



Submission Update Report

WIRRAL LOCAL PLAN 2021-2037

October 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This update report has been produced to accompany the Submission of the Wirral Local Plan 2021-2037, and to assist the Inspector(s) appointed to undertake the Independent Examination (as well as participants) in providing the latest position in relation to the ongoing work to support the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The report provides a short summary of work which is ongoing in a number of areas and includes the anticipated dates for the publication of further reports and information which may be pertinent to the Independent Examination process. The report includes updates on work being undertaken across local authority boundaries, as well as work to implement the Local Plan and ensure the timely delivery of development and infrastructure planned.
- 1.3 The report should therefore be read in conjunction with relevant submission and evidence base documents including the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance (SGD1.1), Consultation Statement (SD5.1) and the Housing Delivery Strategy (BP1).

2. Regeneration Areas

Introduction

- 2.1 The Local Plan identifies 11 Regeneration Areas which will be the focus for strategic growth and regeneration in the Borough. Each Regeneration Area section of the plan includes housing and employment allocations (where appropriate), policy requirements for Masterplan Areas, mixed use neighbourhood designations and a key diagram.
- 2.2 Considerable progress is being made in delivering key aspects of the Regeneration Areas in accordance with policies RA 1 – RA 11. The following section provides a summary of progress being made in each area.
- 2.3 The Council adopted the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework as its Regeneration Strategy for the Birkenhead area in March 2022 ([ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, Wednesday, 9 March 2022, Minute 83](#)).

RA1 – Seacombe River Corridor

- 2.4 The Council is currently working on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Framework for the Seacombe River frontage. As part of this work is ongoing to prepare a detailed masterplan (MPA-RA1.1) for the Wallasey Town Hall Quarter and Toronto/ Demesne Street and Borough Road East Waterside Neighbourhood in accordance with Policy RA 1 (C). The masterplan is being prepared in partnership with Magenta Living Housing Association. Together the Council and Magenta Living own the majority of land in the masterplan area. A specific design code will be included informed by the emerging Birkenhead Design guide. It is anticipated that the Draft Neighbourhood Framework and Masterplan will be subject to consultation in summer 2023 before endorsement by the Council in late 2023.
- 2.5 The Department for Education has recently announced funding for the early replacement of the Riverside Primary School (IDP reference E1) which lies within the Masterplan Area. The new school is expected to be a catalyst for the creation of a new mixed use 'Town Hall Quarter' within the Masterplan Area which will include the redevelopment of the two vacant Town Hall Annexes.
- 2.6 The Eureka Science and Discovery Centre, adjacent to the Seacombe Ferry Terminal is due to open in November 2022.
- 2.7 28 units are now under construction at the former Seacombe Ferry Hotel, on a site previously discounted for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan on viability grounds, with completion expected by 2024 (Onward) ([APP/22/00407](#)). 22 units were completed on another previously discounted site, at the corner of Brighton Street and Borough Road in September 2021 ([APP/20/00023](#)).

RA2 – Scotts Quay

- 2.8 The vision for Scott's Quay is to redevelop vacant and/or under-utilised plots for a mixture of new residential and compatible commercial uses, and more generally to improve the visual appearance and condition of buildings within the area. The development of a Neighbourhood Framework has identified some constraints to the regeneration of the area – an air quality issue associated with emissions from ships berthed at the dockside, and an odour issue associated with the United Molasses (UM) tanks. That said, options to mitigate the odour issue are being investigated and Peel Land & Property are still progressing with plans to develop initially around 200 residential units within the neighbourhood and have secured an allocation through the Brownfield Land Fund for this scheme.
- 2.9 The masterplan MPA-RA2.1 will be prepared by the applicant for allocations RES-RA2.1 and RES-RA2.2. The masterplan MPA-RA2.2 will be prepared by the applicants of any redevelopment.
- 2.10 A development of 32 units was completed at Wheatland Lane in March 2022 ([APP/19/00373](#)).

