

# Waterfront

## Neighbourhood Framework

May 2021

DRAFT



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Key consultations undertaken during the Neighbourhood Framework production process to date includes: RIBA Places Matter Review Panel, Martin Lowe of Boom Developments, Richard Mawdsley of Peel Land and Property, and Steve Wharton of Prima Group.

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# Introduction, Purpose and Boundary

## Introduction

This Neighbourhood Framework (NF) for Birkenhead's Waterfront has been produced by Avison Young, with Optimised Environments ('OPEN') and Mott Macdonald ('Motts') on behalf of Wirral Borough Council and is one of a series to be prepared as part of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040 (the 'BRF'). The document has been produced to consider the strategic recommendations of the BRF in more detail at the neighbourhood level. Its preparation has enabled greater focus on the delivery strategy associated with the ambitions of the BRF, at the neighbourhood scale and below.

## Birkenhead 2040 Framework

This NF for Birkenhead's Waterfront has been prepared in the context of the BRF. The BRF sets out an overarching strategy for the regeneration of the Birkenhead urban area. This includes the identification of nine neighbourhoods each with their own character and contribution to the programme. The BRF establishes a draft vision and high-level strategy for potential land use change, including scale of potential brownfield housing delivery,

alongside supporting public realm and infrastructure requirements, all to be tested further through NF production as appropriate.

The BRF specifically recommends the preparation of NFs for seven of the nine neighbourhoods identified, illustrated in Figure 1.1.

This NF, for the Waterfront, has been developed having regard to the BRF Vision and Objectives. It has further regard to the wider strategy of the BRF, including the prominent role of this particular neighbourhood within the wider strategy. The Waterfront features heavily within the spatial priorities identified within the BRF, including the importance of ensuring physical connections through Birkenhead's 'Heritage Heart' to the Waterfront as a vibrant corridor and a cultural destination.

The BRF recognises the Waterfront as an iconic place. Birkenhead's history, evolution and unique economy are completely entwined with its waterfront location, including both the full Mersey frontage and the Dock frontage, now synonymous with Wirral Waters, moving inland. It was through the port and its associated industries

that Wirral experienced its industrial revolution.

Through the Framework something special will be delivered at Birkenhead's Waterfront, to emulate that of Liverpool. This is not just about reclaiming the area – it is about re-imagining its future, at the heart of a thriving City Region.

There is the potential to create a series of iconic, modern, urban neighbourhoods as part of the older core area, intrinsically connected to both the water and the urban future of Birkenhead, delivering a view from and direct connections via ferry to Liverpool. Development must be of a scale to fully take advantage of the values possible within this waterfront location.

Only the highest quality and innovative architectural designs, materials and long-term management strategies should be accepted within our waterfront locations. This Framework aspires to comprehensively bring these spaces into non-traditional employment use. The opportunity to create something special and iconic must not be missed.

The Framework promotes links to the River Mersey and dockland waterfront and enhancements to the quality of the environment adjacent to it, targeting both opportunities for high-quality passive leisure (taking advantage of the remarkable views and opportunities for riverside walks) and enhancing its social and

economic role (improving the prominence and quality of the ferry services being a key priority).

The Framework recognises the importance of ensuring diversity of the natural environment, habitats and ecology as a key feature of Birkenhead, particularly by identifying opportunities

to open up access to the River Mersey and facilitating movement through the Great Floats to Bidston Moss.

These are very high value environments compromised by poor accessibility. High-quality connections across the A41 will ensure existing and future residential communities can continue to access these assets.

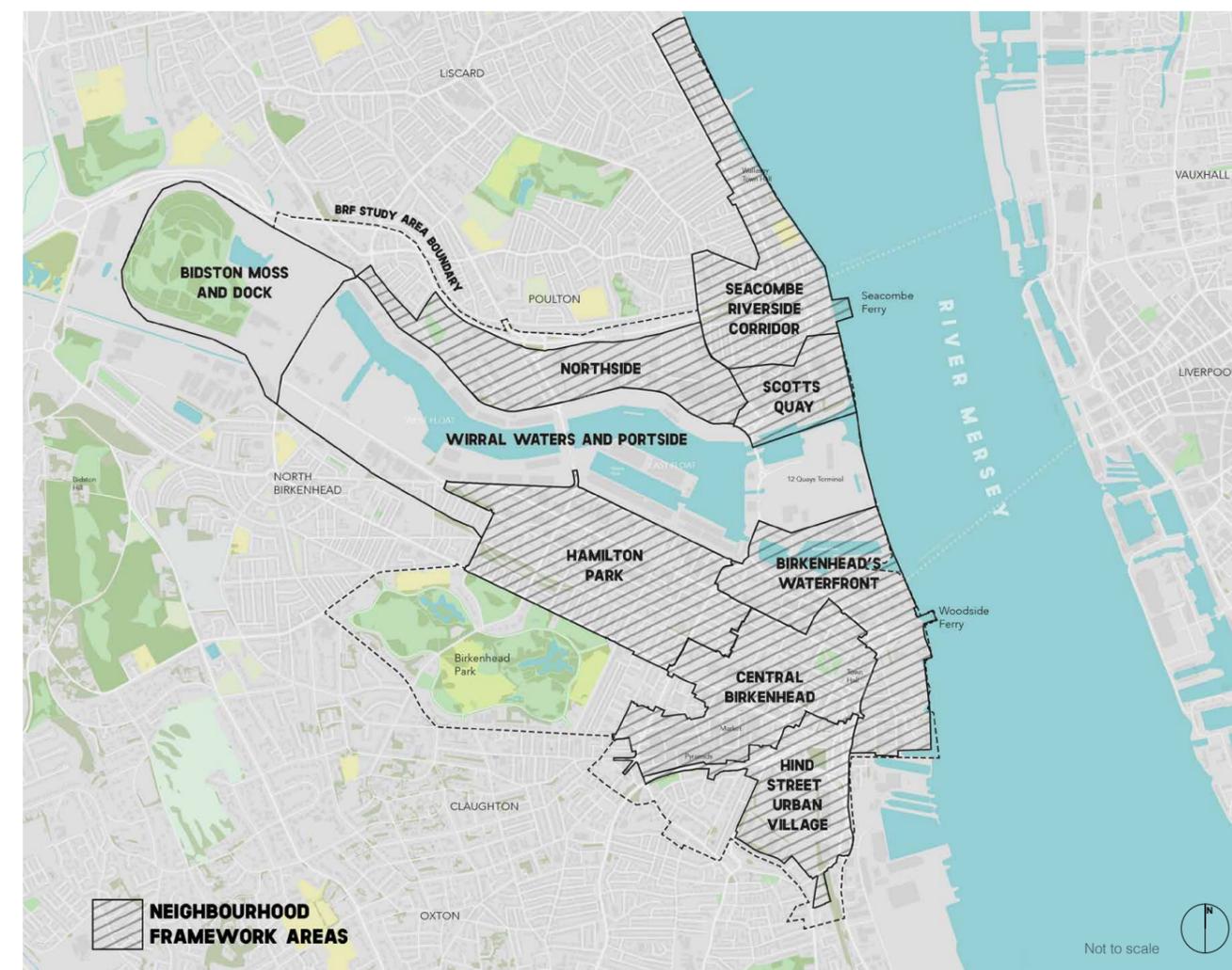


Figure 1.1 Birkenhead 2040 Neighbourhoods and 7 Neighbourhood Framework Areas

## Interface with the Catalyst Projects

The BRF identifies a significant degree of underutilised and vacant brownfield land across Birkenhead on which development can and should be delivered in line with the principles and spatial priorities set out.

But it also recognises that there is a reason why these sites are not coming forward currently in this way as a result of the market failures that do exist across Birkenhead. There is no one factor preventing high quality development being delivered, but it is known that viability and market perception is having a material impact.

The Framework addresses this issue head on – through the identification of a number of catalyst projects, all of which are progressing, to address structural place or market issues, and ultimately create the right conditions for investment and value growth.

These catalyst projects, as shown in Figure 1.2 and summarised in the following text in no particular order, are strategically important for Wirral – underpinning the reconnection, reimagination, and rediscovery of Birkenhead.

### Dock Branch Park

Dock Branch Park is a transformational project, running through the heart of Central Birkenhead connecting to Wirral Waters through the western side of the Waterfront NF boundary in its first phase. The Phase 1 park, designed to bring back to life the disused railway cutting between Wirral Waters and Argyle Street, will be delivered to create a vibrant open space environment facilitating active travel and accommodating cultural and creative activities. This includes proposals to accommodate a new museum offer within Central Birkenhead spilling into the park environment.

The design has been informed by the desire to not just deliver a new linear park within Birkenhead, but also to leverage wider regenerative impact – including ensuring connections to Hamilton Square, the Commercial District, and unlock development sites along its stretch. The nature of the park and associated development potential will have a material impact on Birkenhead more widely – creating a unique new community and fundamentally changing the character of the core of the town.

A masterplan has been produced for Phase 1 of Dock Branch Park, which has in turn informed the preparation of a landscape design approach, cost plan and planning strategy. Dock Branch Park has been included within the Birkenhead Town Deal programme, the subject of a current funding bid to Government in early 2021.

If considered one-dimensionally, bringing the corridor into use will enhance pedestrian, cycling and potentially in the future public transport movement and connectivity through the area. But beyond being a route for enhanced movement, it has the potential to be a unique linear park and cultural corridor, bringing vibrancy and driving values within this new residential-led neighbourhood of Central Birkenhead and the Waterfront.

More detailed masterplan will be progressed for this new neighbourhood as part of the implementation of the BRF.

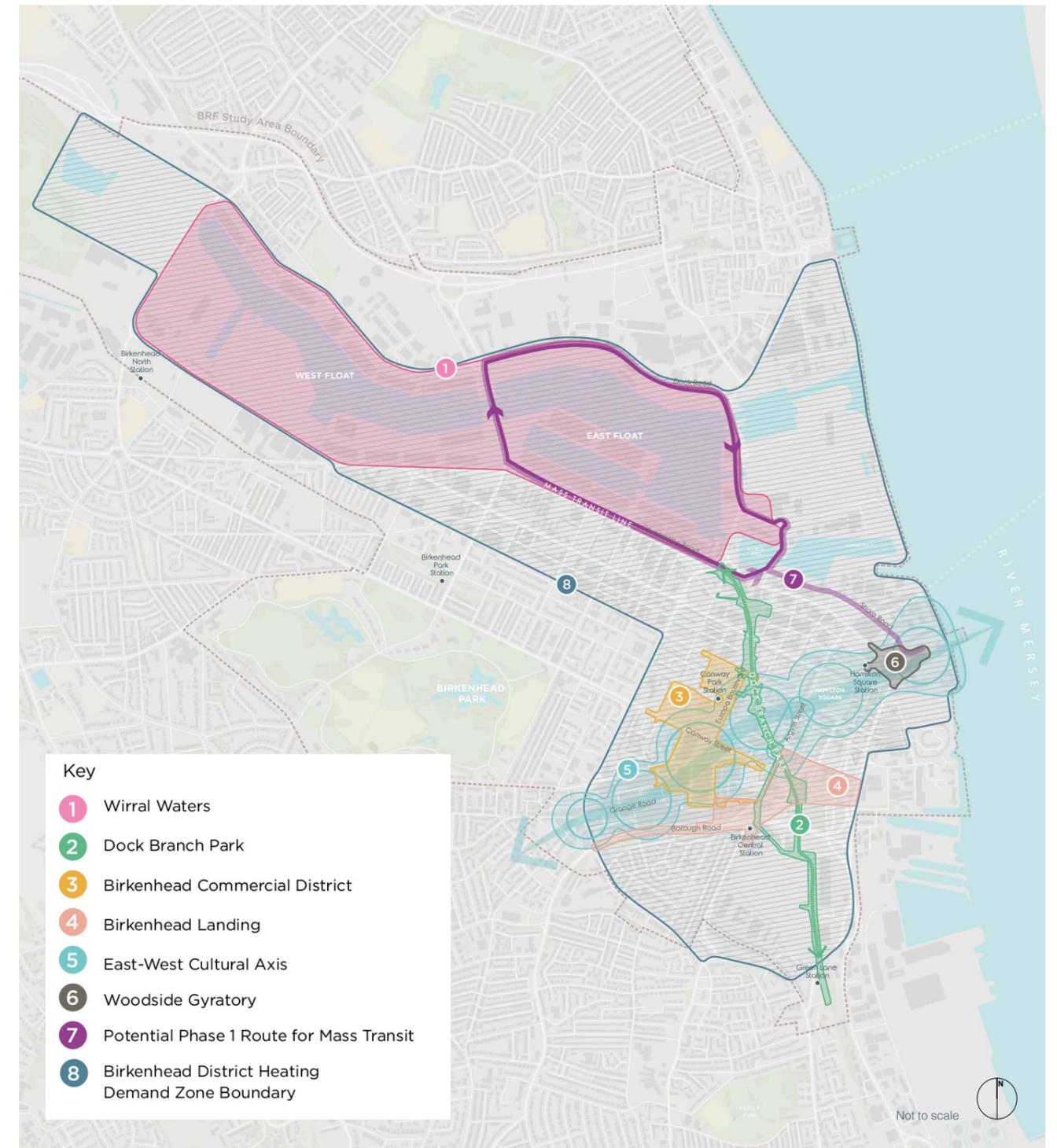


Figure 1.2 Catalyst Projects

### **Birkenhead Commercial District and Mixed-Use Quarter**

The Commercial District and Mixed-Use Quarter lies right at the heart of Central Birkenhead and is a critical project to kick-start the restructuring and diversification of the extensive and dysfunctional retail core of the area.

