit artificial turf pitch and sports courts. Leverhulme Sports Ground and Plymyard Playing Fields support some of the highest quality competition in the Borough and also serve a wider catchment from areas of shortfall further north up the A41 corridor.

**7.42** Sports halls are available at the secondary schools at Bebington, Wirral Grammar and South Wirral. Private health club facilities include the swimming pools and fitness centres at the Croft Retail and Leisure Park and at the Village Leisure Hotel.

**7.43** Windsor Close Community Centre has recently been transferred to community ownership and management. The transfer of Bromborough Social Centre, Delamere Community Centre, Victoria Hall and New Ferry Village Hall has also been approved.

**7.44** The secondary schools at Bebington, South Wirral and Wirral Grammar for Girls have recently been re-modelled as part of a Private Finance Initiative. The former high school at Acre Lane is now the Council's main teaching resource and training centre.

**7.45** A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of the two small primary schools at Bromborough Pool and St Mary's in Eastham. Future schemes are being considered at Town Lane Primary School and Woodslee Primary School. Children's Centres are located in New Ferry, Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham.

**7.46** Wirral Metropolitan College plan to vacate the site at Carlett Park and relocate services to Conway Park and the Twelve Quays campus in Birkenhead, following the approval of a further phase of housing development.

## Open Space and Nature

**7.47** While a general shortage of parks and gardens is largely offset by access to large natural and semi-natural sites at the fringe of the urban area, there is a shortage of facilities for children and young people.

**7.48** The Local Nature Reserve at Dibbinsdale is nationally important, as one of the finest examples of ancient woodland on Merseyside. It forms an important part of the landscape character and setting of the Area and has significant value for wildlife which needs careful control to manage visitor pressure.

**7.49** The banks of the River Mersey at Shorefields are nationally important for birds and the erosion of the clay cliffs and the slow expansion of saltmarsh is allowing a good variety of species to develop.

**7.50** The coastline alongside Wirral International Business Park towards Eastham and beyond is designated as a site of national and international importance for nature conservation.

**7.51** With the exception of the Butterfly Park at New Ferry, other locally designated sites are mainly associated with remnant woodlands. A small site at Mill Road, Bromborough is designated for its local importance for earth science. The southern part of the Settlement Area is also served by Eastham Country Park, which contains some of the finest mature trees to be found on Wirral.

**7.52** The Mersey Coastal Park Strategy will seek to develop a Community Nature Park at Shorefields, as part of a £2.3 million restoration scheme for the former landfill site at Bromborough Dock and to improve the gateways and linkages to Eastham County Park as part of a new coastal footpath between Rock Ferry and Eastham.

## Other Infrastructure

**7.53** United Utilities operate a large Waste Water Treatment Works adjacent to the coast at New Ferry, which has had recent investment to address odour problems. The sewer network is currently limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges.

**7.54** Network reinforcement is required to address low water resource availability at Spital, Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool.

**7.55** Further capacity and/or additional treatment facilities may be required at Bromborough Waste Water Treatment Works to support development in Settlement Areas 3 and 4, if reductions in trade effluent do not come forward as expected.

**7.56** The main electricity substation for the Settlement Area is located towards the south of the Wirral International Business Park. A number of major pipelines also run throughout the industrial areas and along the coast.

**7.57** Some of the industrial facilities at Bromborough and Eastham are registered as IPPC and COMAH sites to control pollution and public safety

**7.58** A specialist Fire and Rescue service operates from Dock Road South and Police services operate from a site adjacent to Bromborough Village centre.

## Air Quality

**7.59** The heavily trafficked A41 Corridor in Eastham is one of only two areas in the Borough where the potential increase in traffic could lead to the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. Traffic growth and the impact of any other pollutants along this corridor will need to be closely monitored.

## Coast and Flooding

**7.60** The North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan provides for existing coast defences to be maintained throughout the period of the Core Strategy and for natural erosion of the rocky foreshore to continue to be allowed at Eastham.

**7.61** The only area of undeveloped coastline in east Wirral, at Shorefields in New Ferry, to the north of the Bromborough Dock landfill is expected to continue to erode at a predicted rate of up to 0.5m each year.

**7.62** Approximately 91 hectares of land associated with the immediate coastline, at Dibbinsdale Brook and at Bromborough Pool, is potentially liable to flooding.

## Key Issues

**7.63** Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 4 include:

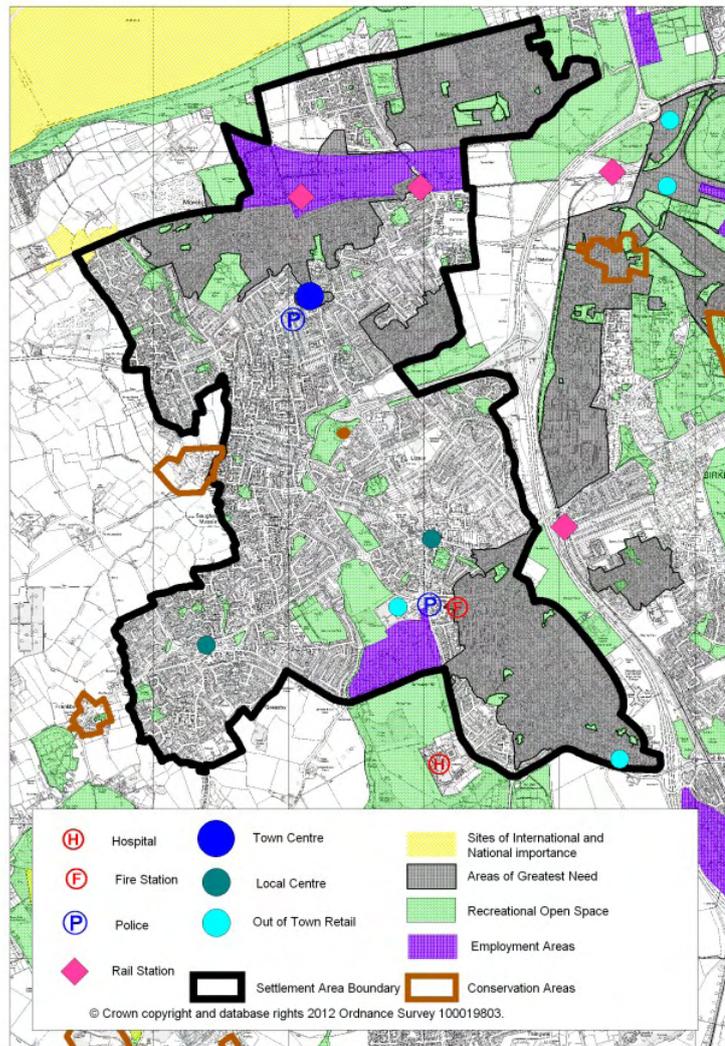
- Maintaining and enhancing the development of the Wirral International Business Park to maximise accessible employment opportunities
- Securing the additional supply of energy for further employment development at Wirral International Business Park
- Supporting the enhanced operation of the Manchester Ship Canal as a low carbon transport corridor and sub-regional inter-modal freight terminal
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on the A41 and B5137 Spital Road and improving cycle linkages
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of New Ferry and Mill Park, Eastham
- Protecting recreation facilities capable of addressing deficiencies in adjacent Areas
- Preserving the woodland setting and attractiveness of high quality residential areas along the eastern fringes of the Area
- Protecting the character of Eastham Village from industrial traffic and development
- Preventing the further deterioration of air quality along the A41 corridor at Eastham
- Addressing local limitations in water supply and wastewater treatment

## Settlement Area 4 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 1,912 hectares (12% of Wirral land area)
Urban Coastline - 8.4km (5 miles)
Population - 54,500 (mid-2010) 18% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 24,700 (17 % of Wirral stock, April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 12.9
Social Housing Properties - 2900 (12% of Area 4)
Vacant Residential Properties - 660 (2.7%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 788 (13% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 20
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 12.09 hectares (472 units) 14.5% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Bromborough Village - 94 Units - 8 Vacant (9%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - New Ferry; Lower Bebington; Croft Retail and Leisure Park.
Designated Employment Areas - Wirral International Business Park (280.2 hectares), Lever Complex (64.7 hectares), other Bromborough sites (14.2 hectares) and Manchester Ship Canal, Eastham (133.5 hectares)
Available Employment Land - 26 sites (102 hectares) 50 % of Wirral Supply (April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 38 sites (85 hectares) 26% of Borough Total
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 6,300 (12% of Area 4)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 20,300 (37% of Area 4)
Recreational Open Space - 227 hectares (4.2 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 157 hectares (2.9 hectares per 1000)

## 8 Settlement Area 5 - Mid Wirral

8.1 Settlement Area 5 includes the largely dormitory mid-Wirral settlements of Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Greasby and Woodchurch.



Picture 8.1

### Socio-Economic Background

8.2 The Mid-Wirral settlements were home to 52,900 people in mid-2010, of which 32,800 or 62 percent were of working age, closely reflecting the average age-profile for the Borough.

8.3 Approximately a third of the population lived within an area of greatest need, largely associated with the large post-war social housing estates at Leasowe, Moreton, Upton and Woodchurch, where worklessness is also over 25 percent. This is the highest concentration of need outside Birkenhead and Wallasey, representing almost 20 percent of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**8.4** Social housing also accounts for approximately 20 percent of the local housing stock.

**8.5** Parts of Greasby fell within the highest 20 percent of the national Index in 2010.

**8.6** The Area provided approximately 8,000 jobs in 2010. The area excluding Greasby and Woodchurch generated over 3,600 journeys to work to destinations outside the Borough in 2001, of which two-thirds were to Liverpool.

**8.7** Almost 40 percent of residents in Leasowe and Moreton East did not have access to a private car. Leasowe, in particular, generated one of the lowest numbers of journeys to work to destinations outside the Borough in 2001.

**8.8** Nearly 4 percent of properties were registered as vacant in April 2012 and the Area has a low proportion of previously developed vacant land (17 sites, totalling 6 hectares). The majority of the Area, with the exception of Leasowe, has previously been subject to restrictions under the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development.

## Employment

**8.9** The large industrial complexes between Moreton and Leasowe, including Tarran Industrial Estate, provide important sources of local employment within easy reach of areas most in need. Vacant industrial areas at Arrowe Park Road in Upton, recently affected by the closures of Federal Mogul and Micropore Insulation, have now mainly been re-let.

**8.10** Large sites at either end of the Pasture Road food complex and a smaller greenfield site adjacent to the biomedical complex at Reeds Lane would be sufficient to provide for past rates of development and could provide for an increase in research and development, advanced technology and manufacturing and biomedical sector.

**8.11** Arrowe Park Hospital is also a major source of local employment.

## Housing

**8.12** The Unitary Development Plan for Wirral initially directed a large proportion of new housing to greenfield sites in Moreton and Leasowe but since December 2003 the majority of the Settlement Area, outside parts of Moreton, Leasowe and Woodchurch, has been subject to restrictions to support development in the regeneration priority areas. Since October 2005, only parts of Moreton and Leasowe have been identified as a regeneration priority area.