RA3 – Waterfront

- 2.11 The Woodside area is set in a truly “world class” waterfront location. With probably the best views of the increasingly impressive skyline of Liverpool City Centre it has significant potential to become a unique waterfront mixed use quarter.
- 2.12 Regeneration plans are to be supported by a range of Town Deal funded public realm projects that will further add to and enhance the creation of the Woodside neighbourhood as both a place to live and visit. Consultants have been appointed to work up all of these schemes and steady progression through the RIBA stages is taking place. On both the Wirral Council and Merseytravel delivered schemes a range of early contractor engagement with Tier 1 entities is being progressed also before a contract is placed for works to commence in 2023.
- 2.13 The Woodside Masterplan (MPA-RA3.1) is due to shortly be commissioned in accordance with Policy RA3 (C) and will bring together both the historic planning work within the Waterfront Neighbourhood Framework Area and the current day context of the pending infrastructure interventions to set the scene for further investment and development in the medium and long term. It is anticipated that the draft masterplan will be consulted on in June 2023 before endorsement by the Council in late 2023 in accordance with Policy RA3 C.
- 2.14 In addition, key residential sites are starting to come forward including at Rosebrae (RES-RA3.4) where owners Prima Group are running an architectural design competition for the site in Q4 2022 with a view to

submitting an outline planning application for a market facing scheme in 2023.

RA4 – Birkenhead Central

- 2.15 Masterplans MPA4-RA4.1, MPA-RA4.3 and MPA-RA5.2 are under preparation by the Council (and in the case of MPA-RA4.3 Dock Branch Park in conjunction with London Continental Railways). It is anticipated that these draft masterplans will be subject to consultation in mid-2023 before receiving endorsement by the Council in late 2023 in accordance with Policy RA3 (C).
- 2.16 The Dock Branch masterplan (MPA-RA4.3) has recently been commissioned (September 2022) in accordance with Policy RA4 (E) and will be completed in June 2023, with endorsement by the Council anticipated in Autumn 2023. The masterplan will include a design code informed by the emerging Birkenhead Design Guide and is being prepared by the Council in partnership with London and Continental Railways (LCR). The delivery of the Dock Branch Park (Policy RA4 (E)), active travel corridor and visitor destination (Transport Shed) is being progressed in tandem and has commenced RIBA Stage 2 design (October 2022). The funding for the Dock Branch active travel corridor (see WS 9.1 and IDP reference TR-AT1) is being pursued through the Combined Authority’s Sustainable Travel Settlement Fund. Funding may be available through LCR to pursue land assembly for Dock Branch Park Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.3). This will augment land acquisition by the Council which is underway.
- 2.17 Outline consent has now been granted for up to 651 new dwellings ([APP/20/01138](#)) (compared to allocations totalling 449 dwellings in the Plan), as part of the regeneration of Birkenhead Town Centre being brought forward by the Wirral Growth Company as follows:

WGC Town Centre - Plot E, Hemingford Street, Birkenhead (APP/20/01138)	RES-RA4.1
WGC Town Centre - Plot G, South of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead (APP/20/01138)	RES-RA4.2
WGC Town Centre - Plots I and J, North of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead (APP/20/01138)	RES-RA4.3

- 2.18 The scheme includes the delivery of 13,812sqm of new town centre office floorspace sqm (with flexibility over ground floor uses over an additional 3,444 sqm), which is now under construction.

- 2.19 The Council has begun procurement of development partners for delivery of RES-RA4.3 with a programme to identify a preferred development partner in Q1 2023.
- 2.20 The Council has commenced a new detailed masterplan for the Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter (MPA-RA4.1) in accordance with Policy RA4 (C) with completion due in Q2 2023. The masterplan will incorporate a design code consistent with the Birkenhead Design Guide. It is anticipated that the Council will endorse the masterplan in Autumn 2023.