The direct physical change that will result from the delivery of the proposals being developed by Wirral Growth Company (WGC) will materially change the physical environment of the retail core, diversify land uses, directly improve footfall of office-based employees, and create new attractions and experiential offer in the centre of Birkenhead.

Phase 1 will see the delivery of the first two buildings of the Commercial District – including 150,000 sq. ft. of office space including a new home for Wirral Council employees alongside private sector occupiers. Early years delivery will see the demolition of the existing market building and temporary relocation of traders to St Werburghs Square, before they are permanently housed in a

new market building within the core of the Commercial District.

Wider proposals include early year aspirations to deliver new homes at the north of Europa Boulevard on car parking land owned by the Council, and longer-term potential for mixed use delivery in key locations along Europa Boulevard and at Europa Square. Wider interventions include proposals for improvements to Europa Boulevard, Conway Street, and Birkenhead Bus Station.

### **Wirral Waters**

Wirral Waters, which benefits from an outline planning permission, is a catalyst project for Birkenhead and Wirral, but with a reach beyond that of the BRF, this NF and the emerging Local Plan given its scale.

The BRF recognises key projects being progressed within the Wirral Waters that fundamental to this catalytic impact on the regeneration process. In combination they address significant portside decline and bringing valuable sites back into vibrant use, and developing embryonic markets including new high quality residential development of

a mixed tenure nature in this unique waterside setting, alongside the establishment of new Grade ‘A’ Office accommodation on Tower Road Other projects include Northbank, MEA Park, Vittoria Studios, Marina View, Tower Road South (transformational public realm) and Four Bridges.

Delivery of development and investment at Wirral Waters will directly influence development potential across Birkenhead generally, including a need to have regard to ensuring a balanced mix of uses and housing tenures and types across the urban area across the outline planning permission and the 2040 Framework and NFs.

Early phase delivery across Wirral Waters will be key to delivering the full ambition and scale of development captured within the outline permission, but as importantly will underpin market development and drive private sector investor confidence in the wider Birkenhead urban area.

### **‘Birkenhead Landing’**

The BRF identifies the need and opportunity to bring down both flyovers that currently cut across Hind Street, severing this new neighbourhood from Central Birkenhead and the potential to create improved east-west connectivity to the Waterfront.

The environment around the flyovers is heavily engineered and has a significant negative visual and physical impact. This is particularly pronounced in the area outside Birkenhead Central Station and on land north of Hind Street, where the town centre is severed from neighbourhoods to the south. Additionally, the flyover structures are surplus to requirements as there is capacity to use alternative routes to connect to Queensway Tunnel. In time they will also present a major maintenance liability.

The flyover removal programme will have a direct impact on wider infrastructure located between Birkenhead Central Station, the core of the Central Birkenhead neighbourhood and the east-west connectivity to the Waterfront, referred to as ‘Birkenhead Landing’ – removing infrastructure currently as wide as a motorway in parts severing the centre from the existing and future residential communities to the south.

This comprehensive approach is needed to unlock the key additional development opportunity for a new exemplar Urban Village at Hind Street. This is an essential project to address severance and the ‘concrete collar’ that sits around the Central Birkenhead core area and will enable the simplification of infrastructure across the area. The removal of the flyovers will also provide the opportunity to create a new public space outside of Birkenhead Central Station, which will enhance the attractiveness for and viability of a new residential neighbourhood connecting it to the adjoining St Werburgh’s area.

### **The East-West Cultural Axis**

Supporting and developing the continued expansion of the cultural and creative economy is fundamental to the BRF. Geographically this will focus on the Central Birkenhead and Waterfront areas – building on existing offer, business clustering, and the physical attributes of in particular the heritage assets at Hamilton Park, the Priory and the Waterfront – with the potential to run as a network of spaces and buildings as an axis connecting these two neighbourhoods.

The axis has at its heart the ambition to bring the core of Central Birkenhead closer to the newly imagined Waterfront neighbourhood. It will include the implementation of an activation strategy which will be fundamental to driving footfall within the retail core, and generally creating vibrancy and attract visitors to the centre and the Waterfront as a new destination in Birkenhead. This experiential consideration of the core will be fundamental to the commercial success of the Waterfront, driving footfall and a positive experience in this key location.

### Woodside Gyratory

One of the key considerations within this NF is how to create better connections between Central Birkenhead and its Waterfront. It is crucial that through the delivery of the regeneration programme that the right conditions are created for investment in Birkenhead – and it is clear that the separation (physical and psychological) between Central Birkenhead and the Waterfront is one of the key dysfunctions of the area currently. The presence of the Woodside gyratory is one of the fundamental reasons for this separation – and its removal will be a key driver of the two key areas connecting and being continuous in terms of development, public realm, function and crucially feel.

Addressing the physical environment in this location will create a positive physical environment between the centre and the Waterfront – including a new arrival from Hamilton Square station. This will include new public realm treatments providing a high-quality walking and cycling environment, and simplified road alignment and public transport provision to enhance road safety and promote sustainable travel choices.

At the heart of the gyratory, prominent and iconic development will be progressed as the arrival to the Waterfront from the wider urban area and peninsula.

### Mass Transit System

A mass transit network for the Central Birkenhead and Wirral Waters areas of the Borough have been discussed for several years. Through recent feasibility work undertaken on behalf of the Council, a wider mass transit network prospect has been identified, serving key regeneration zones such as Wirral Waters, Seacombe Riverside and the south of Central Birkenhead.

The mass transit network is needed due to the absence of ‘last mile’ high-quality public transport alternatives connecting to and between planned regeneration and the high quality Merseyrail system. In some cases, such as Wirral Waters, there is a need to overcome an existing impasse in which large-scale or high-density development on brownfield land is hindered by constrained public transport accessibility, but at the same time provision of

public transport has not been previously considered feasible due to lack of demonstrable demand. This ‘Chicken & Egg’ paradigm is presently being examined through preparation of a Mass Transit Delivery Strategy and Business Case, which is being prepared to recommend ways in which this impasse can be overcome.

### Birkenhead District Heat Network

Investment in Birkenhead must be future proof. New energy infrastructure is needed if development across the area is to contribute to achieving net-zero carbon emissions to help avert the climate crisis. During 2021 the Council will be working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to develop a detailed business case for the implementation of a comprehensive heat network for Central Birkenhead. The emerging Local Plan will include policies to safeguard key sites to facilitate the delivery of this project and require major developments to connect to the system where feasible.

## Document Structure

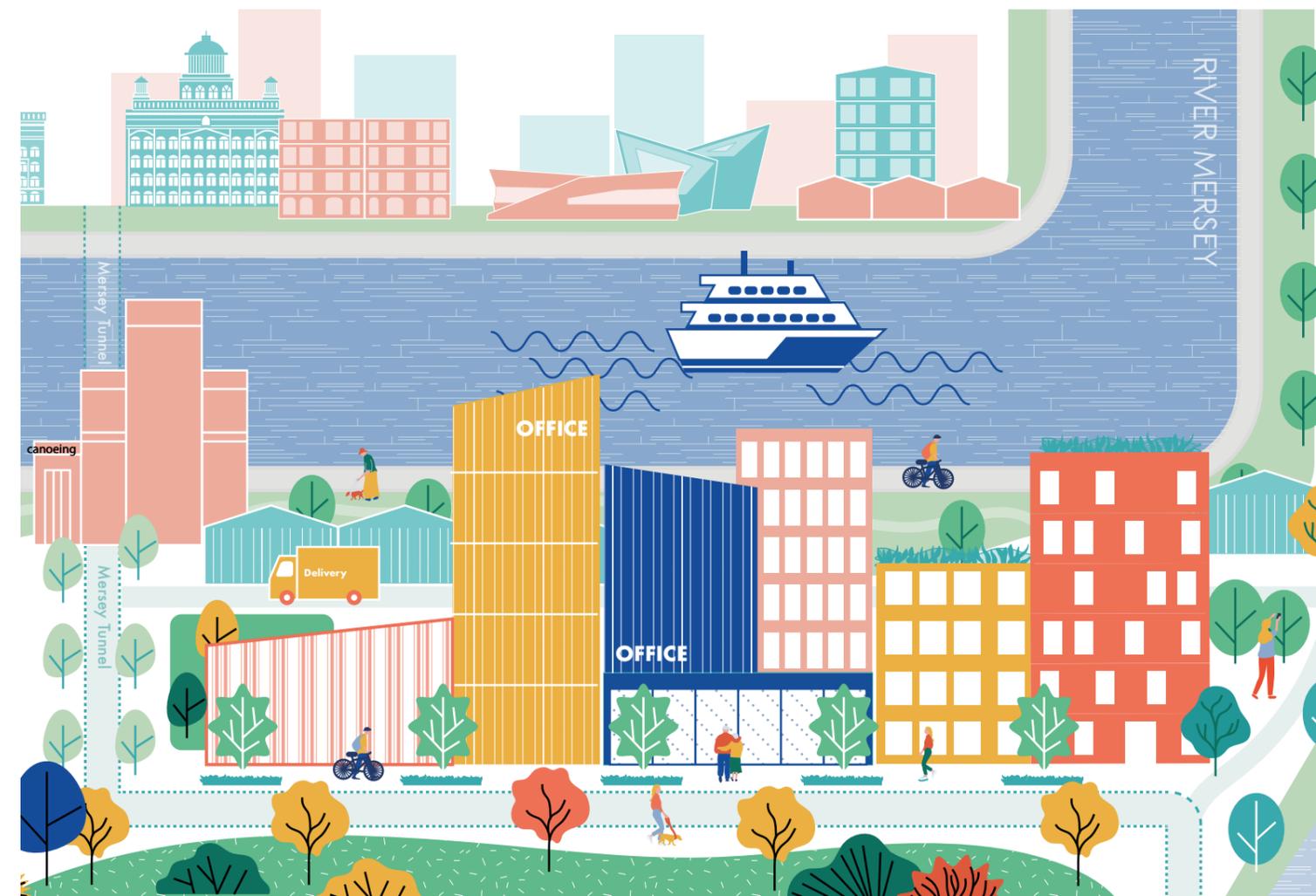
The remainder of the document is structured as follows.

- **Section 02:** Waterfront Context: Summary of baseline analysis to present snapshot of context for the NF within the Waterfront neighbourhood, including SWOT analysis summary;
- **Section 03:** Vision and Objectives: Setting the vision and principles for the Waterfront NF in response to the context, drivers and opportunities identified;

- **Section 04:** Waterfront Neighbourhood Framework: Proposed mix of land uses, and identification of key projects coming forwards as a result of the NF process; and
- **Section 05:** NF Delivery Strategy and Next Steps: Including project action plan, phasing plan, consideration of funding, delivery vehicles and governance.

This Waterfront NF is supported by technical evidence informing the process undertaken including:

- Place and Movement Baseline; and
- Demographic and Market Baseline.



# Waterfront Context

## Waterfront NF Geography

The boundary of the NF is shown in Figure 3. The Waterfront NF covers a significant and underutilised area within Birkenhead urban area. It represents a huge opportunity within the wider programme for the urban area, including the potential to connect the water to the town centre and maximise the value of its views of Liverpool's waterfront.

This NF exercise builds on previous masterplanning undertaken within the Waterfront area, including for Woodside and the Rose Brae site, progressed historically by landowners within the area.

This has included notable leadership of masterplanning exercises undertaken by Peel Land and Property and Boom Developments. Both parties, in addition to Prima Housing have made material contributions to this NF process and this document. The Council recognises and supports the important role that these key landowners will have to the delivery of the Waterfront ambitions.

The NF has identified three key sub-areas within the neighbourhood, each of

which justified a more detailed focus within the masterplanning process. In each case, specific regard has been given to test scale and massing specifically in the context of significant heritage and conservation assets within Wirral and the UNESCO World Heritage designated Liverpool waterfront. The three sub areas are listed below and shown on Figure 3.

### Woodside Yard and Hamilton Place:

Capturing a major area of opportunity spanning from the Woodside Ferry terminal as an important destination for waterfront users.

Currently, a commuter shuttle operates between Woodside and Pier Head, whilst Seacombe is closed for repair works. Normally, weekday ferry services connect Pier Head to Seacombe and then Woodside, with direct return to Pier Head.

Weekend services connect Pier Head and Woodside direct. Realising development potential in this key location, connecting the water to Hamilton Square and the town centre beyond, unlocked by major highway infrastructure change.

### Rose Brae:

Unlocking a long-standing undeveloped and underutilised site in a prime location along the waterfront, improving connections to and along the water's edge, with significant scale and potential to meet housing need in the area.

### The Priory:

Defining a vision for this often-overlooked historical asset of national significance into a high-quality setting with vibrant uses in the context of resilient industrial demands in the area.

The Waterfront NF has a critical physical interface with surrounding neighbourhoods where further material change can enable the delivery of the Birkenhead 2040 vision. This includes the new residential community to be established across Hind Street, material land use change in the Hamilton Park area, and improved connectivity and synergy with Birkenhead's Waterfront.