**8.13** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 5 in April 2012<sup>(59)</sup>:

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Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(60)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(61)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(62)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(63)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(64)</sup>
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	205	202	391	1,344	81

## Local Heritage

**8.14** There are only ten structures on The National Heritage List for England, one of which is Grade II\*. The site of the church and church yard at Overchurch Park in Upton and the stone cross at Woodchurch are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and the site at Overchurch Park is included on the national Heritage at Risk Register.

**8.15** The nearest Conservation Areas are the rural villages at the edge of the Settlement Area at Saughall Massie and Frankby.

## Town Centres

**8.16** Moreton is the Key Town Centre for the Settlement Area. The centre is busy and stable, with low vacancy rates. While the centre adequately meets the day-to-day retail needs of local residents and has a thriving service sector, there is a more limited comparison and convenience offer. Additional parking facilities would be beneficial but suitable sites are limited. Main stores include Iceland, Cool Trader, Co-op and Home and Bargain. Aldi have recently opened a new purpose built store outside the centre at the eastern edge of the Area.

**8.17** Upton Village is the next largest centre within the Settlement Area. Although reasonably healthy, the majority of units are small and occupied by service providers. The convenience offer is sufficient to meet local top-up shopping needs but there is a limited comparison offer. The physical environment is generally in good condition.

**8.18** There are small local facilities within the former Council estates of Leasowe and Woodchurch, although Woodchurch is also served by two out-of-centre superstores including Asda and Sainsbury's at Upton.

**8.19** Greasby has its own local centres at Greasby Road and Frankby Road offering a mix of convenience goods, top-up food and groceries, limited comparison goods and specialist traders. The main centre at Greasby Road, while small, shows good signs of vitality and is the subject of neighbourhood planning proposals.

64 sites below 0.4 hectare

63 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

62 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

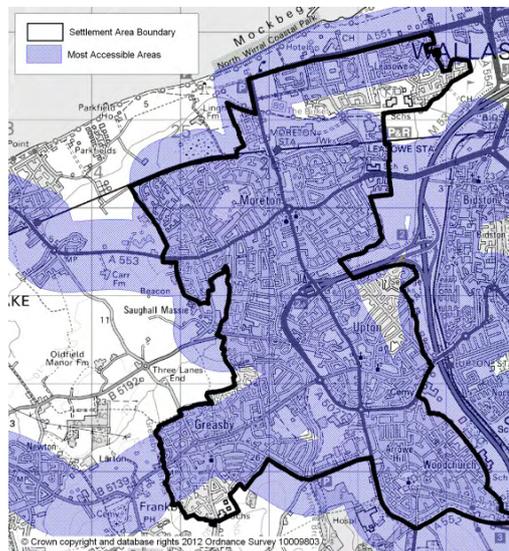
61 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

60 sites with planning permission in April 2012

## Transport Accessibility

**8.20** The majority of the Settlement Area is highly accessible by road, with access to three junctions along the M53 Motorway. The Motorway spur road at Junction 2 runs into the heart of the Settlement Area between Moreton and Upton.

**8.21** Main roads into and out of the Settlement Area include the A551 Leasowe Road leading north and west to Wallasey and Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway, the A553 travelling east-west from West Kirby and Hoylake to Birkenhead and Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway, the A551 heading south to Junction 2 of the M53 Motorway, the A552 south to Heswall and Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway and the A5027 Upton Road, heading west to Birkenhead.



Picture 8.2

**8.22** There is heavy congestion at the heart of the Key Town Centre at Moreton Cross and along Hoylake Road at peak times. Improvements to Saughall Massie Road have meant that there is less congestion in Upton and Greasby but these routes are still liable to congestion at peak times.

**8.23** The majority of the Area, with exception of areas at the urban fringe, is also highly accessible by public transport. High frequency electrified rail services between Liverpool and West Kirby pass through both Leasowe and Moreton. Upton, Greasby, Moreton and Woodchurch are also served by frequent public transport with regular bus links at peak times and throughout the day to West Kirby, Heswall and Liverpool.

**8.24** Merseytravel have identified the potential for a new rail station on the Wirral Line between Moreton and Meols at Town Meadow. If the Bidston-Wrexham railway line was upgraded, there is potential for a new station at Woodchurch Road, which would also be accessible to the surrounding residential areas.

**8.25** A series of cycle routes run throughout the Settlement Area: through Woodchurch and Beechwood to Wallasey and Birkenhead, from Woodchurch through Landican to Higher Bebington, along Arrowe Brook between Greasby and Upton and along the Birket from Leasowe to Meols.

**8.26** Consultation has indicated the need for a safe route to be established between Greasby to Frankby and West Kirby, to link with the schools at Hilbre, Calday and West Kirby Grammar. Safe cycle routes are also needed between Moreton, Leasowe and East Float and to Meols and West Kirby from Three Lanes End.

## Community Facilities

**8.27** There is good provision for indoor recreation at Leasowe and Woodchurch, where there are public swimming pools, sports halls and fitness suites. There is also a private health club facility with a swimming pool at Leasowe Castle Hotel. An additional sports hall is available at Wallasey School in Leasowe and new floodlit playing pitches at Woodchurch.

**8.28** Moreton Community Centre, Greasby Community Centre and Overton Community Centre have already been transferred to community ownership and management. Woodchurch Community Centre has also been approved for transfer and the transfer of Leasowe Lighthouse is still being considered.

**8.29** Fire and Rescue services operate from Upton and Police services from both Upton and Moreton. An extended medical centre is planned to the north of the civic complex next to Moreton Town Centre at Pasture Road.

**8.30** Secondary schools at Leasowe and Upton have recently been remodelled. Woodchurch High School was rebuilt during 2011. The vacant buildings at the former St Benedict's RC High School have now been cleared for housing development.

**8.31** A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School. Remodelling and refurbishment is currently underway at Overchurch Infant School. A successful bid for funding has been made for Foxfield Special School as part of the Priority School Building Programme.

**8.32** A City Learning Centre, to provide enhanced ICT based learning, is located at Wallasey High School in Leasowe and Children's Centres are located in Leasowe, Greasby, Moreton and Woodchurch.

## Open Space and Nature

**8.33** The Settlement Area benefits from access to major open spaces outside the Settlement Area at North Wirral Coastal Park, Arrowe Country Park and the walkways and open spaces associated with the M53 Corridor. Greasby is, however, generally poorly served, despite access at Royden Park to the west and Coronation Park, Arrowe Park and Upton Meadow to the east. There is a local shortage of allotments and natural and semi-natural greenspace.

**8.34** There is high demand for playing pitches, especially in Moreton. A number of facilities also provide for needs arising from within the adjoining Settlement Areas, particularly from Wallasey and Birkenhead.

**8.35** Other than the nationally and internationally designated North Wirral Foreshore, sites of high biodiversity value are few and mainly limited to remnant woodlands. Upton Meadow has become an established community woodland with a network of ecologically important habitats, alongside the well-established wildlife corridor along the Arrowe Brook.

**8.36** A small collection of fields at Meols Meadows, to the north west of Moreton is nationally designated as one of the last remaining wetland meadows but is currently in unfavourable condition.

## Other Infrastructure

**8.37** Almost 70 percent of the Area drains to the Waste Water Treatment plant to the north of Moreton. The remainder of the Area, including only parts of Upton, Woodchurch and eastern Leasowe, drains to Birkenhead. United Utilities also operate detention tanks at Moreton Spur in Upton.

**8.38** Parts of Leasowe have only medium water resource availability, with connectivity issues requiring network reinforcement.

**8.39** The sewer network is limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and the impact on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges and Moreton pumping station is to be upgraded over the next few years.

## Flooding

**8.40** The majority of the Settlement Area is protected from the sea by the Wallasey Embankment but there is still a risk of flooding if the Embankment was breached or over-topped.

**8.41** Approximately 185 hectares of low lying land associated with the adjacent north Wirral coastal plain, the Birket and Fender valleys, Arrowe Brook and Greasby Brook, is therefore potentially liable to flooding, which could affect areas in Leasowe, Moreton and Greasby. Other more localised flooding can, however, also be caused by extreme weather conditions causing flash-flooding and sewer surcharges in areas of Greasby and around the floodplains of Leasowe and Moreton.

**8.42** Flood defences were constructed along the Birket in the 1990s and areas previously designated as washland in the Unitary Development Plan and identified on the Environment Agency's Flood Maps must be retained to provide flood water storage.

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## Key Issues

### 8.43 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 5 include:

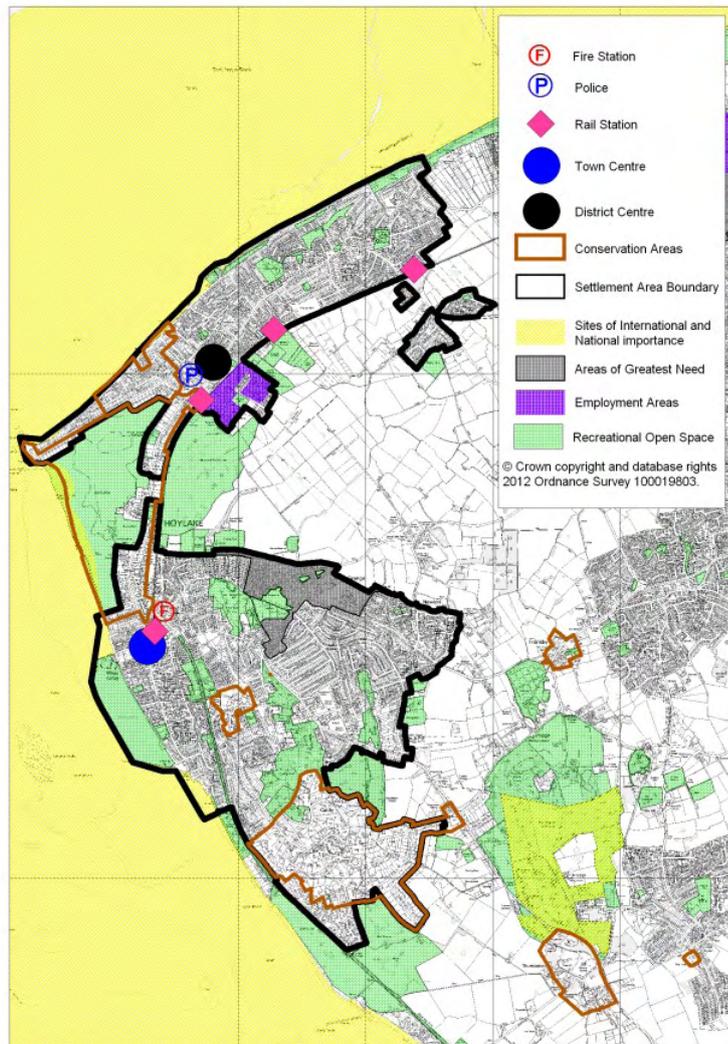
- Safeguarding employment uses at Moreton and Upton
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Leasowe, Moreton and Woodchurch
- Improving existing local retail facilities in Leasowe
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on Moreton Town Centre
- Managing the potential for flooding
- Promoting the recreational and biodiversity potential of North Wirral Coastal Park
- Protecting recreation facilities capable of addressing deficiencies in adjacent Areas
- Improving sustainable transport links including safe cycle routes with the surrounding areas
- Securing improvements to facilities on the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Addressing local limitations in drainage, water supply and wastewater treatment

### Settlement Area 5 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 1,249 hectares (11 % of Wirral land area)
Population - 52,900 (mid-2010) 17% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 24,200 (16% of Wirral stock April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 19.4
Social Housing Properties - 4,885 (20% of Area 5)
Vacant Residential Properties - 900 (3.7%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 813 (13% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 289 (10% of Wirral)
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 5.33 hectares (206 units) 6% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Moreton - 162 Retail Units - 12 Vacant (7%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - Upton Village; Greasby; Upton Retail Park; Asda, Woodchurch Road: Woodchurch and Leasowe.
Designated Employment Areas - Moreton (58.4 hectares), Upton (24.0 hectares)
Available Employment Land - 10 sites (16.5 hectares) 8% of Wirral Supply
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 17 sites (6 hectares)
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 17,400 (33% of Area 5)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 5,200 (9% of Area 5)
Recreational Open Space - 120 hectares (2.3 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 78 hectares (1.5 hectares per 1000)

## 9 Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby

9.1 Settlement Area 6 includes the largely dormitory settlements associated with the coastal resorts of Hoylake and West Kirby.



