

# Scoping Report for the Wirral Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal

September 2019

## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
V1	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	First draft for client review	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Ian McCluskey	Principal Consultant
V2	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Final for consultation	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Ian McCluskey	Principal Consultant
V3	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Final	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Ian McCluskey	Principal Consultant

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 Wirral Borough Boundary



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Purpose of Issue  
**DRAFT**

Client  
**WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Project Title  
**SCOPING REPORT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE WIRRAL LOCAL PLAN**

Drawing Title  
**WIRRAL LOCAL PLAN AREA**

Drawn TD	Checked JW	Approved CM	Date 28/02/2019
AECOM Internal Project No. 60596966		Scale @ A3 1:75,000	

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**FIGURE 1.1**

File Name: I:\5004 - Information Systems\505\96966 - Wirral Local Plan SA SFA02 - Maps\Figure 1 - Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan Area.mxd

# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council ('the Council') to lead on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Local Plan. Plan making has been underway in Wirral for a number of years, though the emerging Plan remains at a relatively early stage of development.
- 1.2 Consultation on the outcome of a Development Options Review was undertaken in September and October 2018. The Local Plan timetable is currently under review but public consultation under Regulation 18 is anticipated by early 2020.
- 1.3 Once adopted, the Plan will establish a spatial strategy in relation to housing and employment growth up to **2035** (as well as dealing with other land uses, e.g. retail and community), allocate sites to deliver that strategy and establish policies to guide the planning application process. Once adopted, the Plan will replace the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2000).
- 1.4 Wirral is part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR), together with the local authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St Helens. The region has a combined population of around 1.5 million people, and is governed by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA). The LCR CA was established in 2014 and in time will provide a Spatial Development Strategy for development in the Liverpool City Region, though there is not currently an adopted Joint Spatial or Joint Strategic Plan, other than the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton, adopted in 2013.

## SA explained

- 1.5 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. The aim is to ensure that the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 1.6 SA must be undertaken in accordance with specific procedural requirements, as established by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes ('SEA') Regulations 2004. Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
  1. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included within the key output report - namely the report published for consultation alongside the draft plan - there is a consultation with certain nationally designated authorities, namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England; and
  2. A report (the 'SA Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e. the draft Local Plan Review) that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan [i.e. the Local Plan Review], and reasonable alternatives'.

## This scoping report

- 1.7 This scoping report is concerned with item 1 above. It presents a suggested scope for the SA so that the designated authorities can provide timely comment. This report is also published for consultation more widely.
- 1.8 This scoping report should be read in conjunction with the **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the Wirral Local Plan**, particularly in relation to the cross cutting themes of Economy and Employment, Health, Housing, Population and Communities and Transport. The SA and the EqIA are part of an integrated process and in this context the EqIA will inform the findings of the SA. The EqIA informs the SEA and vice versa. The role of the SA is to identify high level potential issues, but the EqIA explores these issues in greater detail. There are some subtle differences in how the EqIA should be applied effectively and how it is best presented. This is why the EqIA is a separate report which has been issued to the statutory consultees for completeness and transparency, despite this not being a requirement.

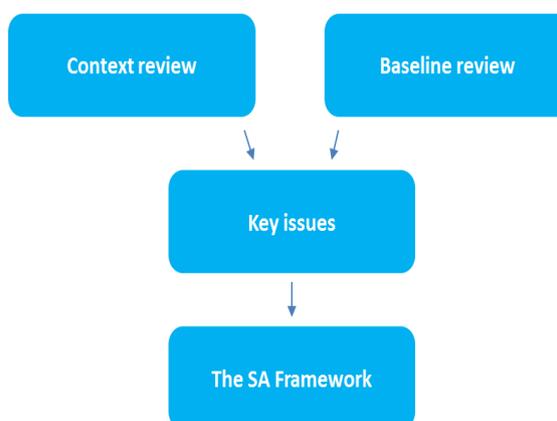
## Approach to scoping

1.9 Scoping essentially involves identifying a 'framework' of sustainability issues and objectives that should be a focus of, and provide a methodological framework for, the appraisal of the emerging plan (and reasonable alternatives).