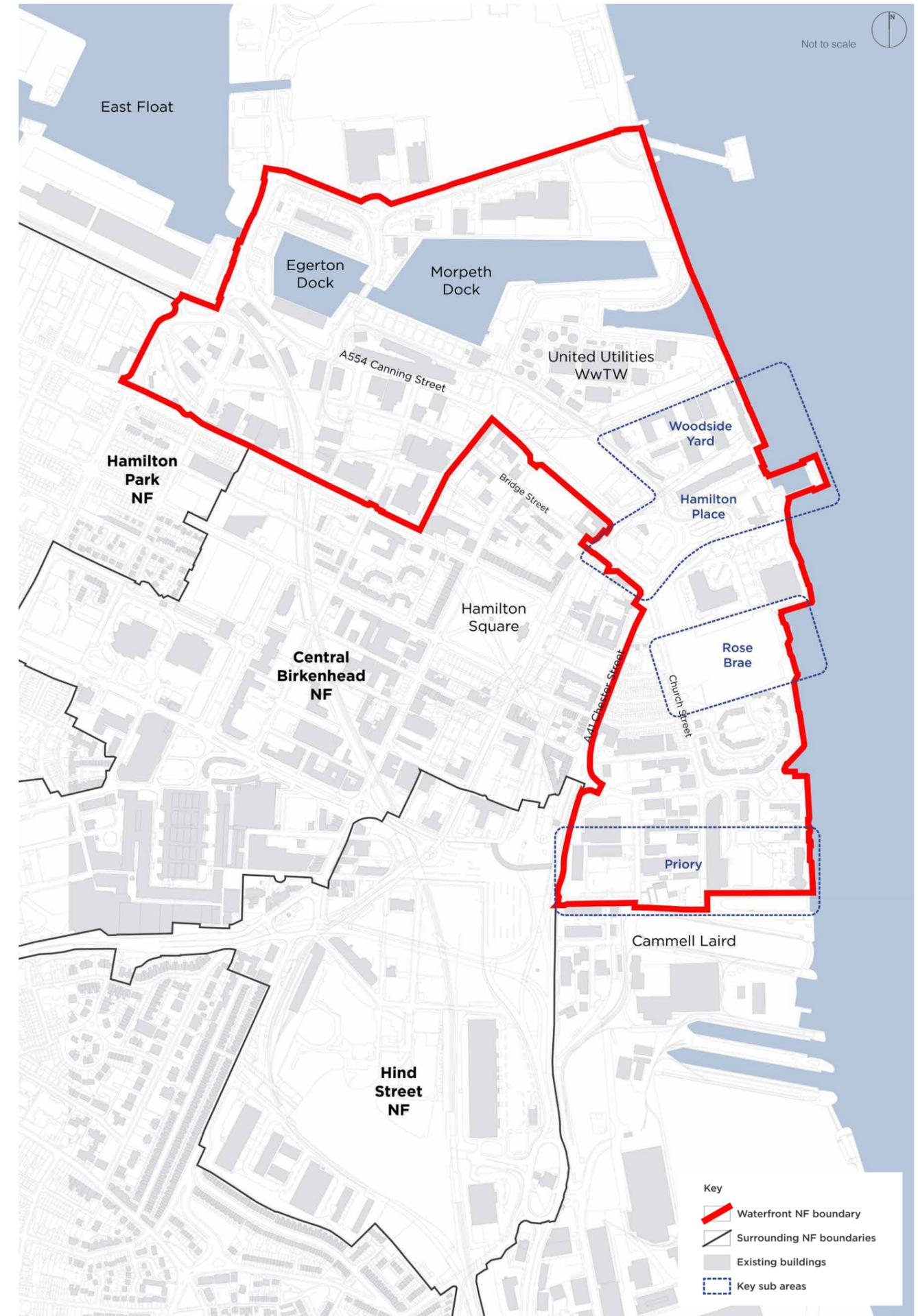


Figure 2.1 Waterfront NF Boundary & Key Sub Areas

## An Uncertain Outlook: Impact of Covid-19

This document has been prepared throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and is therefore cognisant to the fact that future land use requirements need to remain flexible to account for changing patterns of demand.

At the time of writing the extent of the impact of the pandemic on the economy is not fully understood. However, its acceleration of market changes on the high street is clear, with reduction in high street retail expenditure (not online) clear throughout 2020, with the failure of many high street names following.

Considerable job losses are forecast across the country, and across sectors, and at the time of writing there is increasing speculation regarding taxation levels including specifically likely increases in income tax which combined will clearly have a further impact on retail expenditure in the short to medium term.

The in-direct implications of COVID-19 on the built environment is also apparent with significant investment having been delivered across the country increasing public space, outdoor seating areas, and active travel routes throughout the pandemic. This period will have a lasting impact on the way the spaces between our buildings are designed, delivered and managed.

We also note evidence of strong residential market activity, with a resurgence in prices occurring immediately after the first lockdown<sup>1</sup>; primarily driven by pent up demand and perceptions of people wanting to live in more rural, suburban or less urban locations as a potential shift towards homes with greater outdoor space and access to local amenity which creates significant opportunity for Birkenhead – as it is today and as we increase the number of people living in the urban area.

National average house prices in Q4 2020 stood at over £250,000 for the first time, but with an uncertain short term outlook as lockdown restrictions returned impacting on ability to view homes, and continued uncertainty about long term activity with increasing redundancies and job losses anticipated across the economy generally.

The NF is being produced in this context – with potential implications for this NF in particular relating to the housing market, access to and sensitive design of public amenity space, and a concerning outlook across the service industry.

The next 12 months, through 2021, are likely to see considerable market and economic uncertainty. However, the sites identified as priorities in this NF document will remain priorities in this context. During such periods we recognise that opportunities will exist for public funding support, and indeed anticipate potential to leverage greater intervention through this NF under the 'Levelling Up' Government focus, in partnership with the Liverpool City Region.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/nov/06/uk-house-prices-jump-as-average-home-tops-250000-for-first-time-covid>



## Respecting and Harnessing Conservation and Heritage

### The Priory

The recorded history of Birkenhead began with the establishment of Birkenhead Priory and the Mersey Ferry in the 12th century, with the Benedictine Monks running regular services taking people to the markets of Liverpool and home again.

The Priory remains the oldest standing structure in the City Region, and is an understated jewel within our Waterfront as a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national importance.

### Industrial Revolution

By 1801 Birkenhead was still a small, undeveloped village on the banks of the River Mersey with a recorded population of 110, overshadowed by the huge maritime port of Liverpool.

In 1824 William Laird established a boiler works just north of Woodside, developing into a shipbuilding yard and, by 1831 the population of Birkenhead had risen to 2,790.

Laird set out ambitious plans, commissioning Gillespie Graham, a leading Edinburgh architect, to lay out a square and surrounding streets on the upper most point of a ridge overlooking the River Mersey. A grand civic Hamilton Square was

completed by 1846, later including a notable Town Hall 1886.

Major railway infrastructure followed; Europe’s first tramway was established in 1860, running from Woodside to Birkenhead Park. Birkenhead Woodside railway station was opened in 1878, a grandiose building, with two semi cylindrical roofs covering much of the platforms. Mersey Railway connected Birkenhead and Liverpool in 1886 with the world’s first tunnel beneath a tidal estuary.

### 20th Century

The advent of the motor vehicle coupled with the Beecham Report instigated major road investment within Birkenhead. The road tunnels of Queensway in 1934 and Kingsway in 1971 were added including the vast Kings Square tunnel entrance, with major bus depots and road widening schemes eroding the urban grain of the area.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Hamilton Square, the home of the largest concentration of Grade I listed Georgian buildings outside of Trafalgar Square, lies outside of this NF however the Conservation area overlaps the Gyratory and has “major significance for the historical development of Wirral” and beyond its boundaries in future.

It was designated a Conservation Area in 1977, later extended in 1994 to include the environment surrounding the Woodside Hotel. Its designation is recognition of the unique architectural qualities and historic significance of the realised portion of the grand Georgian development.

Policy CH5 of the current Wirral Development Plan - the Adopted Wirral Local Plan (2000), sets out considerations for development around Hamilton Square, key amongst them:

**“To preserve the wider visual setting of the Square by controlling the design and scale of new buildings located outside but visible from the central square”**

This is tempered though by the recognition of the real need to bring buildings back into use and investment through “securing renewed economic, residential and leisure activity within the Area”.

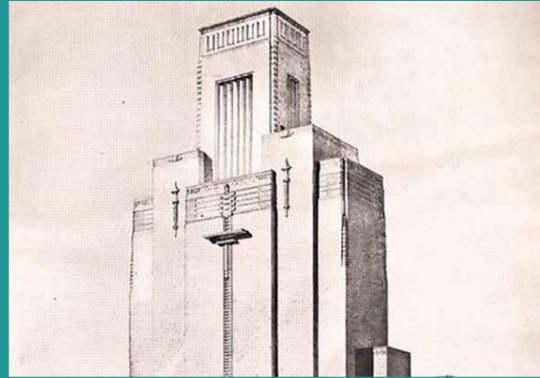
Many other grade-listed and notable un-listed structures remain in the NF area highlighted in Figure 4. The plan is further complemented by a photographic record of the assets identified with referencing between the plan and photographs included.



Source: Birkenhead, Merseyside, England. Detailed Old Victorian Ordnance Survey 6 inch to 1 mile Old Map (1888 - 1913). Credit: ArchiUK Old Maps of Britain

Figure 2.2 Early 20th Century Map of Birkenhead’s Waterfront

Figure 2.3 Historic Character: Images and Plan



1. Queensway Ventilation Shaft



2. Transit Sheds



3. Ferry - Booking Hall



4. Cheshire Lines Building



5. Shore Road Pumping Station



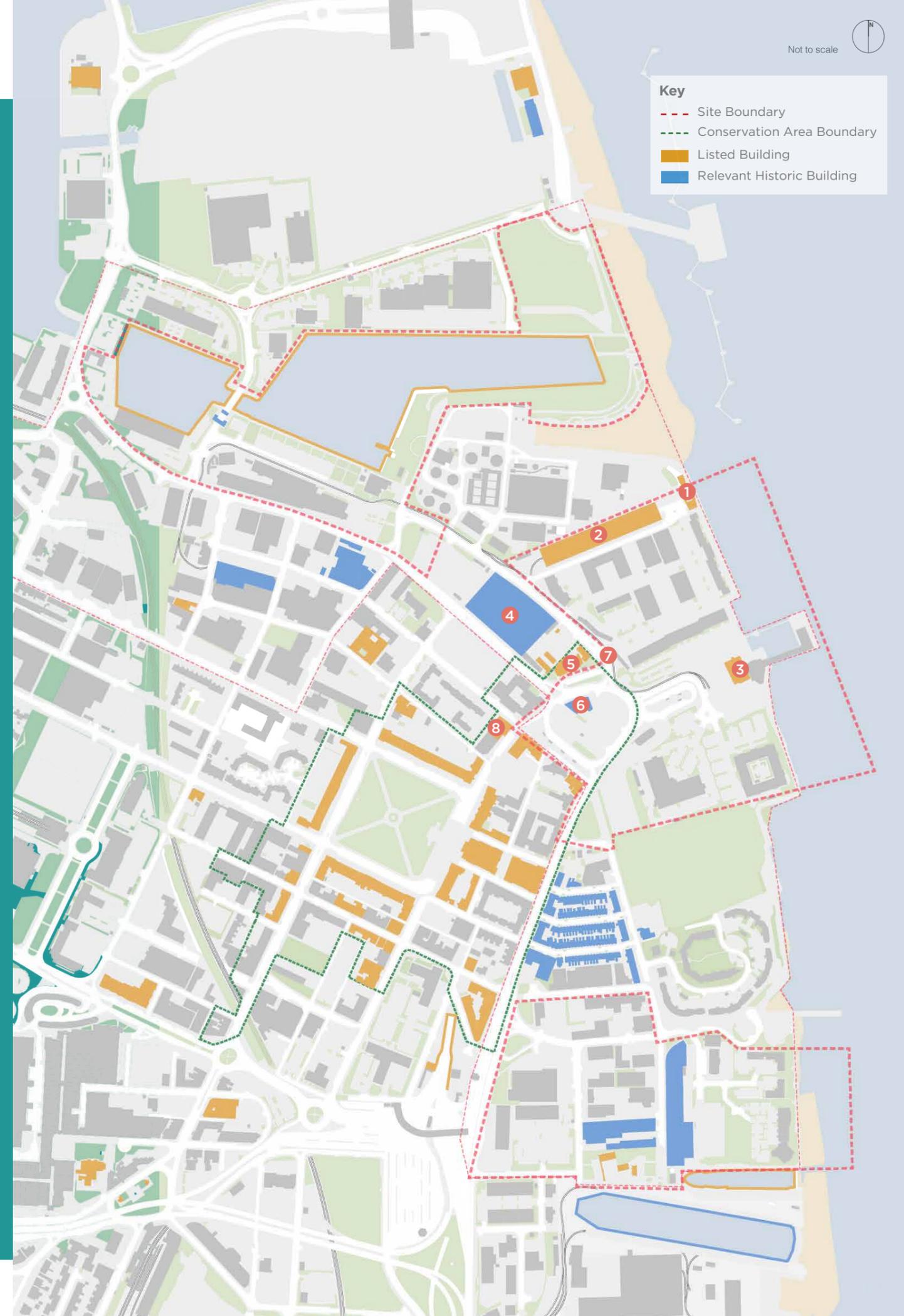
6. Antique Store



7. Former Police Booth and Gate Piers



8. Hamilton Square Station



## A Place with A View / A View of a Place

### Birkenhead to Liverpool

Our Waterfront has the potential to take full advantage of the UNESCO World Heritage views, offering unique and varied views across the Mersey towards Liverpool.

From elevated locations within the area, particularly along the gyratory and Church Street, there are views of Liverpool Cathedral and The Three Graces.