Picture 9.1

### Socio-Economic Background

9.2 The Settlement Area was home to 24,700 people in mid-2010, of which 14,500 or 59 percent were of working age. The population has an older age-profile, with one of the lowest proportions of younger adults and one of the highest proportions of older working age adults in the Borough. Almost a quarter of the population is of retirement age or above.

9.3 The majority of the Area is relatively wealthy and contains some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside, which are a significant economic asset to the sub-region. Skills and household incomes are amongst the highest in the Borough

and Meols, West Kirby and Caldy represent one of the highest concentrations of Wirral residents in areas ranked within the highest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**9.4** Social housing accounts for 4.5 percent of housing within the Settlement Area and only one area, at Greenbank Road, West Kirby, falls within an area of greatest need.

**9.5** Hoylake and Meols generated approximately 1,900 journeys to destinations outside Wirral in 2001. Almost 70 percent were to Liverpool. Just under 80 percent of households had access to a private car.

**9.6** Land values are high and there is little vacant land. The Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new housebuilding to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough, since December 2003.

**9.7** Just 3 percent of residential properties and three previously developed sites (0.9 hectares) were registered as vacant in April 2012.

**9.8** The Council's latest assessment of housing land showed the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 6 in April 2012<sup>(65)</sup>:

Area	Planning Permission <sup>(66)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(67)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(68)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(69)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(70)</sup>
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	62	90	134	23	31

## Local Heritage

**9.9** The Area has twenty-five entries on The National Heritage List for England, one of which is Grade II\*.

**9.10** The older historic settlements at West Kirby and Caldy, which includes areas of high-quality lower-density housing, are designated as Conservation Areas.

**9.11** The high-quality lower-density housing areas surrounding the Royal Liverpool Golf Course at Kings Gap and Meols Drive are also designated as Conservation Areas.

**9.12** The Meols coastline is of high value for archaeology.

65 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

70 sites below 0.4 hectare

69 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

68 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

67 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

66 sites with planning permission in April 2012

## Town Centres

**9.13** West Kirby is an attractive, vibrant and stable town centre, with a healthy convenience and comparison retail offer, including specialist shops and independent retailers. The centre is generally in good condition, with relatively low levels of vacancy and high levels of footfall. Aldi have recently opened a supermarket at Bridge Road.

**9.14** West Kirby Concourse provides indoor recreation facilities and public services including library, meeting rooms and a fire station. Some of the facilities need modernisation and the Council is considering the options for possible re-development. The existing medical services are due to be relocated to a new purpose-built facility on an adjacent site.

**9.15** Hoylake has a limited and contracting comparison retail sector, with high vacancy rates, low footfall and limited operator demand. While the service sector, including pubs and wine bars, is strong this has given rise to concerns about associated anti-social behaviour.

**9.16** Marco Pierre White and Frankie Dettori have, however, recently opened a 'Frankie's' Italian Bar and Grill Restaurant at the King's Gap Holiday Inn Hotel and work is also underway on a new boutique and spa hotel, which will include a new restaurant. There have also been significant physical improvements, particularly at the western end of the centre.

**9.17** Although the linear nature of the centre restricts the size of units and the scope for additional parking, there is potential for consolidation around a centralised core, towards Hoylake railway station. Hoylake Village Life are currently preparing neighbourhood planning proposals for Hoylake.

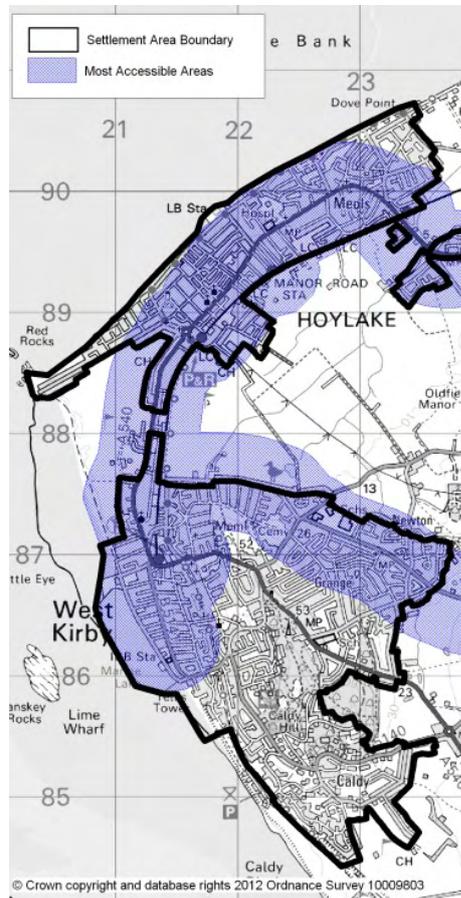
## Employment

**9.18** The only source of local employment outside these centres is Carr Lane Industrial Estate which, despite poor access across the railway line, is fully occupied by a wide range of small businesses and provides an important source of local employment. A limited number of remaining infill sites are available, sufficient for up to five years development at past rates.

## Transport Accessibility

**9.19** Main roads into and out of the Settlement Area include the A553, heading east to Moreton and Birkenhead and the A540 heading south to Heswall and Chester. There is existing traffic congestion on routes to Hoylake and West Kirby Town Centre but little scope to implement major highway infrastructure improvements.

**9.20** The majority of the Area, along main routes towards Birkenhead, is accessible by public transport and West Kirby is the western terminus for high frequency bus and rail services running through Hoylake and Newton to Birkenhead and Liverpool. Merseytravel have identified the need for improvements to the bus station/interchange at West Kirby.



**Picture 9.2**

**9.21** Cycle routes with intermittent links to Moreton, Leasowe, Wallasey, New Brighton and Mid-Wirral run east along the coastal promenade from Hoylake and south along the Wirral Way from West Kirby to Thurstaston, Heswall, Parkgate and Hooton.

**9.22** There is a need for improved cycle links between West Kirby, Moreton and Greasby and between West Kirby and Meols to Three Lanes End.

## Tourism

**9.23** Tourism is particularly important to the Settlement Area. The slipways, beaches, coastal promenades, West Kirby Marine Lake, West Kirby Concourse, Ashton Park and the northern entrance to the Wirral Way are popular visitor destinations, providing access to Hilbre Island and views across the Dee Estuary to North Wales.

**9.24** There are sailing clubs at West Kirby and Hoylake; para-karting, sand yachting<sup>(71)</sup> and model boating at Hoylake; and facilities for both static and touring caravans, just outside the Settlement Area, along the coast at Meols and Thurstaston. The new RNLI Lifeboat Station is also a popular attraction on the waterfront. The Royal Liverpool Golf Course is a significant international recreation and tourism asset.

**9.25** The Council approved a master plan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby in 2004 following public consultation to respond to the return of the Open Golf Championship to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course in 2006<sup>(72)</sup>. Early phases of improvements took place along the waterfronts, in the shopping centre at Hoylake and along the Wirral Way. The Marine Lake, which is used to host international sailing tournaments<sup>(73)</sup>, was repaired in 2009 and the boating pool has been re-lined in Hoylake. The new private investments at Meols Drive and at Kings Gap will enhance local hotel provision in Hoylake.

**9.26** Further projects under consideration include: continued public realm improvements around the railway station in Hoylake and in West Kirby town centre<sup>(74)</sup>; improvements to the promenades at Hoylake and Meols<sup>(75)</sup>; the replacement of the Marine Lake Sailing School; the re-development of the area around West Kirby Concourse; and the upgrading of Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre<sup>(76)</sup>.

**9.27** Additional studies have been undertaken to examine the feasibility and siting of a Golf Resort in the Green Belt, to the south of Carr Lane Industrial Estate, between the railway line and Heron Road and it is intended to invite expressions of interest from potential private sector partners in due course<sup>(77)</sup>. Any proposal will need to comply with national and local planning policies.

## Community Facilities

**9.28** Indoor recreation facilities include the public swimming pool, sports hall and fitness suite at West Kirby Concourse; smaller private swimming pools at Kingsmead School and Caldý; and a sports hall at Hilbre High School.

**9.29** Hoylake and Westbourne Community Centres have recently been transferred to community ownership and management.

- 
- 71 the European Sand Yachting Championship was held at Hoylake in 2007  
72 The Open Championship is scheduled to return in 2014, following the Womens Open Championship in 2012 and the Boys Open Championship in 2013  
73 including the annual British Open Dinghy Racing Championships 'the Wilson Trophy'  
74 West Kirby Public Realm Improvements Report (Atkins, December 2007)  
75 Hoylake and Meols Promenade Masterplan (Scott Wilson, March 2009)  
76 Wirral Country Park Improvements Study (Atkins, March 2006)  
77 Future Golf Resort Detailed Needs Assessment (Capita Symonds, November 2006) and Future Golf Resort Technical Assessment (Capita Symonds, August 2007)

**9.30** Hilbre High School was recently re-modelled as part of a Private Finance Initiative and accommodates a City Learning Centre to provide enhanced ITC based learning. Additional and remodelled classrooms are to be provided at Hoylake Holy Trinity Primary School.

**9.31** Private education is provided at Kingsmead School in Hoylake and at Avalon School in West Kirby. Residential special needs education is provided at West Kirby Residential School for pupils aged 5 to 19, adjacent to the town centre. A Children's Centre is available in West Kirby, with a satellite in Hoylake.

**9.32** Fire and Rescue services operate from West Kirby Concourse. Lifeboats operate from both West Kirby and from the new replacement facility at Hoylake.

## Open Space and Nature

**9.33** The Area benefits from a rich supply of natural and semi-natural open space, most of which has significant visual value, providing a woodland setting for areas such as Newton and Caldy, with hilltop views across the Dee Estuary, Snowdonia National Park and the Irish Sea, as well as value for nature conservation and earth science including UK priority habitats.