1.10 In order to facilitate the identification of sustainability issues/objectives, scoping firstly involves review of the 'context' and 'baseline'. Scoping therefore involves the following steps -

1. Context review - a review of existing policy and issues/objectives established by Government, the Council and other key organisations.
2. Baseline review - a review of the current situation locally and a consideration of how this might evolve in the absence of the plan.
3. Key issues summary - a summary of the key (in the sense that the plan may have an effect) problems and opportunities identified through steps (1) and (2).
4. SA Framework development - a refinement of the key issues.

Figure 1.1: The scoping process



## Structure of this report

1.11 Scoping steps 1 to 4 have been completed, and the outcomes are presented for consultation within this report.

1.12 Rather than presenting the outcomes of steps 1 to 4 sequentially within this report, the outcomes of steps 1 to 4 are presented under the following thematic headings in turn -

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change adaptation
- Climate change mitigation
- Economy and employment
- Health
- Heritage
- Housing
- Land and soils
- Landscape
- Population and communities
- Transport
- Water resources
- Water quality

1.13 These themes reflect the anticipated broad scope of sustainability issues/objectives likely to be of greatest relevance to the emerging Wirral Local Plan. It is intended that presenting the scoping information under these themes will help enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them.

1.14 It should be noted that 'waste' has been scoped out as a discrete SA theme. Waste planning for Wirral is undertaken at a sub-regional level, and the emerging Local Plan will not affect the adopted Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton (2013) which will remain as part of the Wirral Development Plan once the Local Plan is adopted.

1.15 Additionally, it should be noted that Chapter 7 - 'Health' - of the SA scoping report fulfils the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) element of this integrated scoping exercise.

1.16 The discussion of scoping under each SA theme is presented in Sections 2 to 13. A final section then discusses 'next steps'.

## 2. Air quality

### Context

#### National

2.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF) include:

- Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas.
- Opportunities to improve air quality of mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.
- Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

2.2 The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 transpose into UK law the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) which sets legally binding limits for outdoor concentrations of major air pollutants which impact public health.

2.3 The government published the 'UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations' in July 2017.<sup>2</sup> This is the air quality plan for bringing nitrogen dioxide within statutory limits in the shortest possible time. The plan identifies that *"the link between improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions is particularly important"* and that consequently the UK government is determined to be at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner.

#### Local

2.4 Local Planning Authorities are required to publish annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs) to discharge their monitoring obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995). Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Part II of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate air quality management areas if improvements are necessary. Where an air quality management area (AQMA) is designated an air quality action plan must then be put in place. In this context, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council published its most recent ASR in August 2018.<sup>3</sup>

2.5 The Environmental Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Air Quality (2018) presents a review of a range of data on health outcomes in Wirral which are relevant to air quality.

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<sup>1</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> DEFRA (2017) 'UK plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide concentrations' [online], available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633269/air-quality-plan-overview.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633269/air-quality-plan-overview.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (2018), 'Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)' [online], available from: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/environmental%20problems/Pollution/Wirral%20ASR%202018.pdf>

## Baseline

### Current baseline

- 2.6 Monitoring in Wirral is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter and, in two locations, benzene. As at January 2018 NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring is carried out at 31 passive diffusion monitoring sites across the Borough. Particulate matter is monitored via two Automatic Urban Rural Network (AURN) sites. Benzene is monitored at sites in Eastham and West Kirby.
- 2.7 WBC has identified a number of traffic hot spots where there is considered to be a particular likelihood of elevated emissions. These hot spots are at Singleton Avenue and Arrowse Park, both in Birkenhead, and at the A41/Port Sunlight roundabout. No identified hotspots are associated with the Borough's motorway junctions, nor toll point of the Kingsway Tunnel, suggesting that WBC's air quality monitoring data indicates that the presence of significant strategic road network (SRN) infrastructure does not currently give rise to notable air quality concerns. Despite this, evidence from the Wirral Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2017) suggests that in 2015 there were 161 deaths in Wirral (3.5% of the total) directly attributable to poor air quality, although the JSNA does note that this is a lower proportion than the North West region and England as a whole.
- 2.8 The 2018 ASR notes that "*the latest monitoring results indicate that there has been a gradual reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide between 2013 and 2017*" as well as a gradual reduction in particulate matter at monitoring locations over the same period.
- 2.9 There are currently no active Air Quality Management Areas in the Borough.