RA5 – Hind Street and St Werburgh’s Regeneration Area

- 2.21 The Council (as landowner) continues to work with other key landowners to develop plans for the area. A hybrid planning application is being prepared and a PPA has been agreed and signed. It is anticipated that the planning application will be submitted by end of Q1 2023.
- 2.22 In support of this planning application the land owners are also preparing a detailed masterplan (MPA-RA5.1) which will be subject to consultation in advance of the submission of the planning application before endorsement by the Council in accordance with Policy RA5 (C).
- 2.23 The Council continues to work intensively with Homes England and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (through bi-weekly meetings) to develop a public funding strategy for the essential enabling works to reduce the abnormal costs inherent on the site and enable viable development. The Council has retained commercial, financial and economic advisors to support this work. The public funding strategy identifies appropriate funding programmes and timescales for submission and approval of business cases. Significant business case development work has already been undertaken and a final business case for Homes England (Brownfield Land Grant) will make the case for grant funding for remediation and infrastructure works while two business cases for LCRCA are being prepared – firstly to make the case for grant funding for the removal of the flyovers and the necessary mitigation and secondly to make the case for grant funding for the relocation of the gas infrastructure.

RA6 – Wirral Waters

- 2.24 The vision for Wirral Waters is to develop sites adjacent to the Birkenhead docks for a mixture of new residential and employment uses. The existing and planned developments on Wirral Waters are led and delivered by Peel Land and Property in partnership with Wirral Council. Considerable progress continues to be made in delivering planned regeneration and growth as follows:
 - The first 30 units (of 120) have recently completed at the first of the Peel/Urban Splash sites (RES-RA6.3), with the first new residents moving-in in October 2022. Plans for the next phase of 55 units are

currently being prepared by Peel Land and Property who anticipate submitting a planning application in early 2023.

- The 500 units at Millers Quay (RES-RA6.6, DLS/18/00715) are now under construction. The development contract will complete phase one by July 2024 and phase two by January 2025.
- Work is also expected to start shortly on Belong Village – a supported living scheme providing 109 residential units (RES-RA6.7, [APP/18/00470](#)), and works are ongoing to develop other residential schemes in the area.
- Reserved matters applications have now also been submitted for the first phases of Vittoria Studios (RES-RA6.2), for 891 ([DLS/22/00939](#)) and 924 units ([DLS/18/00717](#)) (together totalling 1,815 of the 2,200 units planned for delivery within the Plan period, out of a total long-term estimated site capacity of 3,400).
- Peel Land and Property are at pre-application stage with proposals for an Energy Centre and associated District Heat Network (DHN) to provide heating and hot water for the development and wider area (which could include sites within RA7 Hamilton Park).
- On Tower Road, the recently completed Hythe office development is now two thirds let or under offer, a new commercial development – Egerton Village – planned to start on site in 2023, and planning and Listed Building Consent applications have been submitted to develop a new Research and Innovation Centre – Maritime Knowledge Hub – in the former Hydraulic Generating Station (EMP-RA6.5).
- The MEA Park area of Wirral Waters (proposed employment allocations EMP-RA6.1 to EMP-RA6.4) will remain in employment use, with plans to develop new accommodation on vacant plots and under-developed sites to improve the visual appearance and attract new businesses into the area, thereby increasing the number of jobs and job density, but also creating the opportunity to relocate businesses currently occupying Vittoria Studios to enable residential development there.
- Works to establish an active travel “greenway” around the MEA Park site (EMP-RA6.1, to EMP-RA6.4) are scheduled to start in November 2022, funding has been secured through the Towns Fund to develop Sustainability Central – a new facility creating accommodation for the commercial and voluntary sectors, and a planning application has been submitted for a development at MEA Park Phase 2 (EMP-RA6.4) of 70,000 sq ft of industrial floorspace ([APP/22/00737](#)).