**9.34** Large areas of local biological importance and an extensive network of public rights of way run throughout the heart of the urban areas. A shortage of urban-based outdoor sports facilities is largely made up within the surrounding Green Belt, although approximately 15 percent of football teams still travel to sites in neighbouring Mid-Wirral for home fixtures.

**9.35** Sites of high biodiversity value, with national and international designations, also surround the Settlement Area, including the Dee Estuary, North Wirral Foreshore and Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve, which draw large numbers of visitors from wider Merseyside and beyond. Red Rocks and the dune system to the south are also locally important for earth science and for rare and protected species.

## Other Infrastructure

**9.36** Parts of the Area have only medium water resource availability based on supplies from local boreholes at Newton and Grange in West Kirby.

**9.37** The sewer network is limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and impacts on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges which service the North Wirral Waste Water Treatment Works at Meols, which may affect the location, scale and phasing of development over the plan period.

## Coast and Flooding

**9.38** The North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan suggests that the East Hoyle Bank is likely to continue to accrete over the longer term, increasing the level of the foreshore along the north Wirral coast, ahead of existing defences.

**9.39** Approximately 60 hectares of low lying land associated with the adjoining north Wirral coastal plain and the Birket Valley is, however, currently potentially liable to tidal and river flooding, which could affect areas towards Meols and at the edge of Hoylake.

**9.40** Surface water may need attenuation and infiltration systems may be limited by Environment Agency Source Protection Zones.

## Key Issues

**9.41** Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 6 include:

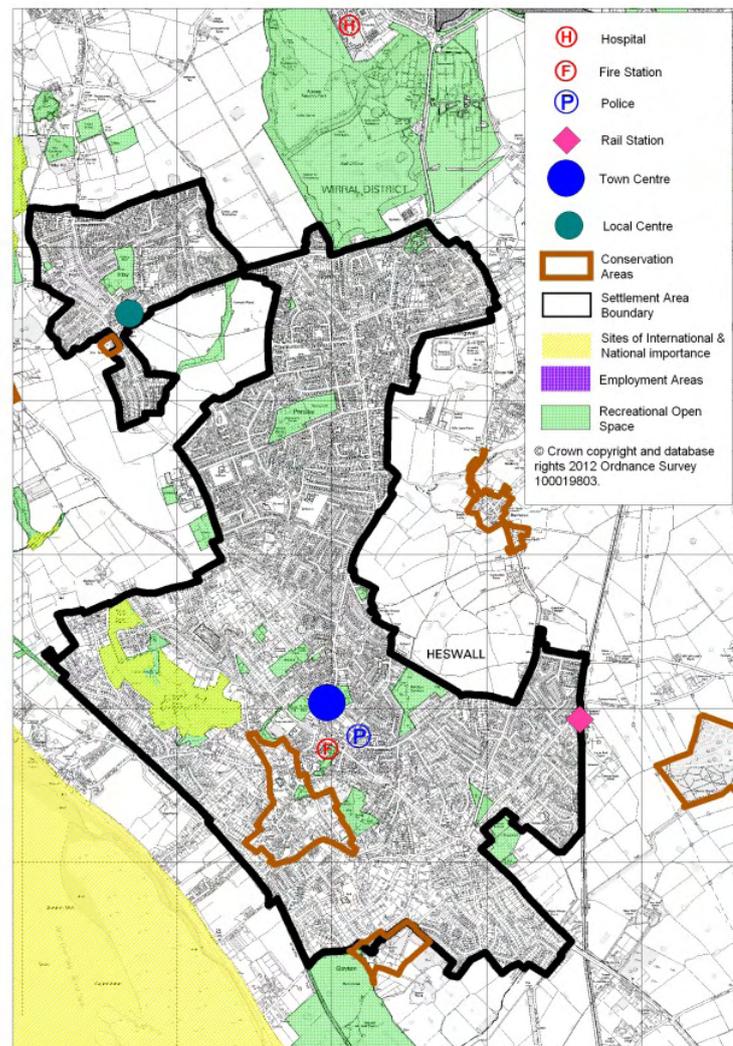
- Preserving the attractiveness of the high quality residential areas at Kings Gap, Meols Drive, West Kirby, Newton, Caldy and Meols
- Securing continued improvements to tourist and visitor facilities including parks and open spaces in West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols
- Preserving remaining Victorian and Edwardian character
- Defining the future role of Hoylake shopping centre
- Protection of employment uses at Carr Lane Industrial Estate
- Maintaining and protecting the high biodiversity value of the area
- Promotion of more sustainable travel choices
- Addressing local limitations in drainage, water supply and wastewater treatment and flood risk associated with the north Wirral coastal plain

### Settlement Area 6 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 810 hectares (5% of Wirral land area)
Urban Coastline - 6.8km (4 miles)
Population - 24,700 (mid-2010) 8% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 11,500 (8% of Wirral stock April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 14.2
Social Housing Properties - 520 (4.5% of Area 6)
Vacant Residential Properties - 360 (3.1 %)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 503 (8% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 30
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 5.75 hectares (62 units) 2% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - West Kirby - 198 Retail Units - 5 Vacant (2.5%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - Hoylake - 193 Retail Units - 17 Vacant (9%) (June 2011)
Designated Employment Areas - Carr Lane Industrial Estate (12.9 hectares)
Available Employment Land - 4 sites (0.38 hectares, April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 3 sites (0.9 hectares)
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 1,400 (6% of Area 6)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 13,400 (48% of Area 6)
Recreational Open Space - 111 hectares (4.5 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 95 hectares (3.9 hectares per 1000)

## 10 Settlement Area 7 - Heswall

**10.1** Settlement Area 7 includes the dormitory settlements of Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton.



**Picture 10.1**

### Socio-Economic Background

**10.2** The majority of the Area is relatively wealthy, with over half the population living in some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside, which are a significant economic asset to the sub-region.

**10.3** Skills and household incomes are amongst the highest in the Borough and Heswall and Gayton represent the highest concentration of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the highest 20 percent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Social housing accounts for 6 percent of homes.

**10.4** The Settlement Area was home to 28,100 people in mid-2010, of which 16,100 or 57 percent were of working age.

**10.5** The Area has one of the lowest proportions of people under 45 years of age, some of the lowest proportions of children and young adults in the Borough and the highest proportion of people over retirement age, which account for almost a third of the local population. Heswall, in particular, has one of the highest proportions of people over 75 years of age in the Borough.

**10.6** Land values are high and there is little vacant land. The Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new housebuilding, to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough, since December 2003.

**10.7** Just 2 percent of residential properties and four previously developed sites (0.71 hectares) were registered as vacant in April 2012.

**10.8** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 7 in April 2012<sup>(78)</sup>:

Area (units)	Planning Permission <sup>(79)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(80)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(81)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(82)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(83)</sup>
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	66	54	76	42	46

## Local Heritage

**10.9** The Area contains nine entries on The National Heritage List for England, relating to fourteen structures, of which one is Grade II.

**10.10** Conservation Areas cover the older cores of the original settlements at Lower Heswall and Gayton.

**10.11** An additional area of high quality lower density housing at Gayton is subject to development control density guidelines.

## Town Centres

**10.12** Heswall performs strongly as the Key Town Centre for the Settlement Area, with a healthy convenience offer, large number of independent retailers and significant food and drink offer, low levels of vacancy and improving investment yields. Recent investment has been made by Marks and Spencer and there is continuing interest from other retailers. The physical environmental is generally good, although traffic

78 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

83 sites below 0.4 hectare

82 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

81 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

80 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

79 sites with planning permission in April 2012

congestion occurs at the Pensby Road/Telegraph Road cross roads. The bus station, which provides services to Liverpool and Chester as well as local services to West Kirby, has recently been refurbished.

**10.13** Irby Village is designated as a Traditional Suburban Centre in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral. The convenience and comparison retail offer is limited. Over half the units are in the service sector but this small centre is generally considered to be pleasant and attractive and hosts the Da Piero restaurant, the Michelin Guide's Best New Entry for 2010.

**10.14** A number of separate shopping parades along Pensby Road and in the Conservation Area at Heswall Lower Village perform an additional local shopping and service function. Very little land outside these centres are available for commercial and industrial uses.

## Employment

**10.15** The Area currently provides approximately 4,400 jobs, mainly in Heswall Town Centre and local centres and parades.

**10.16** Car ownership in Heswall is amongst the highest in the Borough. This area alone generated over 2,000 journeys to work outside the Borough in 2001. Over half the trips were to Liverpool and almost 40 percent to Cheshire West and Chester. The nearest designated industrial area is just outside the Borough, in Neston.

## Transport Accessibility

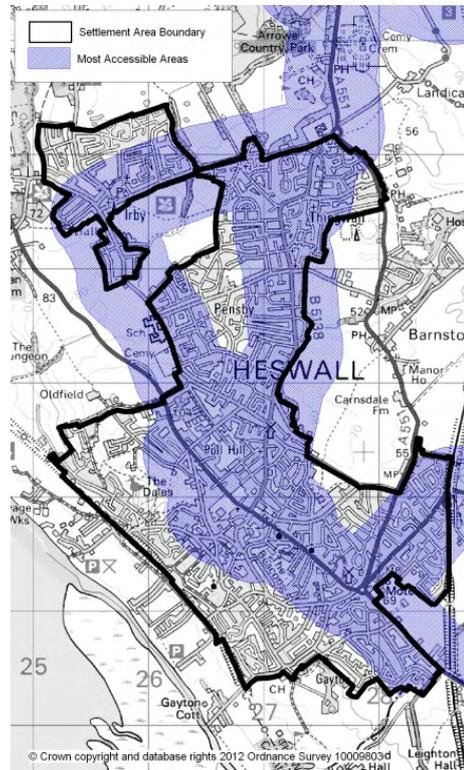
**10.17** Main routes through and out of the Settlement Area include the A540 leading to West Kirby and Chester, the A5137 linking to the M53 Motorway at Clatterbridge and the B5138 connecting to the A552 and M53 Motorway at Prenton.

**10.18** There is congestion at all main junctions along these routes, at Arrowse Park (A552), Clatterbridge (M53 Junction 5) and Heswall Town Centre (A540).

**10.19** Areas along main routes to Birkenhead and Chester are highly accessible by public transport and opportunities to improve bus services between Heswall and Birkenhead are being considered to help reduce congestion.

**10.20** A limited passenger rail service runs along the eastern edge of the Settlement Area from Heswall Hills to Bidston (with connecting services to Liverpool) and Wrexham in North Wales. Merseytravel have identified the need for rail station improvements at Heswall Hills and service enhancements and/or electrification for the Borderlands rail line.

**10.21** Cycle routes run from Thingwall to Woodchurch, Beechwood and Wallasey; through Landican to Woodchurch, Storeton, Thornton Hough and Brimstage; and through Arrowse Park to Greasby and Upton; and along the Wirral Way between West Kirby and Hooton.



Picture 10.2

## Community Facilities

**10.22** There is limited provision for formal sport and indoor recreation. Secondary school facilities at Pensby are now subject to formal community use following the construction of a new sports hall and floodlit all-weather pitch facility. There is a private squash club at Heswall.

**10.23** There are public facilities outside the Borough boundary at Neston and a series of private health club facilities at a number of hotels along the A540.