### Future baseline

- 2.10 New housing and employment provision in the Borough has the potential to negatively impact air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated pollutants, particularly NO<sub>2</sub>. Although there are no AQMAs in the Borough, areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be the identified traffic hotspots in Birkenhead and Port Sunlight, and potentially in other areas likely to generate queuing or stationary traffic, such as pinch points in the major settlements or areas of speed restrictions in the smaller settlements.
- 2.11 New development will likely present opportunities to place increasing focus on sustainable means of transport, particularly development in more sustainable locations such as town centres and near transport hubs. Therefore, as new development is delivered in Wirral there could be associated opportunities to enhance the sustainable transport offer, both through green infrastructure provision and potentially improved access to existing public transport hubs. The significant Wirral Waters regeneration project at Birkenhead docklands presents a particular opportunity in this regard.

## Key issues and objectives

- 2.12 The following key issue emerges from the context and baseline review:
- There are no AQMAs in the Borough and recent trends indicate key pollutant levels are decreasing.
  - Despite this, a number of traffic hot spots have been identified by WBC, suggesting that it will continue to be important to closely monitor air quality in the Borough.
- 2.13 In light of the key issue discussed above it is proposed that the SA should include the following objectives:
- Seek to build on current air quality achievements by minimising air pollution more generally, such as through supporting or enabling the use of low emission technologies and encouraging sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.
  - Locate and design development so that current and future residents will not regularly be exposed to poor air quality.

## 3. Biodiversity

### Context

#### National

3.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>4</sup> (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF to 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'helping to improve biodiversity
- Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity.
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

3.2 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) sets out a strategy for managing and enhancing the natural environment, embedding 'net gain' principles as key to environmental considerations.

3.3 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats requiring conservation action. Although the UK BAP has been superseded, BAP priority species and habitats have been used to draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England.

#### Regional

3.4 The Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) MEAS provides specialist technical advice to the six constituent authorities of the LCR in relation to contaminated land, ecology and biological recording, waste, Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment, historic environment, minerals and low carbon issues.

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<sup>4</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

- 3.5 The Liverpool City Region Ecological Network Report (2015), prepared by MEAS, identifies a Nature Improvement Area across the city region to provide “an LCR-wide opportunity for the strategic delivery of biodiversity outcomes”.<sup>5</sup>

## Local

- 3.6 Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan (2003) reflects the broad objectives of the national BAP, aiming to conserve and enhance biological diversity in Wirral whilst contributing to the biodiversity conservation.
- 3.7 The Wirral Biodiversity Audit (2009)<sup>6</sup> combines a number of workstreams into one report with the aim of providing a biodiversity evidence base for the Development Plan and reviewing and updating Wirral’s site selection criteria for Local Wildlife Sites.

## Baseline

### Current baseline

- 3.8 The Borough supports a rich and diverse range of species and habitats, particularly in relation to its coastal areas and wetlands but also in some areas further inland. As a result there are a wide range of protective designations in the Borough across international, national and local levels of designation. The high biodiversity value within these protected areas has sometimes been recognised at different levels simultaneously meaning a number of designations overlap. These designated areas are mapped in Figure 3.1 and 3.2.
- 3.9 The abundance of biodiversity supporting habitats in the wider sub-region, both designated and undesignated, means that there is likely to be a range of functional relationships between sites within the Borough and beyond. It will therefore be important to be mindful of potential effects from development within the Borough on sites which lie outside the plan area.
- 3.10 The LCR Ecological Network Report identifies that “*complex land uses*” in the region can generate recreational pressure on designated sites, via activities such as dog walking.<sup>7</sup> A key output of the Report is the identification of a strategic Nature Improvement Area (NIA). Based on the former strategic biodiversity opportunity areas, the NIA provides a LCR-wide opportunity for the strategic delivery of biodiversity outcomes through the restoration and management of wildlife sites and enhancement of ecological networks. In this context the NIA provides an important opportunity to support and enhance habitats within the Borough’s designated Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation (see below).