RA7 – Hamilton Park

- 2.25 The vision for Hamilton Park is to create a new family orientated residential neighbourhood closely associated with the Wirral Waters Vittoria Studios to the north of Corporation Road by developing sites currently occupied by employment uses, providing new homes predominantly for families. The Council has commenced the preparation of a delivery masterplan for the

- Britannia Residential Led Mixed Use Area (MPA-RA7.1). It is anticipated that the draft masterplan will be subject to consultation in spring 2023 before endorsement by the Council in mid-2023 in accordance with Policy RA7 E.
- 2.26 The Council has also completed an initial feasibility study for the relocation of the Council Depot to a site north of Dock Road which will facilitate the development of the first phase of residential development.
- 2.27 In tandem, there is a programme of engagement with businesses in the area to determine their appetite for selling and/or relocation requirements, and the Council anticipates that through the combination of the masterplan exercise and the business engagement, that by March 2023 there will be a clear understanding of the properties that will need to be acquired in order to deliver the vision for the neighbourhood. The masterplan will also identify locations for new primary school, urban green spaces, street greening, SUD's schemes, active travel, and other elements in line with Policy RA7. The Council has also completed an initial feasibility study (RIBA Stage 1) for the relocation of the Council Depot to a site north of Dock Road which will facilitate the development of the first phase of residential development (see also below).
- 2.28 Some initial work on viability testing and business case development has been undertaken by a consultant team led by MACE. Homes England provided additional revenue funding in October 2022 to undertake further viability testing as the masterplan develops, with a view to Homes England supporting delivery of the masterplan through the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land (BIL) fund.
- 2.29 46 units are under construction at a site on Conway Street, with completion expected during 2022/23 ([APP/20/00368](#)).

RA8 – Northside

- 2.30 The vision for Northside is to retain the area in employment use, but develop new accommodation on vacant plots and under-developed sites to improve the visual appearance and attract new businesses into the area, thereby increasing the number of jobs and job density. A draft Neighbourhood Framework is under production and it is anticipated that public consultation will take place early in 2023.

RA9 – Liscard

- 2.31 The Council has commenced work on the preparation of the detailed masterplan for Liscard Town Centre (MPA-RA9.1) in accordance with Policy RA 9 (B). This will promote the redevelopment of the Former Municipal Buildings for a minimum of 100 dwellings (RES-RA9.1). It is anticipated that the draft masterplan will be subject to consultation in Q1 2023 before endorsement by the Council in Q3 2023 in accordance with Policy RA9 B.

- 2.32 The Council is proactively seeking Levelling Up Funding to support the development site and the regeneration of the Liscard Town Centre area.
- 2.33 There are no known issues which would prevent the site delivering residential development as proposed in Local Plan Policy RA9.
- 2.34 Prior approval has also been granted for the conversion of Dominic House within the Regeneration Area for between 50 and 70 new residential units, which will contribute towards the delivery of the allowance for conversions and changes of use ([COMX/20/00233](#), [COMX/20/00234](#)).

RA 10 – New Brighton

- 2.35 The Council is currently working on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Framework for New Brighton.
- 2.36 As part of this, detailed work is ongoing to prepare a detailed masterplan for the Marine Promenade Masterplan Area (MPA-RA10.1). The masterplan is being prepared in consultation with landowners and prospective developers to facilitate the early mixed redevelopment of sites in this key location.
- 2.37 It is anticipated that consultation on the Masterplan will be undertaken in mid-2023 before endorsement by the Council in late 2023.
- 2.38 A development of 13 units was completed at the following site in March 2022.

Egerton Street Playground, New Brighton (APP/20/01799)	RES-RA10.2
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- 2.39 A further 14 units have now been permitted at an additional site at the former Hollins Hey Hotel, which is currently under construction ([APP/21/00070](#)).

RA11 - New Ferry

- 2.40 Outline consent has already been granted for up to 79 units as part of the regeneration programme for New Ferry.

43 Bebington Road, New Ferry (Site A) (DPP3/20/00420)	RES-RA11.1
Woodhead Street Car Park, New Ferry (Site B) (DPP3/20/00415)	RES-RA11.2
Land at Grove Street and Bebington Road, New Ferry (Site C) (DPP3/20/00418)	RES-RA11.3

- 2.41 The Council has now appointed a preferred developer for the redevelopment of New Ferry.