**10.24** Pensby Community Centre, Heswall Hall and Alexander Hall have already been transferred to community ownership and management. The transfer of Kylemore Community Centre has also been approved.

**10.25** Fire and Rescue, Ambulance and Police services all operate from Heswall Town Centre.

**10.26** NHS Wirral have supported the construction of new and extended medical centres to replace facilities in Heswall Town Centre and in local centres at Thingwall and Irby. The new Warrens Medical Centre at Arrowe Country Park, is now complete.

**10.27** The recently federated Pensby High Schools provide the main secondary education for the Area, alongside the grammar schools in West Kirby.

**10.28** A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of Pensby Park Primary School, which has been re-used as a Children's Centre.

**10.29** The Pensby Infant and Junior Schools have recently been amalgamated into a single primary school, to be co-located with Stanley Special School. Phase 1 of this new build school was handed over May 2012.

**10.30** Refurbishment has recently been completed at Gayton Primary School and the potential for further work is being explored.

## Open Space and Nature

**10.31** There is a shortage of allotments, facilities for children and young people and outdoor sports and a number of football teams travel to sites outside the Area for home fixtures. This is, however, partly offset by access to the surrounding natural and semi-natural open spaces, including the linked facilities associated with the Wirral Way and Wirral Country Park and to the Dee coastline, which is internationally important for nature conservation.

**10.32** The Local Nature Reserves at Heswall Dales and Thurstaston Common also form part of a nationally designated network of rare lowland heath associated with the higher ground of the sandstone outcrops, with additional local sites of biological and earth science importance at Quarry Road East and Heswall Beacons.

**10.33** The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment identifies Heswall Dales for conservation and enhancement, with the need to manage key features such as woodland and heathland to ensure that urban development remains indistinct, retain the high quality of the area and ensure that the condition of the landscape improves.

## Other Infrastructure

**10.34** A small part of the western part of the Settlement Area drains to the treatment work at Target Road operated by Welsh Water, where restrictions on new development were lifted following improvements in capacity.

**10.35** Elsewhere, the local sewer network is limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and impacts on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges.

**10.36** Attenuation may be needed for surface water and infiltration systems may be limited by Environment Agency Source Protection Zones.

**10.37** Irby and the western parts of Pensby are served by the North Wirral Wastewater Treatment Works at Meols. The remainder of Pensby, Thingwall and Barnston drains to Birkenhead.

**10.38** There are reservoirs along the sandstone ridge at Poll Hill and at Cross Hill in Thingwall.

## Flooding

**10.39** Areas adjacent to Arrowe Brook, along the edge of Irby at Glenwood Drive and in the vicinity of Porto Hey Road are potentially liable to flooding.

**10.40** The Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 7 include:

- Preserving the attractiveness of the high quality residential areas at Heswall, Gayton and Barnston
- Making adequate provision for essential local services in and around existing centres
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on Heswall Town Centre and on main routes to Chester, Birkenhead and the M53 Motorway
- Promotion of more sustainable travel patterns
- Securing improvements in rail services along the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Improving the provision of open space for formal sport and recreation
- Addressing local limitations on drainage and wastewater treatment

### Settlement Area 7 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 902 hectares (6% of Wirral land area)
Population - 28,100 (mid-2010) 9% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 12,800 (9 % of Wirral stock, April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 14.1
Social Housing Properties - 748 (6% of Area 7)
Vacant Residential Properties - 241 (1.9%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 373 (6% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 34
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 4.7 hectares (66 units) 2% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - Heswall - 244 Retail Units - 17 Vacant (7%) (June 2011)
Other Designated Centres - Irby Village
Designated Employment Areas - none
Available Employment Land - none
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 4 sites (0.71 Hectares)
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - none
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 14,600 (52% of Area 7)
Recreational Open Space - 77 hectares (2.8 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 67 hectares (2.4 hectares per 1000)

## 11 Settlement Area 8 - Rural Areas

**11.1** Settlement Area 8 mainly comprises open countryside but includes the rural villages of Eastham, Frankby, Saughall Massie, Thurstaston, Storeton, Thornton Hough, Raby, Brimstage and Barnston and is defined by the boundary to the Green Belt designated in the Unitary Development Plan in February 2000, which provides an essential separation between the surrounding urban settlements.

**11.2** The character of large parts of the Area is highly dependent on the land management approaches of the large, mainly agricultural, landholding estates. The quality of the countryside is a key feature of the image and quality of life in Wirral and access to countryside and coast has been repeatedly identified as a major asset to visitors and residents alike. Almost 40 percent of the Borough's residential properties are located within 400 metres of the open countryside in Settlement Area 8 and almost 10 percent of residential properties are located within 400m of the coastline.

### Socio-Economic Background

**11.3** Settlement Area 8 was home to 5,700 people in mid-2010. Approximately 60 percent were of working age.

**11.4** The majority of the population is over 45 years of age with a higher than average proportion of people of retirement age and a lower than average proportion of children and young adults. The Area also has the highest average household size in the Borough.

**11.5** Thornton Hough is the largest settlement, with approximately 800 people. The majority of the other settlements have fewer than 100 people. Over 40 percent of the population lives in areas that are ranked within the highest 20 percent in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Just 4 percent of residents live within an area of greatest need and social housing accounts for just 2 percent of homes.

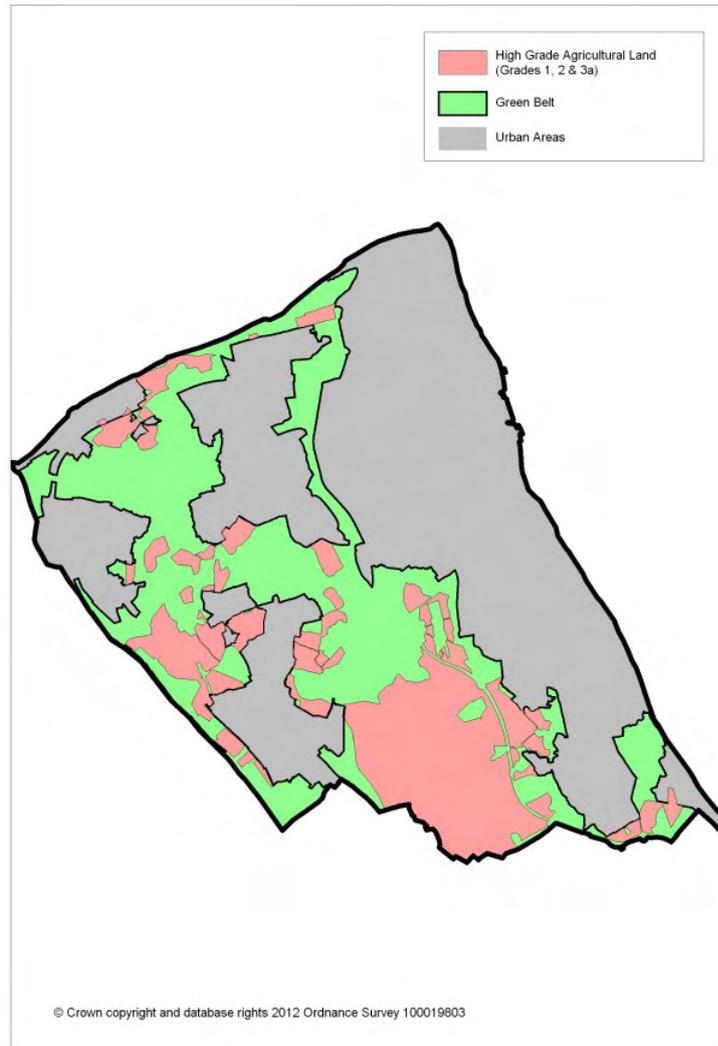
**11.6** Just over 4 percent of residential properties and twelve previously developed sites, most of which relate to former urban facilities in the Green Belt (covering almost 40 hectares), were registered as vacant in April 2012.

**11.7** The majority of the land is used for agriculture or for formal and informal recreational uses. Farming still provides almost 4 percent of the Borough's economic output (GVA), double that across Merseyside as a whole<sup>(84)</sup>.

**11.8** A reducing number of larger farm units is likely to lead to an increased number of redundant farm buildings and demand for new and larger livestock and processing units to meet the changing requirements of environmental legislation.

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84 DEFRA Returns for 2010 show 68 farms in Wirral carrying 5,186 head of livestock and 9,290 poultry, excluding goats and horses. Approximately a third of the land devoted to agriculture was under crops



**Picture 11.1**

**11.9** New development within the rural areas are subject to national Green Belt controls but have also been subject to additional restrictions on new house building, to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough, since December 2003. The main opportunities to provide new housing are related to small developments within the designated Infill Villages at Barnston, Eastham Village, Thornton Hough, Raby and Storeton and re-developments at previously developed sites.

**11.10** There may be a need to provide for elderly people, who may need to leave their own home but wish to stay within their local village, subject to local evidence being provided.

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

**11.11** The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential gross capacity for new dwellings within Settlement Area 8 in April 2012, based on sites already with planning permission and sites falling within the Major Developed Sites or Infill Villages identified in the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000<sup>(85)</sup>.

Area	Planning Permission <sup>(86)</sup>	Category 1 <sup>(87)</sup>	Category 2 <sup>(88)</sup>	Category 3 <sup>(89)</sup>	Small Sites <sup>(90)</sup>
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	46	0	157	126	0

## Landscape Value

**11.12** The Settlement Area contains some of the best quality landscapes in the Borough, a number of which were designated as Areas of Special Landscape Value in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral.

**11.13** Just over 11 percent of the Settlement Area is subject to additional nature conservation and/or earth science designations and/or priority habitats.

**11.14** Open areas along the M53 Corridor, have seen extensive tree planting supported by the Forestry Commission and Groundwork Wirral, since they were designated as Areas Requiring Landscape Renewal in the Unitary Development Plan.

**11.15** The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment 2009 now divides the Settlement Area into thirteen character areas. Seven areas are identified for conservation and another six for some element of restoration or enhancement.

**11.16** The main recommendations for each of the eleven areas within Settlement Area 8 are summarised in the table below<sup>(91)</sup>.

Character Area	Landscape Recommendations
Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley	Protect features of note and enhance and repair features such as hedgerows which are declining, particularly in the northern part of the character area to combine and reinforce the character of the landscape
Dee Coastal Farmland	Continue the present management of the area and maintain features and elements that convey its strong sense of character
Eastham Former Wooded Estate	Enhance and restore landscape features to improve the strength of landscape character

85 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012

90 sites below 0.4 hectare

89 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

88 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

87 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

86 sites with planning permission in April 2012

91 the boundaries to these character areas are shown on Picture 2.8 in Section 2 of this Spatial Portrait

Landican and Thingwall Rural Fringe	Augment and enhance existing landscape features such as linear woodlands along watercourses, small to medium field size patterns and small scale intimate villages and hamlets
North Fender Urban Fringe	Restore and where possible create a more distinctive character, through positive restoration and structural planting to integrate with the surrounding urban environment to alter the marginal and often neglected character of the landscape
North Wirral Shore	Conserve key coastal features to retain it as a distinctive landscape within Wirral
Pensby and Irby Urban Fringe	Enhance and where possible reinstate existing field patterns, improve boundary features and enhance the unity of the character area
Raby Rural Farmland	Conserve distinctive landscape characteristics and enhance them in the areas where they are locally declining to reinforce and ensure that the strength of the landscape character remains high
Birket Floodplain Farmland	Enhance and restore the field pattern whilst retaining and enhancing wetland features such as areas of water, linear clumps of wet woodland and ditches and streams
Thornton Hough Rural Farmland	Conserve the rural landscape and promote continued good landscape and agricultural practice to maintain condition and strength of character
Thurstaston and Arrowe Park Wooded Hills	Manage key features such as wooded hills, heathland and long linear field patterns to ensure that the condition of the landscape remains high

**11.17** The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008 indicates that much of the remaining landscape is also of historic significance.