### Internationally designated sites

- 3.11 The Borough lies on a peninsula and as such has an extensive coastline. In this context there is notable potential for wetland habitats, and this is reflected by the number of Ramsar sites in the area, nearly encircling the Borough’s coastal boundaries. Three Ramsar sites fall partly within the plan area itself, with a further site in the immediate vicinity to the Borough’s north. The Dee Estuary Ramsar site is the largest of these, covering the entire estuary area of the River Dee (the body of water between the Wirral peninsula and the north Wales coast) and following the western coastline of the Borough. The Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site follows the Wirral peninsula’s northern coastline and wraps around the north east as far as Seacombe. The Mersey Estuary Ramsar site covers much of the mid-Mersey River estuary, though only a relatively small area of the Ramsar site at the shoreline at Bebington is directly adjacent to the plan area. Activities within the plan area could also have potential to affect the Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site at the shoreline of Bootle on the far side of the Mersey River to the north of the plan area.
- 3.12 There are four terrestrial Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within or adjacent to the plan area, all of which follow the same extent as their namesake Ramsar sites. These are the Dee Estuary SPA, the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA, the Mersey Estuary SPA and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA.

<sup>5</sup> MEAS (2015) ‘LCR Ecological Network’ [online], available from: [http://www.meas.org.uk/media/5870/main-report-cbv1final\\_web.pdf](http://www.meas.org.uk/media/5870/main-report-cbv1final_web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Penny Anderson Associates (2009), ‘Wirral Biodiversity Audit’ [online], available from: [https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD397&ID=397&RPID=193718&sch=doc&cat=13006&path=12848\\_13003.13006\\_ft](https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD397&ID=397&RPID=193718&sch=doc&cat=13006&path=12848_13003.13006_ft)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

Additionally, the Liverpool Bay marine SPA falls partially within the plan area and extends from north Wales to Morecombe Bay.

- 3.13 There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) of direct relevance to the Borough. The Dee Estuary SAC covers the entire Dee Estuary area to the west of the Borough, and also wraps around the Borough's northern coastline. The Sefton Coast SAC is located to the north of the plan area across the Mersey River, and follows the coastline of the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton.

### Nationally designated sites

- 3.14 There are 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) either partially or entirely within the Borough. The Borough's coastal areas again attract significant coverage, though there are also a number of non-coastal SSSI designations as well. All of the Borough's SSSIs are listed in Table 3.1 below, along with their condition as recorded by Natural England in 2018.

Table 3.1 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Wirral<sup>8</sup>

Coastal	Condition	Non-coastal	Condition
Dee Cliffs SSSI	Favourable (86.9%)	Dibbinsdale SSSI	Favourable (41.4%)
	Unfavourable – no change (13.1%)		Unfavourable – recovering (36.6%)
			Unfavourable – no change (22%)
Dee Estuary SSSI	Favourable (100%)	The Dungeon SSSI	Favourable (100%)
Mersey Estuary SSSI	Favourable (45.99%)	Heswall Dales SSSI	Unfavourable – recovering (100%)
	Unfavourable – recovering (53.19%)		
	Unfavourable – no change (0.47%)		
	Unfavourable – declining (0.36%)		
Mersey Narrows SSSI	Favourable (22.3%)	Meols Meadows SSSI	Unfavourable – recovering (41%)
	Unfavourable – recovering (77.7%)		Unfavourable – no change (59%)
New Ferry SSSI	Favourable (100%)	Thurstaston Common SSSI	Favourable (0.7%)
			Unfavourable – recovering (99.3%)
North Wirral Foreshore SSSI	Favourable (100%)		
Red Rocks SSSI	Unfavourable – recovering (71.6%)		
	Unfavourable – declining (28.4%)		

- 3.15 There are no Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) within or adjacent to the plan area itself. The Fylde MCZ is nearest at around 40km to the north, off the coast of Southport. Marine Conservation Zones were established in 2009 as an additional mechanism for protecting marine species and habitats of national importance.
- 3.16 There are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within the plan area.
- 3.17 There are ten areas of designated Ancient Woodland within the Borough. All are clustered to south-east of the plan area. These are Eastham Wood, Plymyard Dale, Stream Wood, Thornton Wood, Intake Wood, Foxes Wood, Footpath Wood, Marsfords Wood, Railway Wood, Patricks Wood.