- 2.42 A revised scheme covering the three proposed housing allocations (identified above) has recently been shared and consulted on with the local community. This now proposes a fully residential development across each of the three sites, providing up to 74 one, two, three and four-bedroom affordable homes (not 79).
- 2.43 A revised planning application for two of the sites is expected to be submitted in Autumn 2022. Construction works on the three sites will be phased - starting with Site C (RES-RA11.3) in Summer 2023 with the development of the three sites fully completed by Spring 2026.
- 2.44 Further details can be viewed at:
<https://newferryregeneration.commonplace.is/>

3. Settlement Areas

Large sites

- 3.1 A total of 23 units have already been completed on the following proposed allocation sites:

Cleared Site, Oakdale Road, Seacombe (DLS/20/00469)	RES-SA1.4
Atherton Hall, Westbourne Road, Birkenhead (APP/20/00191)	RES-SA3.4

- 3.2 Sites that will provide a total of 208 units are also currently under construction on the following proposed allocation sites:

Gibson House, Seabank Road, Egremont (APP/18/00786)	RES-SA1.2
Rear of Gibson House, Maddock Road, Egremont (APP/18/00786)	RES-SA1.3
Old Manor Club, Withens Lane, Liscard (APP/19/01725)	RES-SA1.5
Redcourt School, 7 Devonshire Place, Oxton (APP/20/01084 and LBC/20/01085)	RES-SA3.2
Sevenoaks Phase 2b, Chatham Road, Rock Ferry (APP/20/01728)	RES-SA3.3
Former Heswall Gospel Hall, Pensby Road, Heswall (APP/19/00636)	RES-SA7.2

- 3.3 The developments at Gibson House and Redcourt School include the conversion of the original Mariners' Home to 34 flats and an adjacent listed building to 15 flats, which will contribute towards the delivery of the allowance for conversions and changes of use. The proposed site allocations only include the new build elements of the approved development.

- 3.4 Planning permission has also been granted for 31 units on the proposed allocation site at:

Gladstone Liberals, Dial Road, Tranmere (OUT/21/00496)	RES-SA3.1
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- 3.5 Planning applications for up to 1,816 units have now been submitted at the following proposed allocation sites:

Former MOD, Old Hall Road, Bromborough (DPP4/22/01080)	RES-SA4.2	249 units
Land at Riverside Park, Riverwood Road, Bromborough (OUT/20/01881)	RES-SA4.3	217 units
Former D1 Oils, Dock Road South, Bromborough (OUT/22/00956 for 622) and OUT/22/00957 for 564)	RES-SA4.7	1,186 units
Unilever Research, Quarry Road East, Bebington (APP/22/01759)	RES-SA4.11	125 units
Land at Grange Hill Farm, Grange Old Road, West Kirby (OUT/22/01305)	RES-SA6.4	39 units

- 3.6 A site marketing brief is being prepared for the following site (currently proposed to be allocated for 65 dwellings):

Former Foxfield School, Douglas Drive, Moreton	RES-SA5.4
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- 3.7 An application has now been submitted for the following sites as part of the re-configuration of Moreton Town Centre (APP/22/01686). It includes a new retail store, up to 45 dwellings and a care home for up to 80 residents:

Moreton Family Centre, Pasture Road (APP/22/01686)	RES-SA5.1
Former Moreton Municipal Building, Knutsford Road (APP/22/01686)	RES-SA5.2
Land at Knutsford Road, Moreton (APP/22/01686)	RES-SA5.7

Small sites

- 3.8 Five units have already been completed on the following proposed housing allocations:

79 Derwent Road, Higher Bebington (DLS/20/01521)	RES-SA4.17
25 Church Road, Upton (APP/20/01498)	RES-SA5.11
2 Sherwood Grove, Meols (APP/20/00249)	RES-SA6.7

Strathcraig, Phillip's Way, Heswall (APP/20/00383)	RES-SA7.6
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- 3.9 The following proposed site allocations, with a total capacity of 17 units, are also now under construction:

2 Hendon Walk, Greasby (APP/21/00531)	RES-SA5.14
7 Caldly Road, West Kirby (APP/19/01918 and APP/21/00309)	RES-SA6.11
Sundial, 61 Caldly Road, Caldly (and APP/18/01247 APP/20/00106)	RES-SA6.9
5 Thurstaston Road, Irby (APP/20/00111 and APP/21/00994)	RES-SA7.9