## Local Heritage

**11.18** The Settlement Area contains 104 entries on The National Heritage List for England, which relate to 170 structures, approximately 10 percent of the Borough total, of which one is Grade I and a further twelve Grade II\*.

**11.19** The villages at Gayton, Thornton Hough, Barnston, Thurstaston, Frankby, Saughall Massie and Eastham are Conservation Areas.

**11.20** The villages at Thornton Hough, Storeton and Raby and areas of more modern suburban development at St David's Road, Eastham; Oxford Drive; Thornton Hough; and at Woodlands Drive and Overdale Avenue, Barnston are designated as Infill Villages in the Green Belt.

**11.21** Thornton Hough is the largest of the rural settlements and acts as a visitor destination in its own right. Brimstage, Carr Hall Farm and farm shops at Thurstaston and Clatterbridge also provide local attractions. Small areas of market gardens remain at Hoylake, Leasowe and along the Dee Coast.

**11.22** Storeton Hall is identified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the grounds of Thornton Manor are designated as an Historic Park and Garden. Both are included on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

## Employment

**11.23** There are no Key Town Centres within the Settlement Area and retail provision is mainly limited to individual shops in villages such as Thornton Hough.

**11.24** The Area currently provides approximately 14,000 jobs, mainly in major facilities such as the hospitals, schools and colleges rather than farms and land-based businesses. The large hospitals at Arrowe Park, Clatterbridge and Thingwall are designated as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt alongside the educational facilities at Pensby; and at Carlett Park in Eastham where residential development has recently been permitted.

**11.25** The hospitals at Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge have taken steps to mitigate congestion and parking issues, including initiatives to improve public transport, parking and cycling facilities and a park-and-ride service to Arrowe Park from the Sainbury's car park in Upton.

## Tourism

**11.26** The Wirral countryside is an important tourism asset in its own right and is home to a significant number of high quality tourism businesses that contribute strongly to the overall tourism offer of Wirral and the wider City Region.

**11.27** This includes Hillbark Hotel, Merseyside's only five star hotel and the smallest five star Hotel in the UK, Thornton Hall Hotel and Spa, Thornton Manor, Herons Well Farm and Cottage<sup>(92)</sup>, Peel Hey Country House, Mere Brook House, Brimstage Hall Courtyard, Church Farm Organics and Claremont Farm.

**11.28** The Merseyside Rural Economic Strategy identified the continued evolution of rural destinations as a strategic priority for Wirral, to keep pace with an increasingly competitive market place. There are proposals for a replacement visitor centre at Wirral Country Park, a coastal interpretation centre at Leasowe Lighthouse and a Golf Resort at Hoylake, subject to appropriate public and private resources being made available.

## Transport Accessibility

**11.29** A number of the roads throughout the Settlement Area are minor and retain a rural character.

**11.30** The M53 Motorway runs through the Fender Valley and the open countryside between Prenton and Eastham.

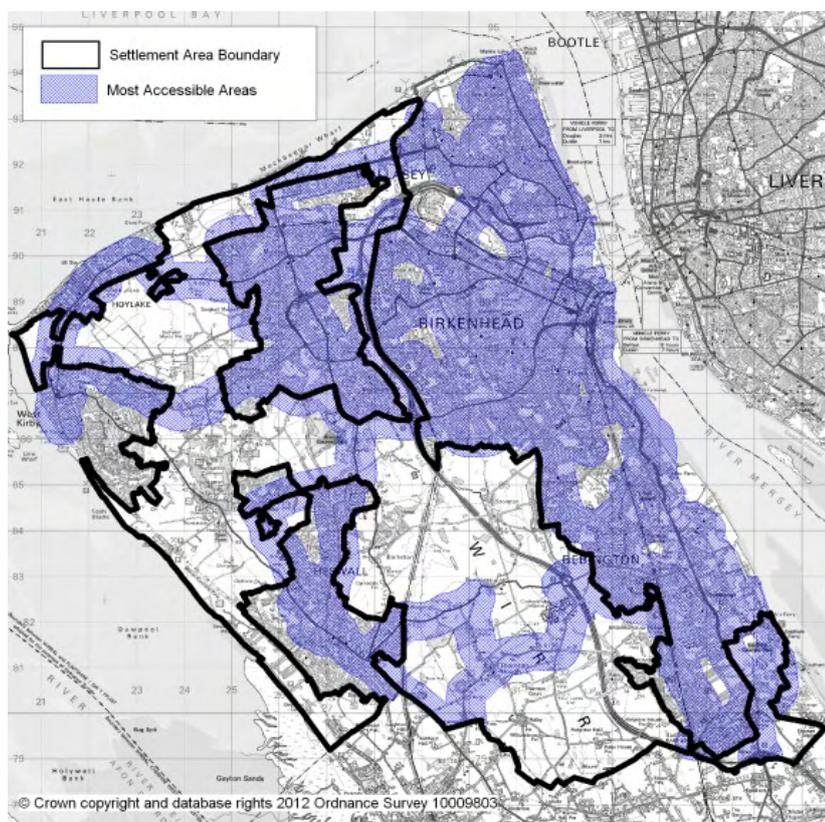
**11.31** Major roads between main settlements and the M53 Motorway include A551 between Leasowe and Wallasey and A553 between Moreton and Birkenhead (to Junction 1); A5027 between West Kirby and Saughall Massie (to Junction 2); A551 from Heswall to Woodchurch (to Junction 3) and A5137 between Heswall and Spital

92 Merseyside's Self-Catering Accommodation of the Year for 2010 and 2011

(to Junction 4). Other main routes crossing the Settlement Area include A553 between Hoylake and Moreton; B5139 between West Kirby and Greasby; and A540 between Hoylake, Heswall and Chester.

**11.32** There is existing traffic congestion at Arrowe Park, Barnston and Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway at Clatterbridge.

**11.33** Some of these routes impact on Conservation Areas like Frankby and Barnston.



Picture 11.2

**11.34** While the main rural settlements are no more than 10 minutes away from the urban area by car, the majority of the Area is not very accessible by public transport.

**11.35** National Cycle Route 56 crosses through the central part of the Area and the Wirral Circular Trail provides cycle and walking routes with links to the coastline.

**11.36** The railway line between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales runs alongside the M53 Motorway in the Fender Valley between the mid-Wirral settlements and Birkenhead and across the open countryside from Prenton to Heswall. Park and ride facilities are currently under construction at Bidston station.

## Community Facilities

**11.37** The Settlement Area provides a wide range of country parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities serving the adjacent urban populations, linked to an extensive network of public rights of way. Indoor facilities include the private health club facilities at Thornton Hall Hotel and Barnston Dale Centre which has a sports hall and climbing wall.

**11.38** Over two thirds of the publicly accessible open space within the Settlement Area lies within 400 metres of an adjacent Settlement Area and functions as local open space for the urban population as well as for visitors from further away.

**11.39** The main educational facilities within the Settlement Area, with the exception of Thornton Hough Primary School, are more closely associated with the neighbouring urban Settlement Areas.

## Open Space and Nature

**11.40** The Settlement Area is rich in open space and biodiversity and includes the majority of the Borough's most significant biodiversity assets, including:

- six nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, four Local Nature Reserves and over 50 local Sites of Biological Importance
- sites of local importance for earth science associated with the sandstone ridges at Irby Quarry; Thurstaston Hill; Telegraph Road cutting; Dee Cliffs; Storeton Hill; and Red Rocks; including the nationally designated Heswall Dungeon, which is the only outcrop of the oldest rock strata observable in Wirral
- five Country Parks: at Eastham, with views over the Mersey Estuary; Royden Park and Thurstaston Common, with views over the Dee Estuary; the four-mile North Wirral Coastal Park, with views across Liverpool Bay and to North Wales; Arrowe Country Park; and Wirral Country Park, the first designated country park in Britain with a popular twelve-mile multi-purpose footpath, cycleway and bridleway from West Kirby to Parkgate and Hooton in Cheshire West and Chester

**11.41** Eastham Country Park, Royden Park, Thurstaston Common and Wirral Country Park, in particular, attract large numbers of visitors from wider Merseyside and beyond.

**11.42** Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve runs into the heart of the urban area in Settlement Area 4 and the tributaries associated with the Dibbinsdale Brook are all well established wildlife corridors.

## Coast and Flooding

**11.43** The Settlement Area also contains the vast majority of the Borough's remaining un-developed coastline.

**11.44** The North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates that the short stretch of sand dunes fronted by a narrow strip of saltmarsh between Red Rocks and West Kirby is expected to remain relatively stable over the plan period.

**11.45** Natural erosion of the clay cliffs at Thurstaston, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is expected to continue at between 0.1 and 0.5 metres each year. The impact of erosion on the former landfill at Dawpool will require further investigation.

**11.46** Saltmarsh accretion is expected to continue to the south, between Heswall and Gayton, and is expected to keep pace with sea level rise.

**11.47** Some privately funded maintenance of existing local defences is however likely to take place, subject to gaining the necessary consents. Only the sandstone block revetment at Riverbank Road is currently expected to last less than 20 years.

**11.48** Approximately 576 hectares of low lying land associated with the north Wirral coastal plain, the Birket and Fender valleys, Greasby Brook, Arrowe Brook, Dibbinsdale Brook, Clatter Brook and their tributaries in south and central Wirral, is at risk from flooding.

## Other Infrastructure

**11.49** The power lines that run across Wirral, from Capenhurst to Prenton and on to Liverpool, are an essential part of the National Grid electricity transmission network. The Borough's main high pressure gas main also runs along the M53 Corridor.

**11.50** The new trans-national underground power cable between Scotland and North Wales will run via the Irish Sea from Leasowe, between Hoylake and Moreton, Greasby and West Kirby and to the east of Heswall into Cheshire West and Chester before connecting at Connah's Quay.

**11.51** Water supply and disposal infrastructure has limited capacity to support additional development within the rural areas.

**11.52** The northern parts of the Area are served by the North Wirral Wastewater Treatment Works at Meols, where further process capacity and/or additional treatment facilities may be required to support additional urban development.