Moving closer to the riverfront and as the topography falls, views of Liverpool from within the site are opportunistic and inconsistent and often interrupted by streetscape

clutter or large areas of poor-quality streetscape. The views are also very often unframed.

There is potential through the introduction of development height and carefully orientated buildings to create structured views towards the Liverpool Waterfront, which creates a richer and more interesting experience across the area. As development is encouraged to come forward, it will be possible to frame key views of the Anglican Cathedral, the Liver Buildings and Albert Dock and as a series of journey-views which reveal themselves the closer you get to the Mersey.

### Liverpool to Birkenhead

Not to be overshadowed, Birkenhead too has a unique skyline almost Venetian in scale and proportion.

The river itself is approximately 1km wide, with building forms, façade detailing and elements of height and expression visible from the opposite riverbank. Any future development along the Birkenhead riverfront will be visible and interpretable from the Liverpool dockside.

Italianate towers pierce the Birkenhead Waterfront's gentle hill brow landscape including the 1886 Hamilton Square Station's brick and terracotta tower and the Palazzo Vecchio-inspired

1860 Central Hydraulic Tower at the Great Float.

Birkenhead Town Hall 1887 tower demarcates the heart of the Hamilton Square Conservation Area.

The delicate silhouette of the 1821 St Mary's church spire marks the national monument and oldest standing building on Merseyside, the Priory.

Three imposing geometric tunnel ventilation shafts sit shoulder to shoulder with the 19C skyline in an Art Deco style from 1924-34.

There is potential to accentuate these vertical elements to create a more interesting and varied skyline, which can offer a balance to the Liverpool skyline.

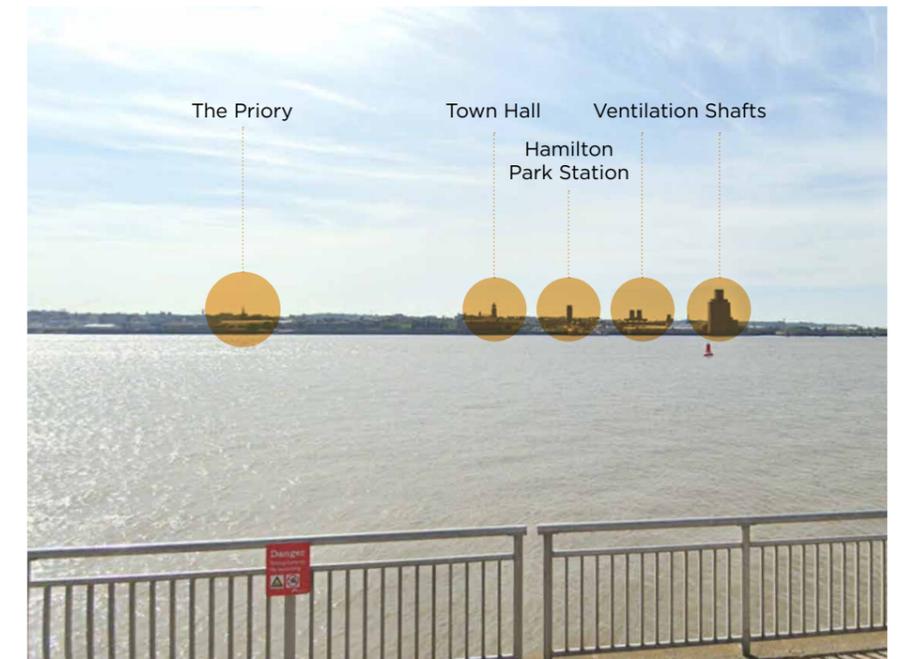


Figure 2.5 View towards Birkenhead from Liverpool

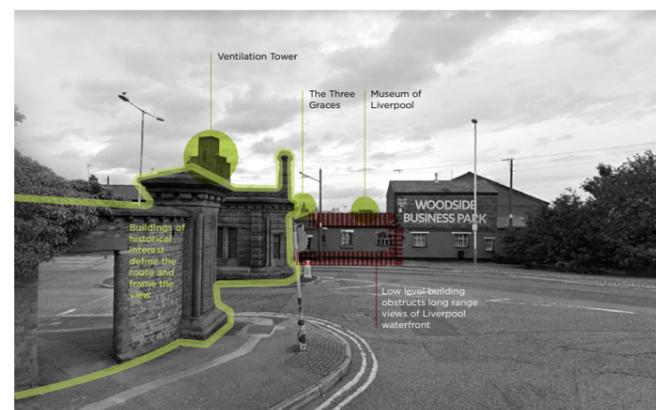


Figure 2.4 Approach views from Hamilton Park Station towards Woodside

Figure 2.6 Approach views along Chester Street and from Woodside Ferry Terminal

## Infrastructure Barriers

The core of the waterfront enjoys strong strategic public transport connections via rail, bus and ferry. Hamilton Square Station provides fast links to Liverpool, including St. James Station within 3 minutes, Lime Street mainline station within 7-minutes, and with local connections to wider Wirral and Cheshire. This is a major asset to the waterfront and will allow us to be ambitious around low-car development in the core area.

Areas further north (close to Egerton Dock) and south (around the Priory) have lower levels of public transport connectivity but good access to the highway network.

Woodside Gyratory has long been a significant barrier between the town and waterfront. It is oversized and over-engineered, creating a poor environment for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Woodside Ferry Terminal is

presently closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is usually a limited ferry service that operates from here, with hourly services towards Liverpool on weekdays with infrequent River Explorer Cruise connections. The Ferry Terminal landing stage is now approaching the end of its structural life expectancy, and major refurbishment or replacement is required if it is to remain operational.

The space outside the ferry terminal is largely occupied by Woodside bus interchange, which is also over-sized infrastructure that experiences low use and demand. It is a poor quality space and inefficient use of land, particularly in a key waterfront gateway location. The existing sub-marine museum accommodated within the terminal, the U Boat Story, is underplayed in this location and represents a great opportunity to be part of a much wider network of cultural offerings across Birkenhead and the Waterfront more specifically.

Active travel links through the area are generally poor, created by a hostile highway environment. Whilst there is a traffic-free route along the waterfront, which is part of Wirral Circular Trail, it is tired and in need of upgrade – particularly in the area around Morpeth Dock, where surfacing and pinchpoints create accessibility issues. There is also little frontage activity along the waterfront route that would encourage more use, footfall and dwell time.

As part of Phase 2 of the City Region Local Cycle & Walking Investment Plan<sup>1</sup>, a new £14m segregated cycleway will connect Birkenhead with Seacombe, Liscard and New Brighton. At present this is planned to run through the Waterfront NF area via Shore Road and the west and south side of Woodside Gyratory before continuing south along A41 Chester Road. This route is subject to change following public consultation in Spring 2021.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-LCWIP-Final.pdf>

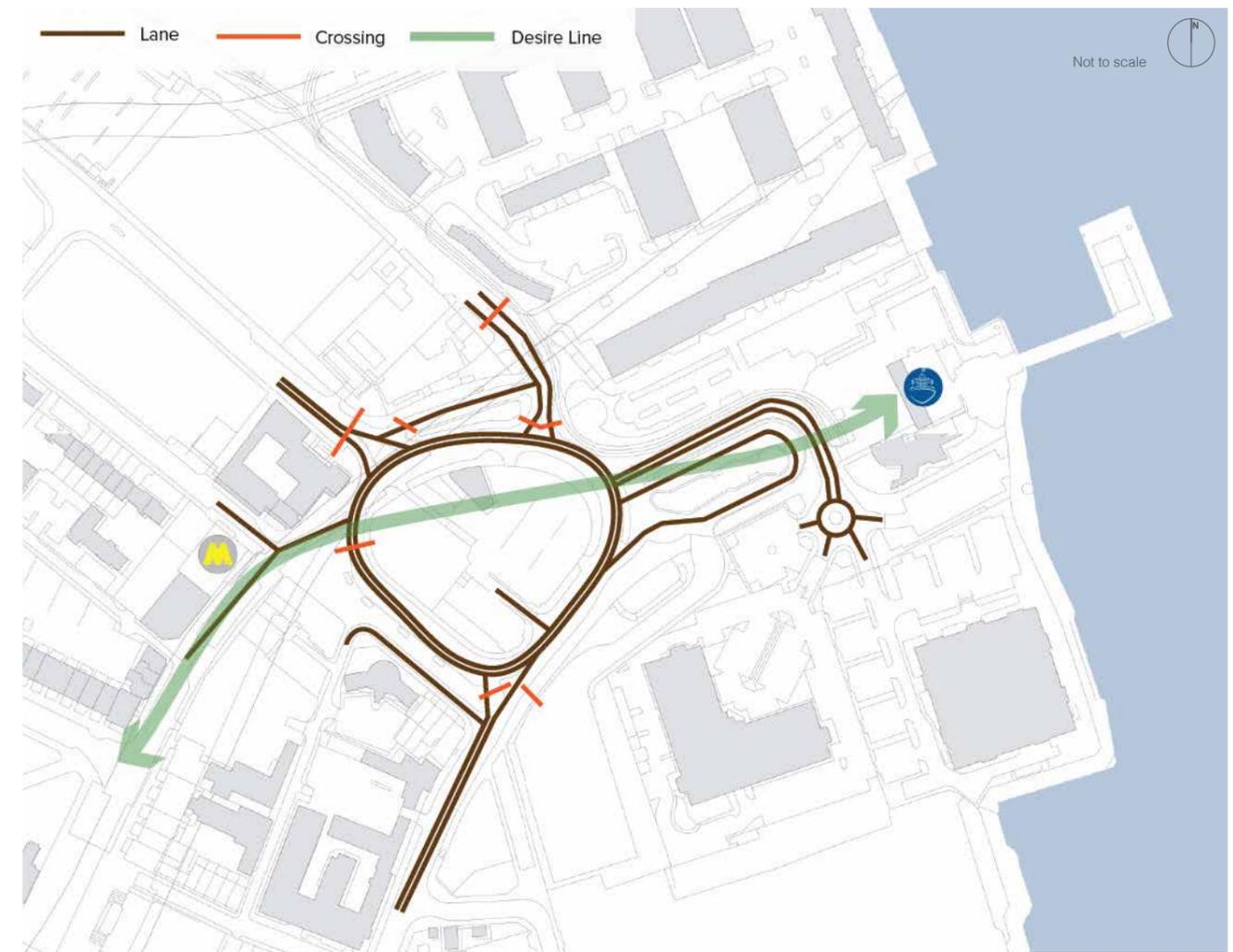


Figure 2.7 Current Configuration of the Woodside Gyratory



Figure 2.8 Current Bus Routes Serving the NF

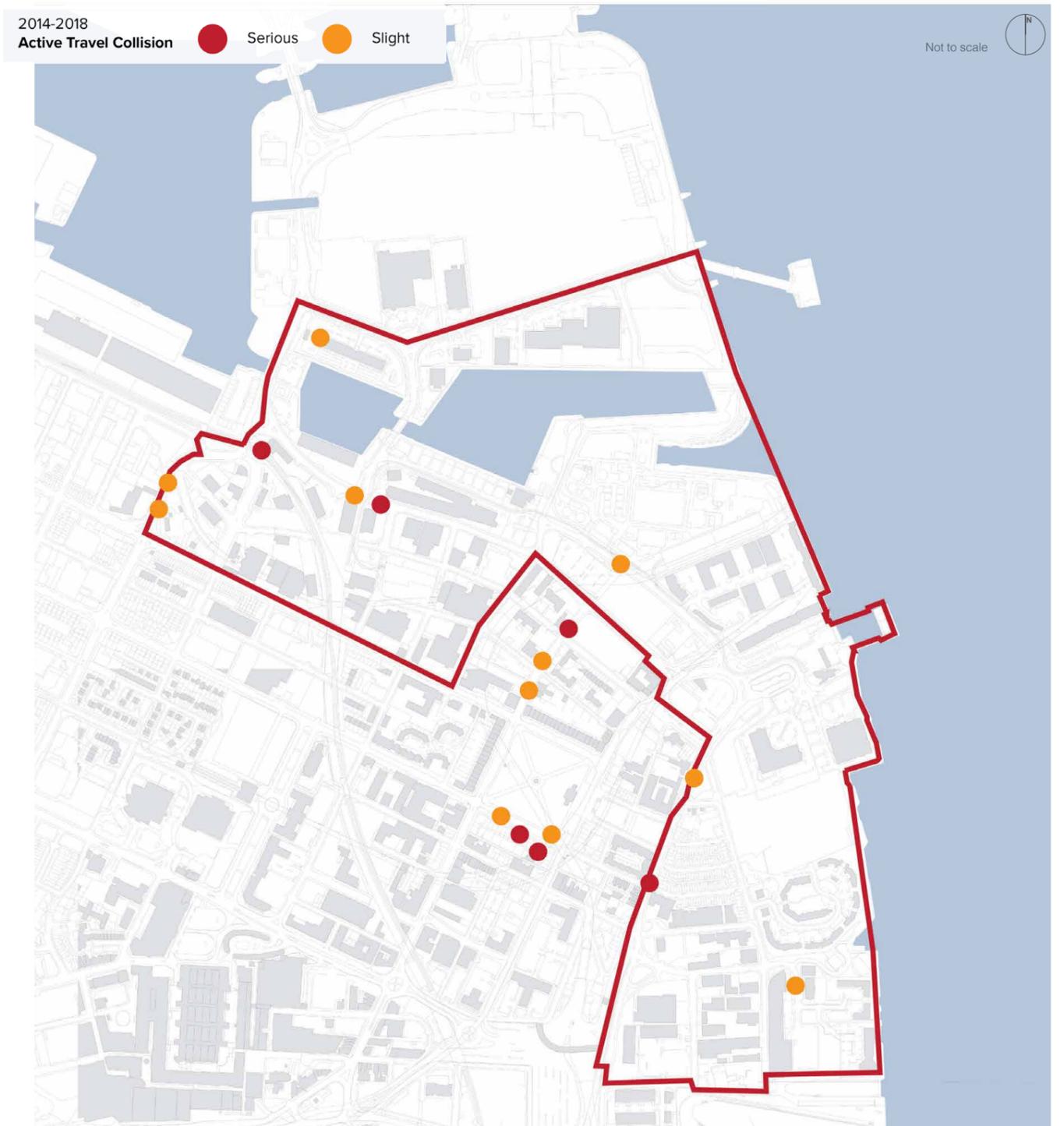


Figure 2.9 Active Travel Collisions

## Landownership and Land Use

Birkenhead's Waterfront is dominated by commercial uses - heavily informed by the Dockside environment and ship building. Cammell Laird to the south sets a strong urban industrial story that has historically run along the waters edge in Birkenhead.