<sup>8</sup> Natural England (2018) Designated Sites View, available from: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx>

3.18 There are a broad range and distribution of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats within the Borough, summarised below:

- Large areas of coastal saltmarsh in the Dee estuary to the south-west and Mersey estuary to the south-east of the plan area.
- Two notable sites of coastal sand dunes along the northern coast of the borough.
- Large mudflat area in Mersey estuary, with a smaller mudflat area in the Dee estuary.
- Significant clusters of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh in the north of the borough.
- Scattering of lowland heathland, mostly towards the western border of the area plan.
- Scattering of deciduous woodland throughout the borough.
- Small, isolated pockets of woodpasture and parkland throughout.

### Locally designated sites

3.19 As at January 2017 there are 69 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), referred to in Wirral as Sites of Biological Importance. The sites are monitored by the Wirral Local Wildlife Sites Partnership.<sup>9</sup>

3.20 The British Trust for Ornithology undertakes a Wetland Bird Survey known as the WeBS Core Counts scheme at around 2,850 wetland sites around the country. Wirral's fertile wetland environment makes it an important location for undertaking these surveys, and a number of Core Count areas lie within the Borough.

### Future baseline

3.21 Habitats and species have the potential to come under increasing pressure from the individual and cumulative effect of provision of new housing, employment and infrastructure in the Borough, including at designated sites. This could include increased recreational disturbance plus noise, light and atmospheric pollution as well as the loss of habitats and fragmentation of biodiversity networks. Habitat loss and fragmentation could be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.

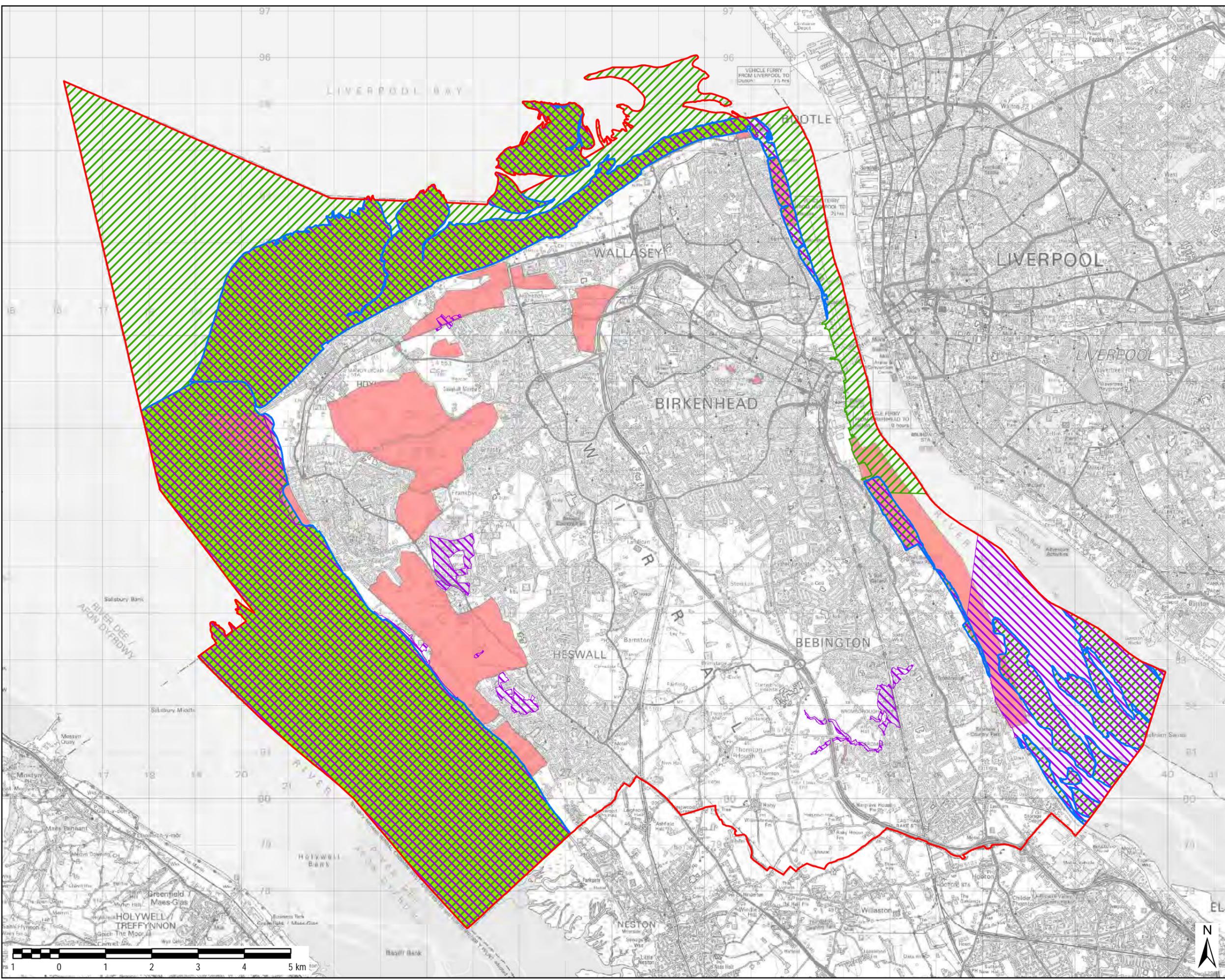
3.22 However, future growth can also provide opportunities to increase understanding and integration of biodiversity habitats and networks into new development at a strategic scale. Therefore, new development could potentially unlock opportunities to protect and enhance important habitats and also enhance the connections between them, particularly through the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure.