- 3.10 Planning permission for a further 15 units has also been granted on the following site allocations:

34 Dingle Road, Tranmere (APP/21/02389)	RES-SA3.7
45 Palatine Road, Bromborough (OUT/20/00501)	RES-SA4.18
30 Salacre Crescent, Upton (APP/20/01144)	RES-SA5.12
Pinetree Cottage, 50 Moreton Road, Upton (OUT/19/01133)	RES-SA5.13
Ridge Rowans, 25 Wetstone Lane, West Kirby (APP/19/01378)	RES-SA6.8
Clan Mo, 11 Buffs Lane, Barnston (APP/20/00467)	RES-SA7.3
Land at Ashbourne House, Mount Avenue, Heswall (APP/19/01669)	RES-SA7.4
Willowbank, 33 Oldfield Road, Heswall (APP/19/01177)	RES-SA7.5

- 3.11 This means that of the total capacity of 51 units on the small sites identified in the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan, 37 units (72%) have either already been completed, have started on site or obtained planning permission.

4. Planning for Housing Needs

Local Housing Needs

- 4.1 The Council is mindful that new evidence continues to emerge which has the potential to impact upon the identification of local housing needs for the Borough, including the 2021 Census. Officers are continuing to assess new evidence which emerges in consultation with the University of Liverpool and other appointed consultants. The Council is also mindful that the Government has indicated that changes are likely to be made to national planning policy in the near future which may impact upon the standard method for calculating local housing need.
- 4.2 However, the Council is confident that the Submission Draft Local Plan follows the approach currently required by national planning policy which is the appropriate course of action for the Council to take.

Delivering Strategic Site Allocations

- 4.3 The Council has been working closely with landowners, developers, and site promoters associated with strategic sites throughout the production of the Local Plan. Since August 2022 the Council has requested meetings with representatives of all Local Plan residential allocations of 100 dwellings or more. Through this engagement, the Council is seeking to draft statements of common ground or update statements relating to each residential allocation over 100 dwellings. The statements will outline the current status of the site, and the expected approach and timescales for developing the sites and associated infrastructure.
- 4.4 To date, the Council has met with and begun drafting statements of common ground or update statements for Local Plan site allocations RA9.1, RA5.1, SA4.6, SA4.7, SA4.11, RA4.1, RA4.3, SA4.2, and sites relating to allocations at Wirral Waters and Scotts Quay. The Council will continue to engage with remaining sites RA3.4, SA4.3, and RA5.3.
- 4.5 The Council will continue to engage with representatives of all strategic site allocations over 100 dwellings in order to provide the Local Plan examination with statements of common ground or update statements where possible in order to assist the process.

Wirral Left Bank Collaboration Agreement

- 4.6 The Council has now agreed and signed a Collaboration Agreement with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England relating to the Wirral Left Bank Birkenhead programme (BP3). This provides evidence of the high levels of joint working and commitment in place to secure the delivery of the regeneration programme and to implement and deliver the policy requirements of the Local Plan.

Housing Monitoring 2021/22

4.7 From additional monitoring undertaken since April 2021:

- Net housing completions during 2021/22 were 629 units.
- The five-year average for windfall generation (excluding regeneration areas) was 45 pa (total 228).
- The five-year average for net gain from conversions and changes of use was 128 pa (total 640).
- The five-year average for the return of empty homes was 209 pa (total 1,048).
- The five-year average for demolitions was 37 pa (total 188). The annual average over the last three years has reduced to 13 (total 39).
- The Borough's Housing Delivery Test Result for 2021, for delivery over the previous 3 years (published in January 2022) was 99%.
- The Borough's Housing Delivery Test Result for 2022, based on 2021/22 completions, is expected to be at or near 100%.

5. Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

- 5.1 There are no required changes to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan since publication at the Regulation 19 stage. The Council will continue to engage with internal Council Departments, external stakeholders and site promoters regarding delivery of planned and required infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule will be updated as appropriate.