Land uses are however more complex than that within this area - there are residential communities, including traditional dense terraced streets off Church Street most likely built to house Birkenhead workers, and more modern but relatively under-ambitious developments - including a medium density development from the early 2000s as an early attempt to maximise the value of our water.

More widely the area is home to infrastructure including inland docks (Morpeth and Egerton), and a Waste Water Treatment Works. The Woodside Ferry Terminal and

bus station are important movement assets, and the abundance of underutilised land in this neighbourhood accommodates bus layovers, and surface level car parking.

Land use as for all of Birkenhead is relatively complicated with multiple ownerships across the area. That said, there are concentrations of single ownership, or more simplified ownership in key locations.

This includes Peel Holdings ownership of the Woodside Business Park, public sector control of the Ferry Terminal, Bus Station, and the Land Registry and Child Support Agency occupied buildings, and the single ownership of Rose Brae. Whilst not in single ownership, land within the Gyratory does enable the potential to deliver meaningful development as part of reconfiguration in the future - including land owned by Boom Developments.

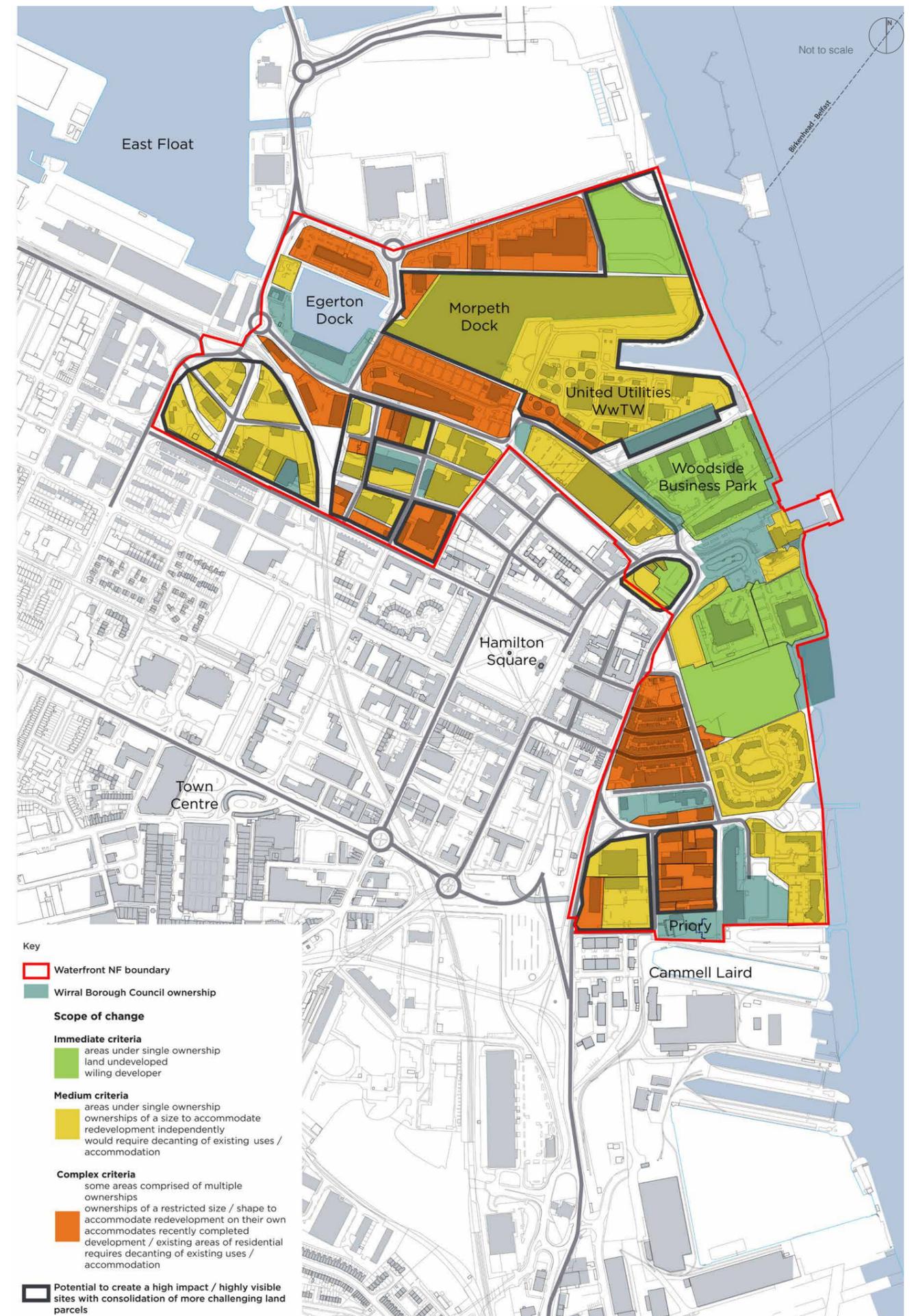


Figure 2.10 Current Land Ownership and Ownership Impact

## Legibility and Coherence of Place

The built environment of the Waterfront currently creates a physical and perceptual barrier between the River Mersey, Hamilton Park Station, Hamilton Square and Birkenhead Town Centre. The visual coherence and character of this area of Birkenhead has become eroded and disjointed over time. There is a distinct lack of permeability between these key locations.

The historic grid is terminated for the most part by Chester Street, creating a severance corridor between the western and eastern parts of the NF area.

There are a number of listed buildings located across the area and others with a positive contribution to the sense of place. Unfortunately, many sit in isolation within a poor-quality public realm and built environment. The Ventilation Tower, Birkenhead Town Hall rotunda and Hamilton Square Train Station provide some sense of location and relationship to the river; however the ability to directly access its edge is challenging and often confusing.

The extent of concrete in this area has a negative impact on the perception of the place and the ability to visually and physically connect with the riverside. The most significant is between the historic Hamilton Square and the river's edge. Within this area, the gyratory highway infrastructure and linked bus layover spaces, large surface car parks, derelict land and current operational infrastructure and

employment sites occupy highly visible riverside frontage locations. Through their publicly restricted nature and poor-quality pedestrian environments they combine to create a missed opportunity.

The second shatter zone is located just south of Tower Road and is characterised by a number cleared sites, low grade employment space, the redundant railway cutting and vehicular dominated highway infrastructure. The sense of arrival to this part of Birkenhead from the north and from Wirral Waters is weak and has poor legibility.

There are areas within the NF which do have a more coherent and readable structure. The area to the west and south of Chester Street has a mostly intact historic urban grid structure which is permeable and offers longer views and vistas. Although the area is predominantly characterised by a mix of industrial units, vacant sites and surface car parks, sitting within the grid structure are some buildings / structures which help with legibility including the Taylor Street Ventilation Tower, the Sidney Street Ventilation Towers and the former Oleo Works chimney along Canning Street. These provide wider markers that help orientate as you move through the area.

Morpeth Dock, and to a lesser extent Egerton Dock, are disconnected and hidden from the wider area due to the nature of the uses which surround them. The Priory is hidden from view and

difficult to access due to the commercial and industrial uses which surround it.

Finally, the river edge is somewhere which also has a disjointed and low-quality sense of place. There is a lack of positive activity along the river edge and many developments step back and form defensive boundaries to the Wirral Circular Trail.

The Wirral Circular Trail is a National Cycle Network route that runs around the edge of the peninsula. Here it connects Tower Road with the Priory, via the north side of Morpeth Dock and along the waterfront. The route is in need of quality and accessibility upgrades, as well as better connection back to the town centre from the Priory.

The scale, type, orientation and relationship of development to the riverside, generally does not create a legible, animated and attractive river front environment and fails to capitalise upon its prominent views and setting.

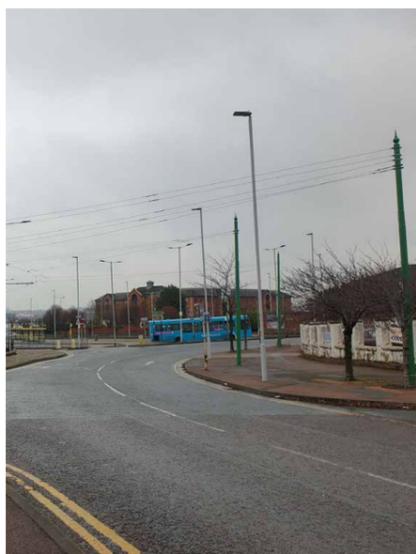


Figure 2.11 Legibility and Coherence of Place

## Framework for Change

The baseline analysis undertaken and summarised above is included in full within the appendix to this NF report. It has fed into the identification of a framework for change across Birkenhead's Waterfront, to be progressed through the option development and testing process.

This framework focuses on the build-up and overlay of five key considerations, responding to the baseline context:

1

**Location, location, location:** More than any other NF area, the Waterfront's main asset is its location. The water is synonymous with the history and development of Birkenhead, but somehow its urban area remains disconnected from the river - its greatest natural asset. This location creates an opportunity unlike anywhere else across Birkenhead - with the potential to tap into some of the potentially greatest land values of the urban area. The strategy must make the most of this location to create a successful neighbourhood, and a successful wider Birkenhead, and deliver development of a scale, type and design that creates iconic landmarks and spaces for the

2

future.

**Creating vibrancy with a mix of uses:** Whilst the waterfront is already a mixed-use environment, the baseline analysis recognises that the area lacks a coherence and a vibrancy. Its uses do not encourage people to spend time at the water's edge, at their water's edge. This is not a place that encourages

3

community, or activity, but with such potential to put people right at its heart.

**Addressing movement within as well as to the waterfront:** The analysis has firmly identified the strategic connections at the waterfront and on its doorstep. Whilst this connectivity is important, it is too easy to overlook the issues with movement within the area. The nature of road infrastructure divides rather than creates opportunity, and sites are constrained rather than unlocked by

4

access. The strategy must address this by putting people and their sustainable movement first.

**Connecting into the core:** This is Birkenhead's Waterfront. To be successful, development and investment need to respond to both the water's edge and the urban context of

5

this neighbourhood - recognising its important relationship to both the water and the town centre, and its role in connecting the two.

**Celebrating our heritage:** Birkenhead is rich with heritage, and its waterfront is no different; its story stamped on its built environment. Future development and investment must celebrate this heritage whilst continuing to make its mark through the spaces and places we create. Celebration can come in many forms, but here it must highlight, accentuate, frame and balance our existing assets. We cannot be afraid of new development in this context, but always be respectful and cognisant of the importance of our most important (and not always listed) assets, telling the story of this place over time.

# Waterfront Vision and Objectives

## Vision

Building on the high-level vision, the NF baseline analysis has recognised the great opportunity that exists within the waterfront area of Birkenhead. It is critical to the wider strategy that change within this neighbourhood is not progressed to create a distinct and separate neighbourhood, but rather that the waterfront evolves as an integral and connected part of Birkenhead.

The waterfront is unique in its potential – the prominence of the views over the water to Liverpool and its Three Graces is significant but is only half of the story. The waterfront represents an opportunity to connect the people of Birkenhead and Wirral with this stretch of the Mersey in an urban environment for the first time in a comprehensive and high-quality way. And from Liverpool, it will be the place in people’s eyelines enticing them to make the short journey across.

Nestled against some of our proudest heritage assets,

the waterfront is special and must be celebrated as such through all future investment and development. This investment and development needs to create a place that people can and do enjoy time and time again. And it must create buildings and spaces that are special as its setting and unique as its potential.

As with all of the NF neighbourhoods, the waterfront is not a homogenous place and nor are we advocating it being delivered as one in the future. Rather it is a combination of a series of sub-neighbourhoods and character areas that combine to create a vibrant and exciting place.

Whilst we acknowledge within the NF the importance of these individual sub-neighbourhoods, it is imperative that there is a unifying vision to bring them together, to create this vibrant and exciting place on our waters edge.