**11.53** An Aircraft Beacon for national and international flights operates from a site just outside Moreton.

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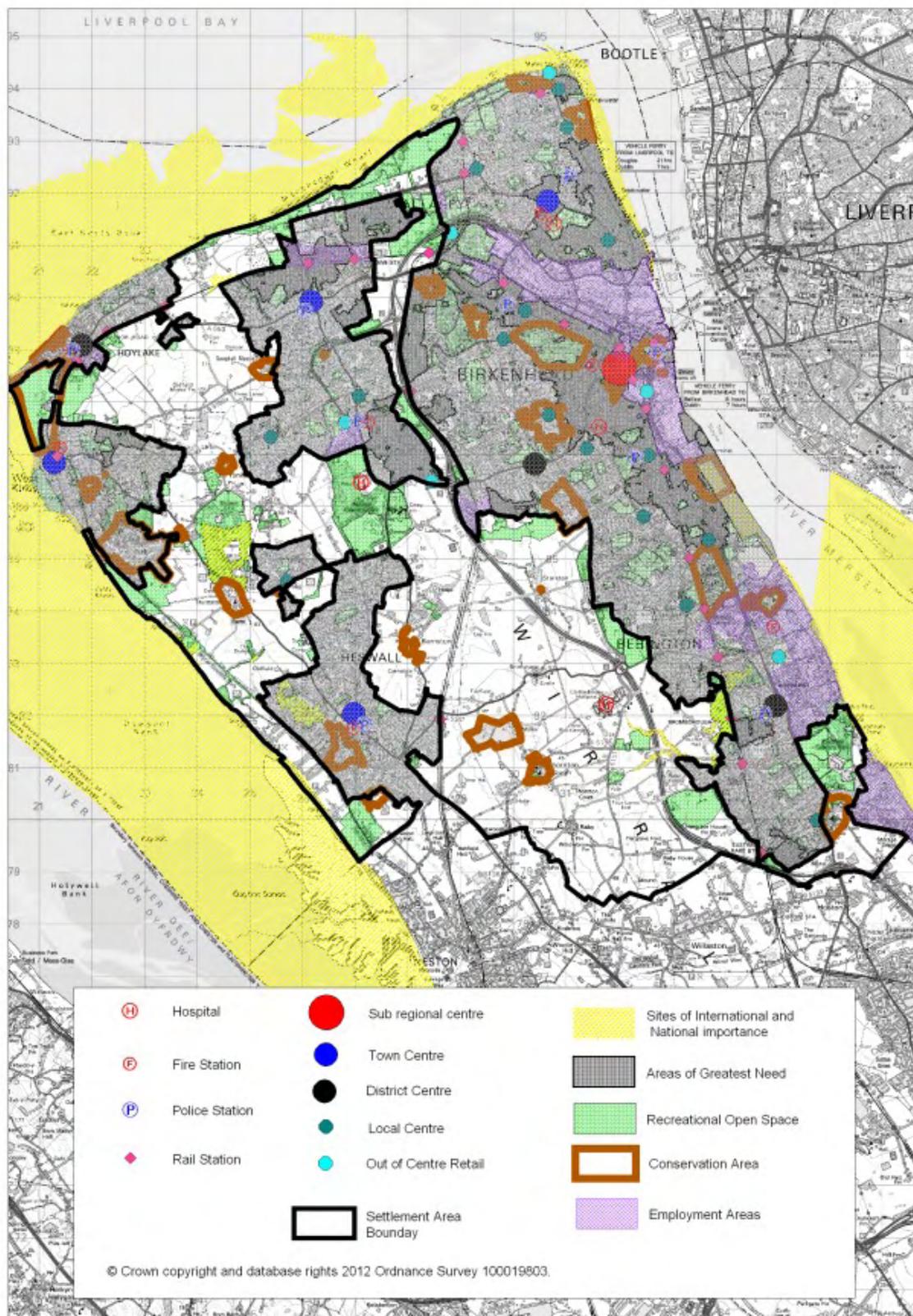
## Key Issues

**11.54** The Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 8 include:

- Maintaining the Green Belt
- Accommodating the economic restructuring of agriculture
- Maintaining the local distinctiveness of settlements, rural villages and Conservation Areas
- Maintaining the character of the landscape, rights of way, heritage, biodiversity and recreational open spaces associated with the countryside and coast and their contribution to the image and attractiveness of the Borough
- Improving accessibility to key opportunities of employment, education and health care
- Reducing the impact of traffic on rural villages and Conservation Areas

### Settlement Area 8 - Key Statistics

Land Area - 7,053 hectares (45% of Wirral land area)
Undeveloped Coastline - 15km (9 miles)
Population - 5,700 (mid-2010) 2% of Wirral
Residential Properties - 2,800 (2% of Wirral stock, April 2012)
Dwellings per Hectare - 0.4
Social Housing Properties - 70 (2.4% of Area 8)
Vacant Residential Properties - 120 (4.3%)
Dwellings Completed Since 2000 (gross) - 146 units (2% of Wirral)
Dwellings Demolished Since 2000 - 18
Planning Permissions for Housing (April 2012) - 9.5 hectares (247 units) 7.6% of Wirral Supply
Key Town Centres - none
Designated Employment Areas - none
Available Employment Land - 1 Site (0.91 ha, April 2012)
Vacant Previously Developed Land - 12 sites (40 hectares) 12% of Borough Total
Population within Lowest 20% of IMD 2010 - 200 (4% of Area 8)
Population within Highest 20% of IMD 2010 - 2400 (42% of Area 8)
Recreational Open Space - 1,382 hectares (243 hectares per 1000)
Publicly Accessible Open Space - 674 hectares (118 hectares per 1000)



Picture 11.3

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

## 12 Document List

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
A Strategy for Inner Wirral 2004 -2014	A strategy to deliver the comprehensive the restructuring of local housing markets in Inner Wirral	2004	GVA Grimley
Birkenhead (and Wirral Waters) Integrated Regeneration Study	A study to provide a comprehensive regeneration plan for the commercial heartland of Birkenhead	2010	GVA Grimley
Brand New Brighton Pier Feasibility Study	A study looking at the structural environmental and financial aspects of reintroducing a pier at New Brighton including the nature of uses that a new structure could accommodate	2009	Faber Maunsell/ AECOM
Catchment Flood Management Plan - Mersey Estuary	Sets out the policies that will be applied by the Environment Agency to control flood risk within the catchment of the River Mersey	2009	Environment Agency
Catchment Flood Management Plan - River Dee	Sets out the policies that will be applied by the Environment Agency to control flood risk within the catchment of the River Dee	2010	Environment Agency
Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation	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 - Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the findings of initial public consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy	2006	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Second Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the results of public consultation to prioritise the issues identified in response to consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	A consultation report setting out the Council's initial proposals for the issues to be addressed in the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy	2009	Wirral Council

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Issues, Vision and Objectives	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Spatial Options Report	A consultation report setting out what the Council considered to be the main options that would need to be considered before deciding on the most appropriate long term spatial strategy for the Borough	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 - Report of Consultation on Preferred Options	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Core Strategy Spatial Options Report	2012	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policies	A series of consultation reports with accompanying maps setting out draft policies for each of the eight Settlement Areas identified in the Core Strategy	2012	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Draft Settlement Area Policies	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the draft Settlement Area Policies to be included in the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy	2012	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Proposed Submission Draft	A consultation report setting out the Core Strategy that the Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for public examination	2012	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment	A report setting out an assessment of the potential impact of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy on designated European Sites	2012	URS
Core Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Baseline Review	A report setting out the latest baseline information to inform the sustainability appraisal of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy	2012	Wirral Council

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Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Embracing Change - An Enterprise Strategy for Wirral	A strategy setting out short, medium and long term priorities for improving local enterprise and economic performance	2007	Wirral Council
Future Golf Resort - Detailed Needs Assessment	A report setting out the planning issues, likely catchment and mix of uses that could be contained in a new Golf Resort at Hoylake	2006	Capita Symonds
Future Golf Resort - Technical Assessment	A report setting out the technical and environmental considerations that may influence the potential location of a new Golf Resort at Hoylake	2007	Capita Symonds
Hoylake and West Kirby Masterplan	A report setting out proposals for the future regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby	2004	BDP
Hoylake and Meols Promenade Masterplan	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to the public realm in Hoylake and Meols	2009	Scott Wilson
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	A former local policy to support the regeneration of identified priority areas in the east of the Borough which was revoked in October 2012	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 Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton	A jointly prepared sub-regional Development Plan Document which will replace the policies and proposals for waste management contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral	2012	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework	A strategic overview of the network of ecological resources across the City Region.	2011	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts - Recession and Recovery	A series of updated economic forecasts indicating the possible growth paths for the Liverpool City Region economy to 2030	2012	Cambridge Econometrics

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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 Reports	A series of regular reports monitoring performance against national and local indicators and progress on the preparation of Local Development Documents	2012	Wirral Council
Mersey Coastal Park Strategy	A framework for the regeneration of the Mersey waterfront between Rock Ferry and Eastham Country Park	2010	Wirral Council
Merseyside Local Transport Plan (LTP3)	A strategy for future transport investment and service improvement in Merseyside	2011	Merseyside Transport Partnership
Merseyside Mineral Resource Study	A review of mineral resources and reserves within Merseyside	2008	Urban Vision
Mersey Ports Master Plan	A consultation document setting out a 20-year strategy for growth for the Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal	2011	Peel Ports
Merseyside Rural Economy Action Plan	An economic strategy for rural Merseyside	2009	Rural Innovation
Noise Action Plan Birkenhead Agglomeration	A strategy to manage noise from industry and road, rail and air traffic to comply with the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006	2010	DEFRA
North West of England Plan 2021	The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West which will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral until formally revoked	2008	Government Office for the North West
North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2)	A management plan setting out priorities for coast protection along the North West coastline	2011	Halcrow Group
River Basin Management Plan for	A management plan setting out priorities for managing water quality in the North West River Basin	2009	Environment Agency

# Core Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Submission Draft Spatial Portrait

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
the North West River Basin			
River Basin Management Plan for the River Dee Basin	A management plan setting out priorities for managing water quality in the Dee River Basin	2009	Environment Agency
Travel in Merseyside	An annual compendium of transport trends and statistics in Merseyside to accompany the ongoing work of the Merseyside Transport Partnership	2010	Merseyside Transport Partnership
West Kirby Public Realm Improvements Report	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to the public realm in West Kirby	2007	Atkins
Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous A Sustainable Community Strategy	A strategy setting out how local partners will work collectively to improve quality of life within Wirral	2009	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Assessment of Core Strategy Transport Impacts	An assessment of the transport impacts of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy	2012	Mott MacDonald
Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan	A document setting out local measures to enhance and safeguard the Borough's most important habitats and species	2003	Wirral Biodiversity Partnership
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 Climate Change Strategy	A strategy to tackle climate change by working with local businesses and communities to reduce Wirral's carbon emissions	2006	Wirral Council
Wirral Country Park Improvements Study	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to Wirral Country Park	2006	Atkins
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 updated in September 2012	2012	BE Group