6. Cross-boundary Working

Duty to Cooperate

- 6.1 The Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance (SGD1.1) provides a comprehensive summary of the engagement which has taken place with prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies and surrounding local authorities throughout the production of the Local Plan. The appendices to the Statement include all Duty to Cooperate statements of common ground which have been agreed with prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies and surrounding local authorities.
- 6.2 Where considered necessary to support the examination of the Local Plan, the Council may produce updates to the agreed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Statements are up to date and appropriately reflect recent and ongoing cooperation and engagement with relevant organisations.
- 6.3 Officers continue to engage with neighbouring districts in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) through established groups such as the Merseyside Chief Planning Officers Group and the Planning Policy Managers Groups plus involvement in the following specific workstreams relevant to the Wirral Local Plan:

Interim Policy Approach for Mitigating Impacts on the Liverpool City Region Coast

- 6.4 The six local authorities within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) along with West Lancashire Council are jointly preparing a Recreation Mitigation Strategy (LCR RMS) that will enable the local authorities to meet their legal duties to protect European wildlife sites on the coast from the impacts of recreation associated with housing development and tourism. The main element of the RMS will be an “opt-in” levy on new dwellings within a certain distance of the coast to be used to fund measures at the coast to reduce disturbance such as signage and the enhancement or provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) in inland locations.
- 6.5 The LCR RMS will not be completed until June 2023 because new survey evidence needs to be gathered, which has been delayed by Covid-19. In the meantime, individual authorities are preparing interim approach documents which set out their approaches to addressing recreational disturbance impacts pending completion of the RMS. The latest version of Wirral’s Interim approach document is ECC27 in the evidence base library. There is a separate mechanism already in place for Wirral Waters.

Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy

- 6.6 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has commenced work on a Spatial Development Strategy for the City Region. This work is at a relatively early stage, with two initial rounds of public engagement completed, with the focus having shifted towards completing technical evidence. Vision, objectives and policy frameworks are being prepared. The Council is participating in this process through its participation in the Combined Authority and officer groups such as the LCR Chief Planning Officers group plus a task and finish group supporting the preparation of evidence on housing and employment land needs.

7. Working with Statutory Consultees

- 7.1 The Statement of Compliance (SGD1.1) provides an update on cross-boundary Duty to Cooperate related engagement with prescribed duty to cooperate bodies. The following paragraphs provide an update on engagement taking place relating to representations received from statutory consultees through the Regulation 19 Publication.

Historic England

- 7.2 The Council is currently working with Historic England to produce an additional SoCG which directly addresses the issues raised within their Regulation 19 representation relating to tall buildings and the approach to heritage more generally. Although the Council is satisfied that the Sustainability Appraisal is legally compliant as published, the SoCG will provide further context relating to the concerns raised about the assessment of impacts of the plan policies on heritage. The Council expects the SoCG to be available in advance of any hearing sessions.

Natural Resources Wales

- 7.3 The representation from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has identified a need for minor clarifications to the Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Council will engage with NRW on this issue and anticipates that a Statement of Common Ground will follow to address the issues raised in advance of any hearing sessions.

Cheshire West and Chester Council

- 7.4 Cheshire West and Chester Council have submitted a representation relating to the soundness of the Local Plan in relation to Policy WM 6. They suggest that it would be helpful to set out how/when the Joint Waste Local Plan will be reviewed or whether there is sufficient waste management provision within the area to meet the Local Plan period up to 2037. Officers will continue to engage with their counterparts at Cheshire West and Chester on this issue to be addressed in an updated Statement of Common Ground if necessary.

8. Local Development Scheme

- 8.1 The Local Development Scheme is currently being updated to reflect the actual date of submission. The date of submission is October 2022 as compared to the adopted LDS (KSD2) date of September 2022. The Council's approval process to adopt the updated LDS is expected to be completed week commencing 31 October 2022 and the updated LDS will be published on the Council's Local Plan Web Page and Examination Page as soon as practicable thereafter.