On this basis, and as a unifying vision to underpin this masterplanning exercise, this NF is:

## Waterfront Vision:

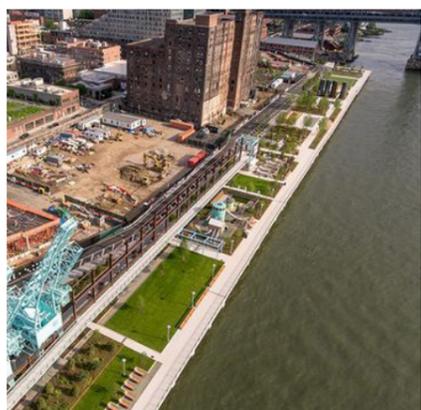
**“Delivering the waterfront Birkenhead deserves. A unique place to live, spend time and do business with a nationally recognised cultural offer within a world class setting.”**



Across the key character areas, this will manifest as:

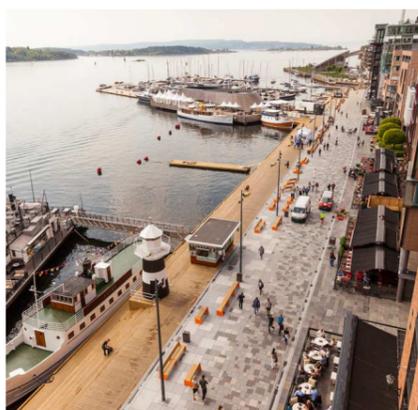
**Woodside Yard and Hamilton Place:**

The Brooklyn to Liverpool’s New York, our iconic waterfront destination, home to a nationally significant cultural offer, and architecture and spaces creating new quality benchmarks.



**Rose Brae:**

A modern, sustainable residential-led mixed use community; a new home on the waterfront, offering family homes in an innovative, appropriately dense setting, connected to the wider waterfront with safe and vibrant public realm corridors.



**The Priory:**

A setting befitting the oldest standing structure in the Liverpool City Region, connecting into our communities, and attracting visitors to this southern waterfront neighbourhood.



**Waterfront Objectives**

Sitting beneath the vision are a number of objectives – identified to guide investment and change specifically in the context of the baseline conditions established, and a means against which to establish a robust monitoring framework to test the impact of implementation. In no particular order:

- **Claiming Birkenhead’s waterfront:** making the once gated and private harbours of Birkenhead an active, visible and well-connected part of the town, including opening up new versatile mixed use development areas and active corridors encouraging recreation and sustainable movement from newly created neighbourhoods, and linking our existing communities to their waterfront.
- **Capitalising on our connectivity:** making the most of our frequent and rapid rail links combine with characterful ferry connections to encourage the sense of a seamless urban environment with Liverpool City Centre. This area’s unrivalled public transport connectivity will support increased activity and use of higher density family living.
- **Completing the world-class City Regional waterfront:** delivery of defining landmark attractions that create a new address on the ‘Left Bank’ of the Mersey. Creating new destination uses within iconic buildings and spaces that can accommodate installations and events combining with the highest quality buildings to add to the character of the regional centre, working in harmony with the Liverpool waterfront but creating a place in its own right.
- **Enriching character and built form:** new high-quality mixed-use development and new spaces between buildings that celebrate and build on our heritage assets and historic environment, to create a distinctive and authentic place.
- **Addressing climate emergency challenges through new development:** offering a new type of low carbon living and working environment that contributes to a sustainable and resilient place for the future. Carbon efficient and climate resilient development, with the supporting infrastructure that sustains lasting

communities, encourages healthy lifestyles and active travel, and helps deliver a vibrant economy for the long term.

- **Showcasing our ambitions:** ensuring development on the waterfront embodies Birkenhead’s ambitions for the future as a vibrant waterfront city. A place defined by its architectural quality and variety, connected by sustainable infrastructure that befits a growing and confident part of the City Region. Functional, high quality streets and spaces that put people first will support more sustainable and sociable living whilst encouraging visitors to explore further into a regenerating town centre.

**Spatial Principles**

Sitting alongside the vision and objectives a series of ‘Spatial Principles’ have been established for the Waterfront NF. These principles have been used to directly shape and test alternative options and ultimately informed the preferred option for the NF. These principles are considered on the following pages and are:

1. **Creating connections to the waterfront**
2. **Arrivals and transitions**
3. **Bringing city life to the waterside**

### 1. Creating Connections to the Waterfront

Key elements of this principle include those listed below, supported by the concept illustration in Figure 3.1. The concept has then been applied to the Waterfront area on Figure 3.2.

Realising the opportunity to draw the historic grid of streets across Chester Street to meet the waterfront;

Creating more connected and legible links to the waterfront, allowing existing neighbourhoods to connect with the waterfront;

Tackling the barrier and severance caused by Chester St by humanising and animating this corridor and looking to create opportunities to cross;

Establishing permeable links and spaces through new development to the east of Chester Street, creating an environment that is linked to its waterfront, allowing the character and life along the edge to filter back towards Hamilton Park, The Town Centre, Hind Street and Dock Branch Park.



Figure 3.1 Connections Spatial Principle Concept Diagram



Figure 3.2 Connections Spatial Principle Applied

## 2. Arrivals and Transitions

Establishing a new arrival experience to the waterfront from Tower Road, integrating Wirral Waters, the Dock Branch Park and Hamilton Park;

Redefining the arrival by river and rail, creating an impressive cultural gateway with a reconfigured and humanised Chester St and Woodside gyratory;

Linking the waterfront with the Town Centre and Hind Street, creating seamless links back to areas of the Town and which integrate historic landmarks as part of the journey.

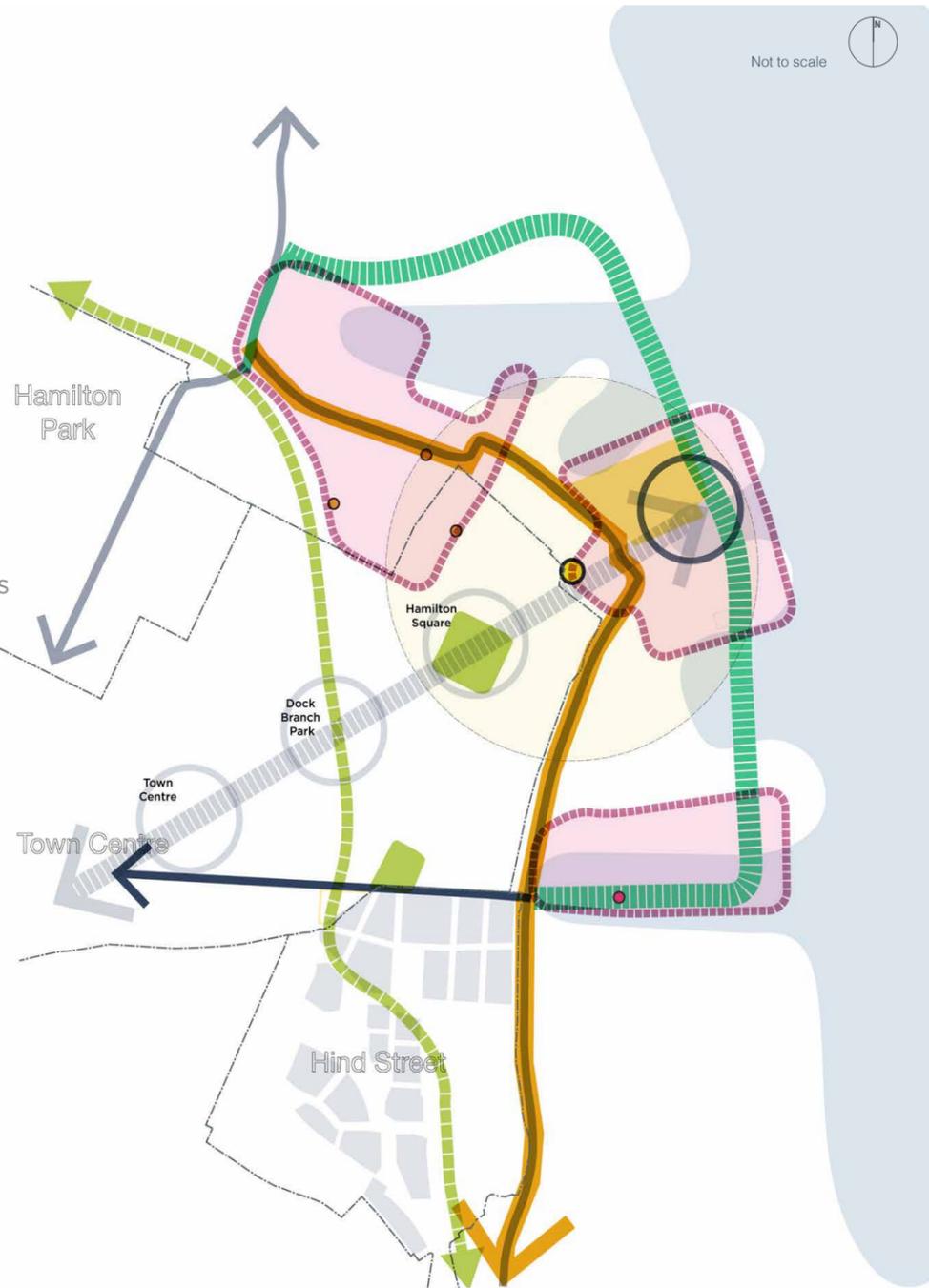


Figure 3.3 Arrivals and Transitions Spatial Principle Concept Diagram



Figure 3.4 Arrivals and Transitions Spatial Principle Applied

### 3. Bringing City Life to the Waterside

Animation of the waterfront through a combination of connected public realm, permeable links and high quality, impactful architecture that responds to the scale of the waterfront opportunity;

A sequence of spaces along the waterfront will provide interest and attract a variety of people to experience this new environment. Animated with ground floor active uses & front doors and which bring people closer to their waterfront;

Celebrating local heritage and identity by integrating the Priory & The One O'Clock Gun as part of an expanded and enhanced Wirral Circular Trail;

Establishing a landmark cultural destination at the waterfront, part of the necklace of attractions along the 'East-West Cultural Axis'.



Figure 3.5 Waterside Animation Spatial Principle Concept Diagram



Figure 3.6 Waterside Animation Spatial Principle Applied

Liverpool's waterfront identity is well-known, characterised by a hard urban landscape with major cultural offers. Complementing this offer, Birkenhead's waterfront could be characterised by expansive green recreational landscapes, with open spaces and diverse leisure offers synonymous with a growing need for improved health and well-being enhanced by an appreciation of natural world.

Figure 3.7 Exploring Complementary Waterfront Identities



# Waterfront Neighbourhood Framework

## Options for Regeneration

In response to the Birkenhead 2040 Framework, NF baseline analysis, vision, and objectives established, alternative options for change and delivery within Birkenhead's Waterfront have been identified and tested.

Alternatives have been modelled in a variety of ways, with the testing to ultimately inform the preferred option for land use and change across the Waterfront area.

Specifically, the option testing has considered the following:

- Gyratory arrangements:** Birkenhead 2040 identifies the reconfiguration of the Woodside Gyratory as a catalyst project enabling new strategic development and place making projects to be delivered, creating conditions for investment required. Different solutions and arrangements creates development and public realm and movement opportunities, with a number tested through the process; and
- Scale and massing within key development areas:** in the context of significant heritage assets within

Birkenhead proximate to and within the Waterfront NF, plus the need to enrich views from and to Liverpool (noting the World Heritage Site status on the eastern bank of the Mersey), the NF has tested alternative scale and massing within the three identified key delivery areas to provide a framework for future developments.

All the options tested have sought to build on the scale and nature of change identified within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework for the Waterfront NF area. Birkenhead 2040 identified an initial number of opportunity sites with the capacity for just over 1,800 new homes to be tested further through the NF process.

Through the NF a number of additional opportunity sites have been identified on the basis of being underutilised, vacant, being promoted for development, and/or being owned by the public sector (including active and vacant assets) - with the NF capturing more localised analysis to be undertaken than through the Birkenhead 2040 process.

## Option Testing Process

### Alternative Gyratory Solutions

Historic masterplanning for the Woodside area has considered potential solutions to the issues identified at the Woodside gyratory. Whilst previous solutions have been designed, none have been implemented to date. The NF recognises the importance therefore of not simply identifying a design solution but being clear on how it can be delivered.

Of primary importance is the recognised need to address the significant severance created by the over-engineered highway associated with this junction. Addressing this issue of severance is key to create better connections between Central Birkenhead and the Waterfront - identified as of strategic importance within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework.

The Framework specifically notes the reconfiguration of the gyratory is a catalyst project for Birkenhead. Through the implementation of the NF, a number of alternatives were identified and considered. These are documented over the following pages.