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Compendium of Health Statistics	An annual compendium of health related statistics for the Wirral PCT administrative area	2012	Wirral NHS Primary Care Trust
Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2016	A strategy that outlines local economic opportunities and constraints and key priorities to drive economic growth updated to respond to changing economic conditions	2011	Wirral Council
Wirral Landscape Character Assessment	An assessment of the landscape and visual character of the countryside in Wirral	2009	The Environment Partnership
Wirral Open Space Assessment	An audit of the quantity, quality and distribution of recreational open space updated in December 2012	2012	Strategic Leisure
Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan	An assessment of the supply and demand of playing pitches	2004	KKP
Wirral Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of local flood risk from surface run-off, groundwater and ordinary watercourses	2011	Wirral Council
Wirral Retail Study Update	An update to the quantitative retail assessment contained within the Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study	2012	GVA
Wirral Statement of Community Involvement	A statutory document setting out local standards for community involvement in decisions under the Planning Acts	2006	Wirral Council
Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	A strategic assessment of areas at risk of flooding	2009	Faber Maunsell
Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	An assessment of the Borough's ongoing housing land supply updated to April 2012	2012	Roger Tym and Partners, A.P. Sheenan and Wirral Council
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update	An assessment of local housing needs including the need for affordable and specialist housing revised to take account of the impact of the economic downturn	2010	Fordhams Research

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Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Affordable Housing Viability Study	An assessment of the viability of targets for affordable housing in the context of the economic downturn	2010	Fordhams Research
Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study	An assessment of the function of retail centres across Wirral providing recommendations to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents	2009	Roger Tym and Partners
Wirral Town, District and Local Centres Study and Delivery Framework	A framework to guide future action to support the sustainability of twenty-three of the Borough's existing shopping centres	2011	Wirral Council
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 such as the Core Strategy Local Plan	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
Woodside Masterplan	A masterplan for the development and regeneration of land and buildings at Woodside in Birkenhead	2006	Building Design Partnership

## 13 Glossary

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Air Quality Management Area	AQMA	An identified area for which a local action plan must be prepared to improve air quality to meet national objectives
Affordable Housing		Housing that is provided at a cost that is below that typically available in the open market
Agricultural Land Classification	ALC	Classifies agricultural land in five categories according to versatility and suitability for growing crops. The top three grades, Grade 1, 2 and 3a, are referred to as 'Best and Most Versatile' land.
Annual Monitoring Report	AMR	A report published by the Council 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

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Ancient Woodland		Woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before
area of greatest need		A geographical area falling within the lowest 20% of scores within the national Index of Multiple Deprivation for England
area of higher value housing		A geographical area falling within the highest 20% of scores within the national Index of Multiple Deprivation for England
Assisted Area		Area designated by the European Commission to receive additional Government funding to support employment and economic revitalisation
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
Biodiversity Action Plan	BAP	A document setting out priorities for the conservation of nature and the enhancement of biodiversity
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
Cammell Lairds		The geographical area containing the port-related and marine engineering facilities to the east of Campeltown Road in Tranmere
Catchment Flood Management Plan	CFMP	A document produced by the Environment Agency providing an overview of each river catchment, which recommends ways of managing the risk of flooding
Catchment Flood Map		A series of maps produced by the Environment Agency showing probability of sea and river flooding, ignoring the presence of existing defences
Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering	CORE	A partnership between central and local government organisations to point businesses looking to invest in manufacturing for the offshore renewables industry to areas where the most support is available
Communities and Local Government	CLG	The Government Department responsible for planning, building and the environment
comparison goods		Non-food items including household goods, furniture, electrical goods and clothing

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Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Conservation Area	CA	An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected and enhanced
Control of Major Accident Hazards Sites	COMAH	A site which is subject to special statutory controls to minimise and prevent a potential hazard to public safety
convenience goods		Largely relates to perishable goods such as food items which are purchased on a regular basis. Some non-food goods are also classed as convenience goods 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
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs	DEFRA	A Government Department responsible for the natural environment, countryside, farming, wildlife, climate change and waste
Development Plan		A plan for future development prepared and adopted in accordance with a nationally prescribed legal process. Individual planning decisions must be made in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise
Development Plan Document	DPD	A Local Development Document that is or will be formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough
Dock Estate		An area of land owned and operated by a port operator
earth science		A collective term for the study of earth materials including minerals, rocks and sediments
East Float		The geographical area of the Birkenhead Dock Estate between Duke Street and Tower Road
Eastham Dock Estate		The geographical area under the control of the port operator at Eastham, associated with the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal, previously designated under Policy EM10 of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral
Employee Jobs		A job undertaken by anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from an organisation's payroll in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme, excluding voluntary workers, the self-employed or working owners who are not paid via PAYE

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
employment development		Development falling within Classes B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) of the national Use Classes Order
Environment Agency	EA	A government body that aims to control and prevent a wide variety of harmful impacts on the environment
European Sites (and their supporting habitats)		Sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation. Protection extends to habitats located outside the designated area that also contribute to the support of the species within them
Flood Zone 2		Areas with a medium probability of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Flood Zone 3		Areas with a high probability of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Forestry Commission		A Government agency responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands
Functional Floodplain		Areas where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood as defined by the Environment Agency
Green Belt		Land designated for protection to prevent urban sprawl and to safeguard surrounding countryside from further encroachment
greenfield		Land that is not classified as previously developed land
green infrastructure	GI	Networks of public and private green spaces and habitats
Groundwork Wirral		The Wirral branch of a national environmental regeneration charity that promotes environmental improvements and greener ways of living and working
Growth Point		An area previously identified by the Government in which an accelerated level of housing delivery was to be promoted
Gross Value Added	GVA	A measure of the performance of the local economy.
Heritage at Risk Register		A national record of nationally designated heritage assets that are considered to be at serious risk of at harm of damage
Highways Agency		A Government agency responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England
Historic Parks and Gardens		Parks and gardens of special historic value which are included in the National Heritage List for England

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Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Home and Communities Agency	HCA	A Government agency responsible for housing and regeneration in England
Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area	HMRI	An area previously designated 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 included 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
Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control	IPPC	A system that employs an integrated approach to control the environmental impact of emissions arising from industrial activities to land, water and air
Interim Housing Policy Regeneration Priority Area	IHPA	The area of the Borough defined in the Council's former Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development as the target area for new housing development, focused on New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Leasowe, Birkenhead, Beechwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and parts of Bromborough
Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development		A local policy document that was adopted by the Council in October 2005, to control the location of new housing development, which was revoked in October 2012.
legal 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
Listed Building		A building or structure listed by the Secretary of State as having special architectural or historic interest
Liverpool City Region		The geographical area principally comprising Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral
Local Development Document	LDD	A locally adopted document prepared to guide decisions on future development within the Borough
Local Development Framework	LDF	The overall name for the collection of Local Development Documents for the Borough
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	A new-style partnership of local authorities and business representatives intended to promote local economic development
Local Nature Reserve	LNR	A designated site of local importance managed for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Local Plan		A Development Plan Document prepared by the Council that is or will be formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough
Local Strategic Partnership	LSP	A non-statutory partnership of public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors intended to co-ordinate improvements within a local area
Local Transport Plan	LTP	A joint strategy for investment in the provision and management of transport infrastructure including buses, trains, ferries, freight, roads, footpaths and cycleways
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point		An area, with the same boundary as the former Newheartlands Pathfinder, which was previously designated as a Growth Point to increase the national delivery of new housing
Merseyside		The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.
Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership		A partnership between the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and the local councils of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral
Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority	MRWA	A local government body that arranges the disposal of household and other waste
most accessible areas		Areas within an easy walking distance, equivalent to approximately five minutes or 400 metres, of an existing centre, railway station or high-frequency public transport corridor with a day-time public transport service of at least every thirty minutes
National Heritage List for England		The official list of all nationally designated heritage assets
Natural England		A Government agency responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Natura 2000 Sites		A series of sites on the west and north west of England and Wales between which there is a large exchange of wild birds at all times of the year, in Wirral, including sites within the Dee Estuary, North Wirral Foreshore and Mersey Estuary. Also known as European Sites.
Neighbourhood Plan		A Development Plan Document prepared by the local community and formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough following a local referendum

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Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
neighbourhood planning proposals		Proposals by the local community to prepare documents to guide future planning decisions within a defined local area
Newheartlands		Previously one of ten nationally designated Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Areas, which in Merseyside included parts of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, which were designed to tackle low demand and housing market failure in areas of greatest need
NHS Wirral	PCT	The National Health Service Primary Care Trust for Wirral
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
Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change		A declaration which all local authorities are invited to sign to commit to reducing the impacts of climate change
Office of National Statistics	ONS	The Government Department responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy
Permitted Development		Forms of development that are permitted by an Act of Parliament or other statutory instrument without the need to apply for planning permission
Ports Master Plan		A management plan prepared by the port operator to guide the future operation and development of port facilities
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 the National Planning Policy Framework published by the Secretary of State
Primarily Industrial Area	PIA	An area designated for employment uses in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Priority habitats		Habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and identified in an adopted UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plan
Private Finance Initiative	PFI	A Government promoted method for providing financial support for public projects through a partnership with the private sector
Proposals Map		An annotated map showing the areas of land where the policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan or contained within a Development Plan Document will apply
Proposed Submission Draft		The version of a Local Plan that the Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for public examination
Publicly Accessible Open Space		Land used for formal or informal recreation which can be used without charge by the general public
Ramsar (site)		A site designated as a wetland of international importance for nature conservation under an international agreement called the Ramsar Convention
Recreational Open Space		Land used for recreation, including land to which the general public do not have an automatic right of access
Regional Spatial Strategy	RSS	A statutory document, issued by the Secretary of State, to set out the vision and priorities for future development within the North West Region, which has status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough but which the Government now intends to revoke
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
Scheduled Ancient Monument	SAM	An area identified for its national importance for archaeology which is included in the National Heritage List for England
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 of Biological Importance	SBI	A site designated in the Unitary Development Plan on the basis of its local importance for nature conservation

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Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
site of local importance for earth science		A site designated in the Unitary Development Plan on the basis of its local importance for earth science
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	A site designated by the Secretary of State on the basis of its scientific importance for nature conservation and/or earth science
Social Housing		Housing provided by a Registered Social Landlord at a level below market prices
Special Area of Conservation	SAC	A site designated under the European Habitats Directive to give increased protection to wildlife, plants and habitats to conserve the world's biodiversity
Special Protection Area	SPA	A sites of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds designated under the European Birds Directive
statutory		A document or process which has a special legal status, as set out in national law
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	A site designated by the North West Development Agency as a priority location for the promotion of new business development
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
Taith		The joint board of the six county authorities in North Wales working together to deliver improvements to transport
The Mersey Partnership	TMP	A sub-regional public/private sector partnership to promote economic development, investment and tourism, which is now the Local Enterprise Partnership for 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

Terminology	Abbrev	Explanation
Unitary Development Plan	UDP	An old-style Development Plan, which will be progressively replaced by new-style Development Plan Documents, such as the Core Strategy Local Plan
Use Class		A category of development defined in the national Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) issued by the Government
Water Framework Directive		A European Union Directive which requires that all coastal and inland waters within defined river basin districts must reach at least good status/ potential by 2015
West Float		The area of dockland between Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road
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 Waters		A project to create a new internationally recognised city waterfront, focused upon the East and West Floats of the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock system and Bidston Dock
World Heritage Site		A site designated by UNESCO as having outstanding universal value for the protection of world cultural and natural heritage