3.23 The ongoing long term development at Wirral Waters represents both an opportunity to deliver significant green infrastructure, with potential to enhance connections between biodiversity networks and contribute to biodiversity net gain, in addition to providing mitigation required by the 2017 Habitats Regulation Assessment.

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<sup>9</sup> Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (2017) 'Sites of Biological Importance' [online], available from: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/unitary-development-plan/sites>

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- Wirral Borough Boundary
- Ramsar
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- WeBS Corecount Boundary

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Project Title **SCOPING REPORT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE WIRRAL CORE STRATEGY LOCAL PLAN**

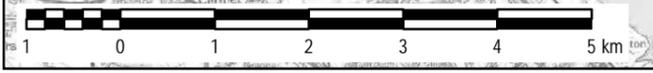
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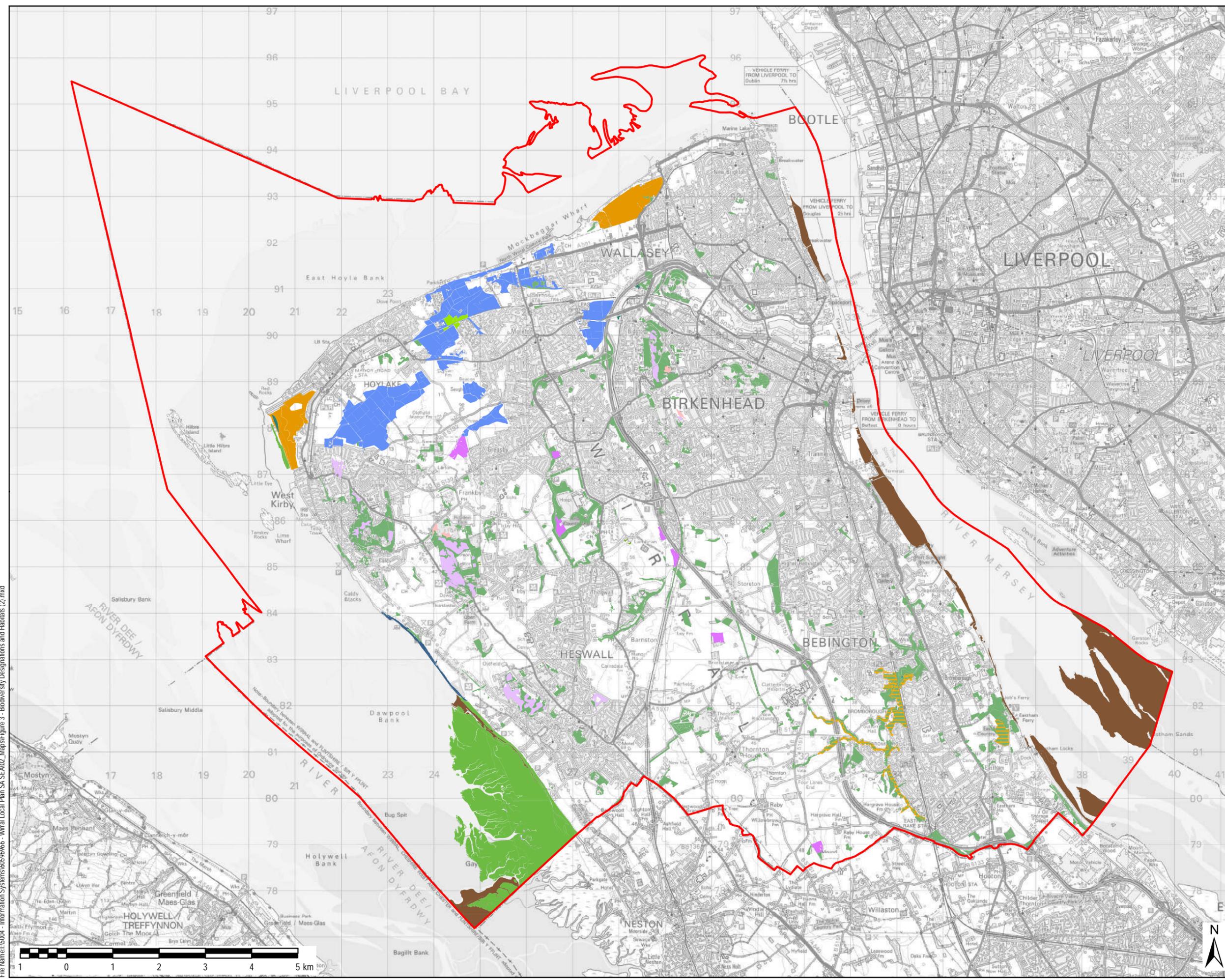
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- LEGEND**
- Wirral Borough Boundary
  - Ancient Woodland
  - Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
  - Coastal saltmarsh
  - Coastal sand dunes
  - Deciduous woodland
  - Good quality semi-improved grassland
  - Lowland dry acid grassland
  - Lowland heathland
  - Lowland meadows
  - Maritime cliff and slope
  - Mudflats
  - Reedbeds
  - Traditional orchard



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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client **WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Project Title **SCOPING REPORT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE WIRRAL LOCAL PLAN**