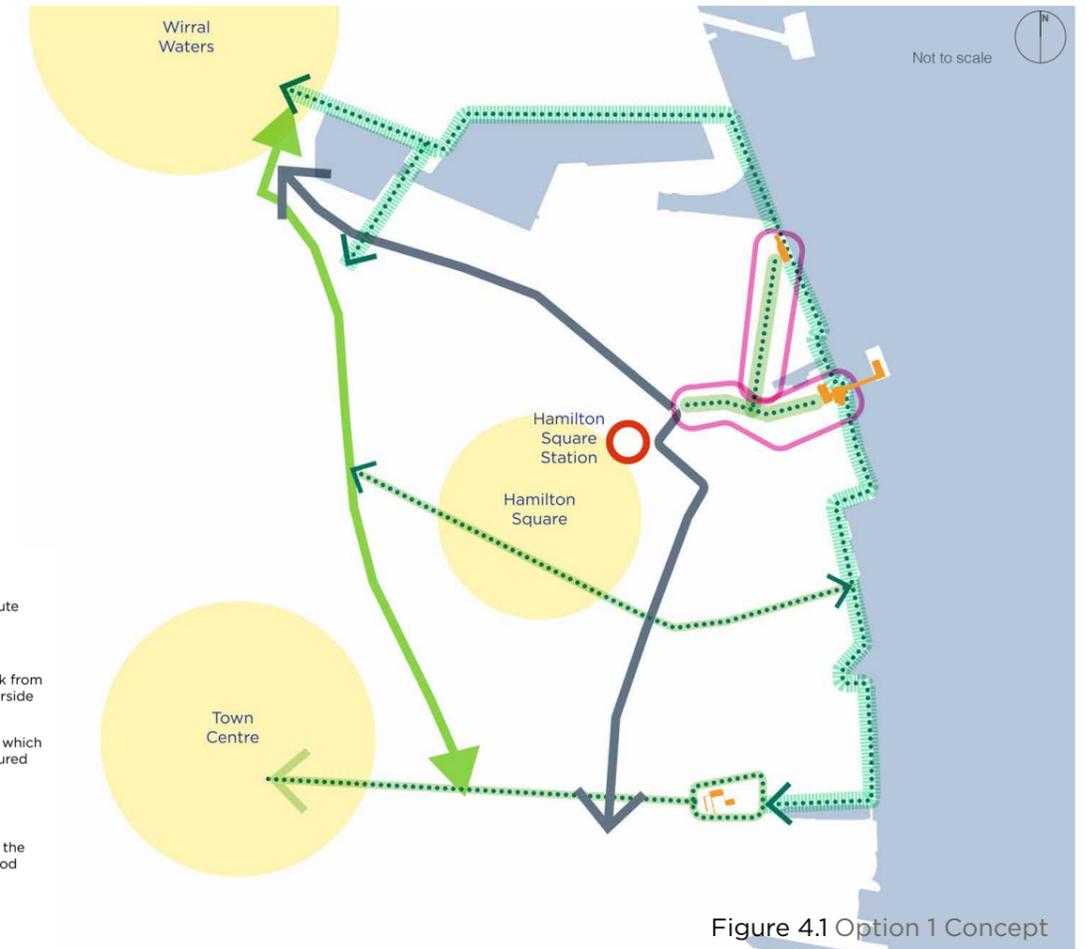


Figure 4.1 Option 1 Concept

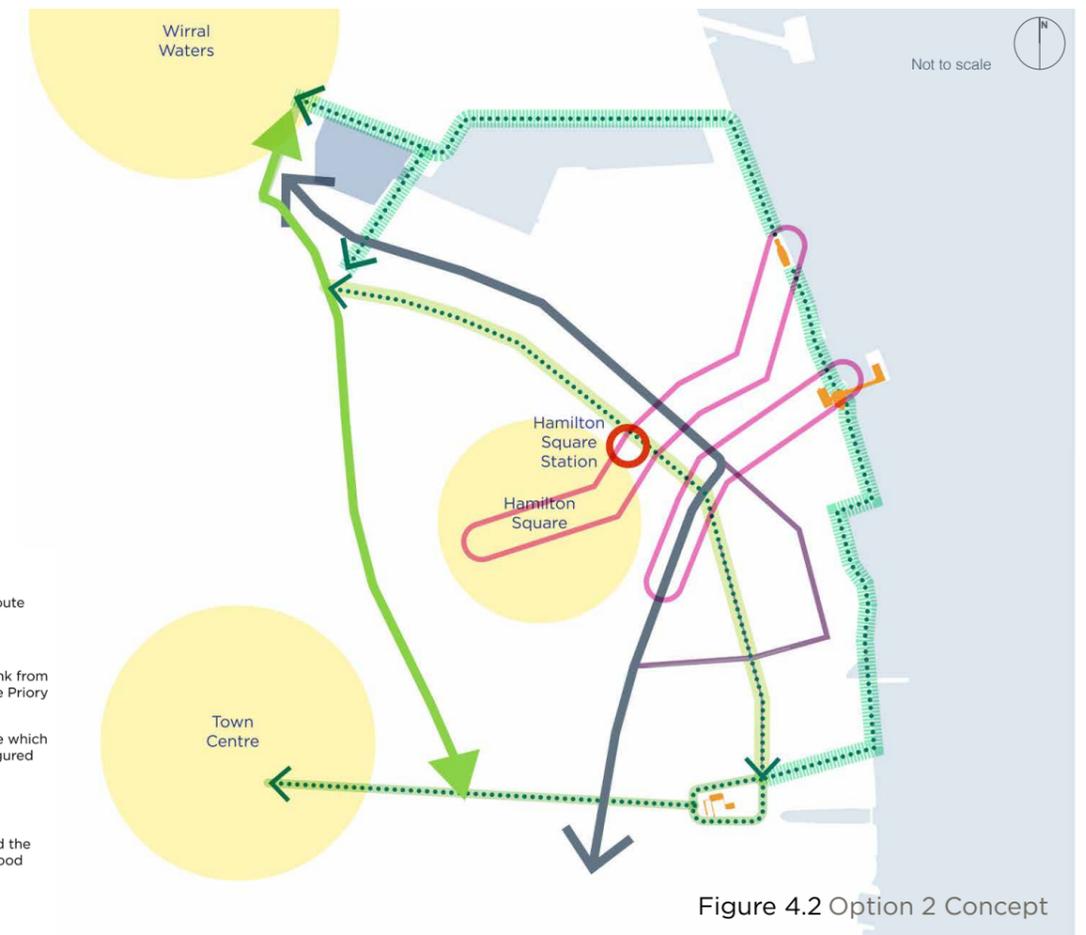


Figure 4.2 Option 2 Concept

“ We will remodel the Woodside Gyratory to unlock the Waterfront development area, and create better physical links to Hamilton Square Station, Hamilton Square, and Central Birkenhead beyond.

Woodside Gyratory has long been a significant barrier between the town and waterfront. It is oversized and over engineered, creating a poor environment for both pedestrians and cyclists. We will remove the gyratory and bus interchange and create a continuous high-quality public realm connection between Woodside Terminal and Hamilton Square. This will allow us to stitch the town and water back together and release major development opportunity sites.

Early on in the NF process we considered alternative options for the gyratory, and their potential implications for wider placemaking and development potential, alongside movement and delivery testing.

These alternatives included different approaches to routing traffic through the area, recognising the importance of the A41 and A554 roads, as through routes connecting north and south throughout

the LeftBank, whilst also prioritising movement and access issues, which extent beyond the local. These roads are part of the Liverpool City Region key route network - highlighting their strategic significance. There is a recognised need to design a solution which enables the creation of a positive and welcoming public realm and unlocks development sites across the area supporting early phase and longer-term delivery aspirations.

In the first instance the alternative designs were formed based on the following:

- Previously suggested re-routing proposed within the 2010 Woodside Masterplan (Peel Holdings, Boom Developments and Wirral Council) (Option 1); and
- Alternative routing suggestion based on work undertaken by Mott MacDonald as part of the NF process - proposing a more direct series of connections from the A41 Chester Road to Bridge Street and Canning Street (Option 2).

These alternatives were tested in the following ways:

Engagement with Wirral Council as Highways Authority - qualitative testing across considerations including

traffic flow, road hierarchy, public transport provision, crossing points and road safety, access to development plots, and impact on the pedestrian environment;

- Engagement with major landowners - understanding implications on their land holdings, seeking to minimise impacts and number of landowners involved within the ultimate delivery strategy for the infrastructure, increasing the likelihood of delivery; and
- Impact on wider strategy identified within the 2040 Framework, including direct implications for public realm corridors, creation of strategic space outside Hamilton Square Station, and connections to the waters edge from the centre.

The impacts of the different options considered are nuanced but important to note including those summarised in the following table - applying a RAG (red/amber/green) rating and explanation for each consideration. The findings of this option appraisal has fed directly into the preferred option for the gyratory, subject to securing landowner agreement and funding, identified later on in this section under 'Introduction to the Neighbourhood Framework'.

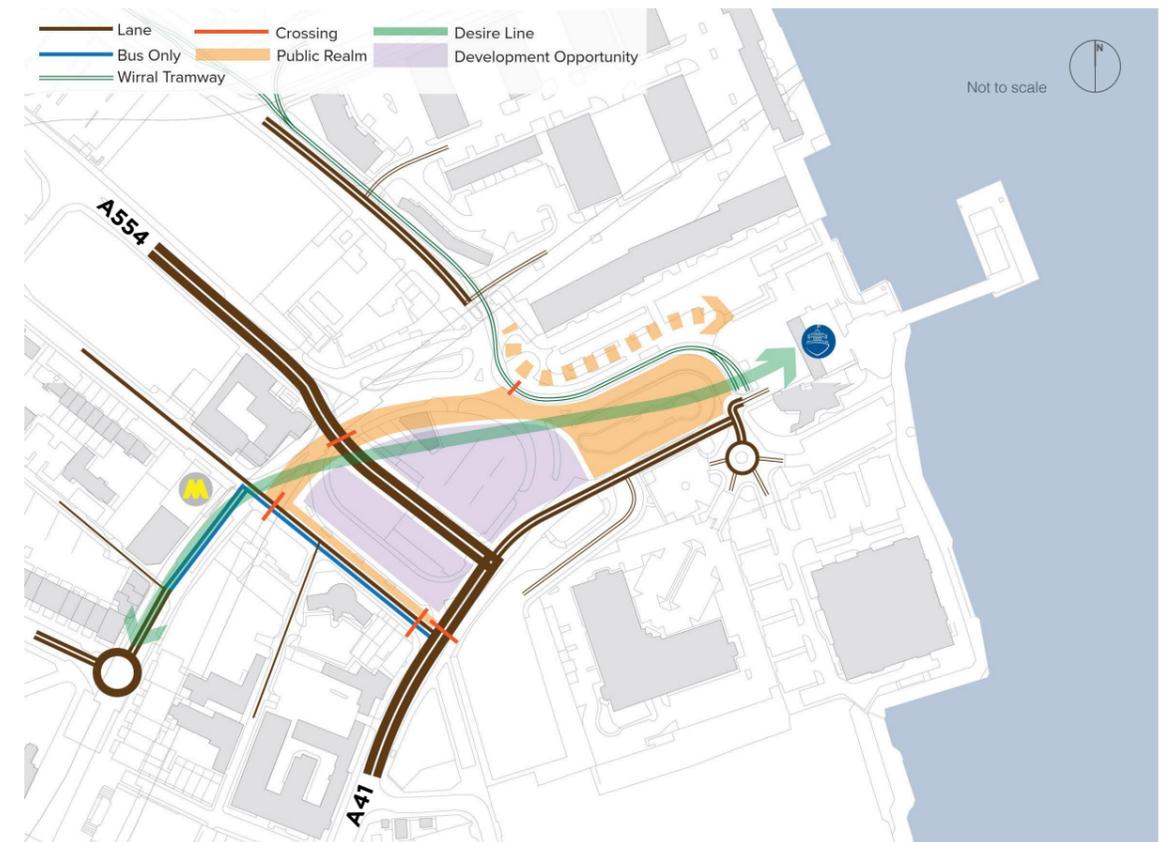


Figure 4.4 Woodside Gyratory Option Testing

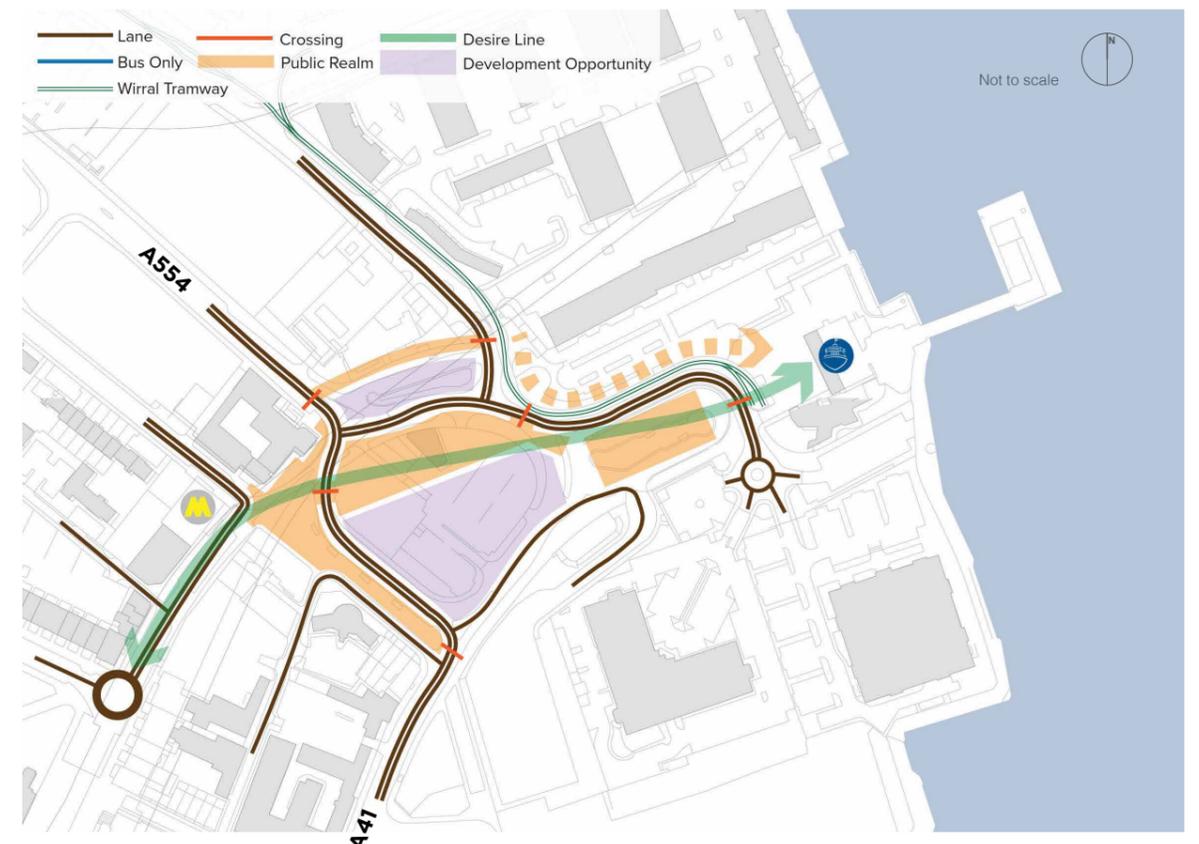


Figure 4.3 Woodside Gyratory Option Testing

### Option 1

Option 1 considered a more radical remodelling of the gyratory, reflecting a road alignment more in keeping with the wider Laird grid.