Drawing Title **BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS AND HABITATS (2 OF 2)**

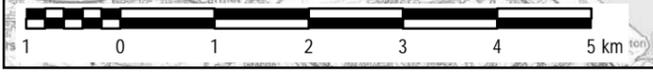
Drawn TD	Checked JW	Approved CM	Date 01/03/2019
AECOM Internal Project No. 60596966		Scale @ A3 1:75,000	

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Drawing Number **FIGURE 3.2** Rev

File Name: I:\5004 - Information Systems\60596966 - Wirral Local Plan SA SEA\02 - Maps\Figure 3 - Biodiversity Designations and Habitats (2).mxd



## Key issues and objectives

3.24 The following key issue emerges from the context and baseline review:

- Wirral's unique geography gives it particular biodiversity significance, reflected by the number of international, national and locally designated sites partially or entirely within the Borough, namely:
  - Three Ramsar sites, plus an additional adjacent site;
  - Four Special Protection Areas, plus an additional adjacent SPA;
  - Two Special Areas of Conservation;
  - 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and,
  - 69 locally designated sites of biological importance.
- Wirral also contains a variety of coastal and non-coastal BAP priority habitats.

3.25 In light of the key issues discussed above it is proposed that the SA should include the following objectives:

- Minimise, and avoid where possible, harmful effects on biodiversity, both within and beyond designated and non-designated sites of international, national or local significance.
- Achieve biodiversity net gain including through delivery of multifunctional blue-green infrastructure and the long term enhancement and creation of well-connected, functional habitats that are resilient to the effects of climate change.