The proposed road alignment was explored to create a more direct street connection

across the gyratory, towards the riverside. This connection allowed the development structure to be set out within a more regular grid structure, extending the characteristics of the Laird grid towards the riverside.

The following table summarises the assessment

of the option against key considerations used to inform the preferred option.

The thumbnail plans on the next page explain the broad principles behind the option and the adjacent plan applies this in greater detail across the NF area.

Table 4.5 Option 1 Summary of Key Considerations

Option 1		
	RAG Rating	Comment
Contribution to vision and objectives	Orange	Option 1 simplifies the road infrastructure to the east of the current gyratory 'island' - enabling improved public realm connection to the waterfront with strengthened relationship specifically with the Woodside Ferry Terminal environment. Widened public realm outside of the station creates opportunity, but again strengthens primarily route down to ferry terminal rather than along the stretch of the waterfront edge and full environment.
Private sector leverage	Orange	Both options seek to unlock investment opportunities across key development plots. Option 1 retains the existing 'island' land but removes the restrictions of heavy road infrastructure to the north-east / eastern sides. Strong route down to ferry terminal suggests prime commercial core to the waterfront in this particular stretch, with values along the water dependent on secondary infrastructure delivery 'spreading' the environment along the waterfront edge.
Viability	Orange	Alternatives not costed at this stage in any detail but option utilises stretch of existing road, and cuts across the least number of land ownerships reducing land assembly costs and risk of ransom. Retains large development area within the former gyratory centre. Assumption infrastructure delivery will be wholly reliant on public funding.
Technical Assessment	Orange	Transport modelling has not been undertaken of the alternatives, and detailed topography is not currently available. High level highways assessment identified concern with bend proposed within road - creating potential issues for pedestrian crossing angle and visibility, including the proximity of the nature and proximity of the bend from A41 Chester Street and onto Canning Street.
Deliverability	Orange	Both options are noted to have a heavy reliance on public funding so strength of business case will be important. Option 1 requires least third-party land ownership to implement (one private interest impacted) but is therefore not in full public sector control.

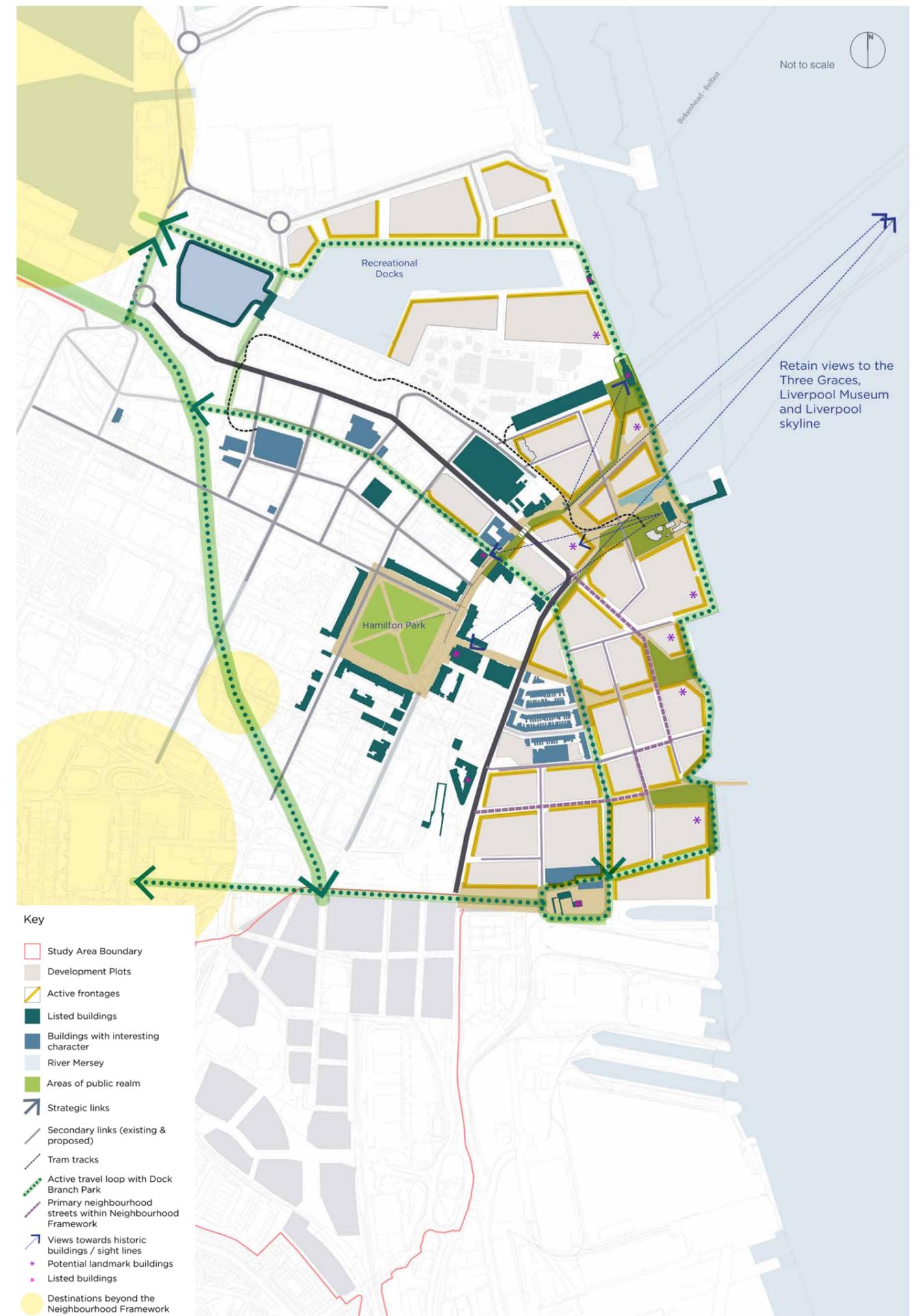


Figure 4.6 Option 1 Indicative Framework Plan

## Option 2

Option 2 explored reconfiguring the A554 section of highway which links Canning Street with Chester Street in order to remove the eastern loop

of Chester Street (which currently has a junction with Shore Road) and opening up land for development opportunities and improved links to the riverside from Hamilton Square Station and Chester Street

This option relies on improving links and connections with the existing street network, and establishing a series of new access points which connect into the existing network of streets.

Table 4.7 Option 2 Summary of Key Considerations

Option 2		
	RAG Rating	Comment
Contribution to vision and objectives	Green	Option 2 creates simplified environment outside of Hamilton Square Station, enabling safe crossing points for pedestrians, direct interface with public transport nodes, and strengthened links east-west (south east - north west) to multiple points along the waterfront by creating more dominant connections from Canning Street and Bridge Street to multiple locations along the stretch of the water's edge.
Private sector leverage	Yellow	Both options seek to unlock investment opportunities across key development plots. Option 2 dissects the existing 'island' land and effectively creates two more regular shaped sites for development purposes. Option envisages spread of activity along the waterfront edge by creating a series of links down to the edge aligned with new infrastructure delivery. Whilst this option spreads opportunity in this way, it may also dilute the impact of a significant critical mass of change in one location to shift the market appeal of this area more widely.
Viability	Red	Alternatives not costed at this stage in any detail, but option includes the greatest level of intervention including road closures, new public realm created and new road delivered. Includes greater number of land ownerships and creates a dissected development plot. Assumption infrastructure delivery will be wholly reliant on public funding.
Technical Assessment	Green	Transport modelling has not been undertaken of the alternatives, and detailed topography is not currently available. High level highways assessment undertaken preferred the simplified road structure and junctions created under Option 2. The improved pedestrian environment and crossing points were considered safer in principle, albeit it was noted that two crossings would be created between the station and the approach to the waterfront instead of one.
Deliverability	Red	Both options are noted to have a heavy reliance on public funding so strength of business case will be important. Option 2 requires multiple third-party land ownerships to implement (more than one private interest impacted) which would create significant challenges and weaken potential future business case.



Figure 4.8 Option 2 Indicative Framework Plan

## Testing Scale and Massing

As noted previously within this document, the NF process has highlighted three key sub-neighbourhoods within the Waterfront, each with its own identity, development potential and interface with key heritage assets.

These three sub-neighbourhoods are identified below, including a summary of the key development considerations within each identified through this NF process:

- **Woodside Yard and Hamilton Place:** Host of the gyratory and therefore an area of major change in the future through delivery of that catalyst project, this is a neighbourhood where significant change is possible due to concentrated pockets of willing private landowners including Peel Holdings at Woodside Business Park and Boom Developments at the gyratory, plus public sector ownerships including Land Registry and the Child Support Agency. This sub-

neighbourhood has critical interface with key heritage assets including Hamilton Square Station, Hamilton Square itself including the Birkenhead Town Hall, and the Ventilation Tower at the waters edge. This area has the potential to be of significant prominence given its topography and aspect from Liverpool.

- **Rose Brae:** A long term underutilised site, a former gravating dock which has subsequently been filled, in single ownership by Prima

Housing Group, who are keen to bring development forwards. The site has a steep topography, running down to the waters edge from an area of traditional terraced housing and sits adjacent to the only 'waterfront' residential offer in the NF - Priory Wharf. Although not directly adjacent to any specific heritage assets, the Rose Brae site is prominent from Liverpool with views including the Town Hall spire visible behind it.

- **The Priory:** The Priory building itself is the oldest standing structure in the Liverpool City Region, nestled amongst a number of industrial uses including the heavy Cammell Laird to the south and multiple smaller more ad hoc light industrial units to the north, east and west. This southern hub of the Wirral Circular Trail is a hidden asset within the wider waterfront area, which could form an important part of the visitor offer across Birkenhead.
- The NF masterplanning process has recognised the dynamic and tension between development pressure across these critical neighbourhoods – taking advantage of the waterfront location and the views of Liverpool and its Three Graces – and the need to protect and enrich heritage assets across the area.

## Method

More detailed consideration of topography and key views has been factored into testing of alternative heights across the three sub-neighbourhood areas. Cross-sectional analysis has highlighted the potential to take advantage of natural topography to deliver height along the waters edge without directly impacting on views behind.

The project team visited the wider site area on several occasions to gain a detailed understanding of the area's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Historic analysis and research was undertaken to inform option testing and decision making as well as the use of a full working 3D model, providing a powerful tool with which to test scale and massing options.

Engagement has also been undertaken with Council officers specialising in heritage and urban design as part of the process.

The option testing undertaken across the three focus areas does not replace or negate the need for more detailed heritage and visual impact testing through the planning application process.

## Heritage Context

As identified in previous sections of this report this is a particularly complex historic urban area where James Gillespie Graham's famous 1825 Laird Grid meets the reclaimed gravating dock areas of Woodside below. These layers of urban fabric have been cleared over decades worth of major road infrastructure network implementation, dominated by the gyratory. Hamilton Square Conservation Area overlaps the gyratory site and development scale options have a strong bearing to its context.



Figure 4.9 Sub-Neighbourhoods

## Hamilton Place and Woodside Yard Option Testing

### Placemaking, Movement & Urban Grain

Both Hamilton Place and the Woodside Business Park area are characterised by open, vacant areas, predominantly in the form of surface car parking and sparse development, creating empty and windswept environments; however, a collection of historical buildings leave clues to a rich and fascinating past providing a context for future development to aid in urban repair.

Option testing sought to establish an urban structure and scale response which would connect spaces with defined walking routes, and manage the transition from the historic Laird Grid with a new, permeable urban street pattern to the riverside.

The wider NF framework for the area identifies that the Woodside Business Park is a key area which will connect the riverside with Hamilton Place and back towards Hamilton Square. An orthogonal layout was first explored but discounted and under the wider framework, a diagonal visual corridor was established.

This diagonal visual corridor links from the corner of Shore Road and former Grade II Listed Police Booth with views towards the Ventilation Tower, framing views of Liverpool's Three Graces and UNESCO World Heritage Site and back towards the Town Hall Clock tower.



Figure 4.10 View towards Woodside Business Park (Image courtesy of Boom Developments)



Figure 4.11 View towards Hamilton Square Station and Park (Image courtesy of Boom Developments)



Figure 4.13 Hamilton Place and Woodside Yard: Testing Urban Grain - Diagonal Connections



Figure 4.12 Hamilton Place and Woodside Yard: Testing Urban Grain - Orthogonal

**Key Views, Scale and Massing**

Hamilton Place

A series of key views were identified early on in the process as important influences on the siting and scale of future development in the area; the Liverpool UNESCO World Heritage waterfront a driver and conversely views towards and within the focus area led by key landmarks such as the Town Hall, Hamilton Square and Hamilton Train Station Tower, the Queensway Ventilation Tower.

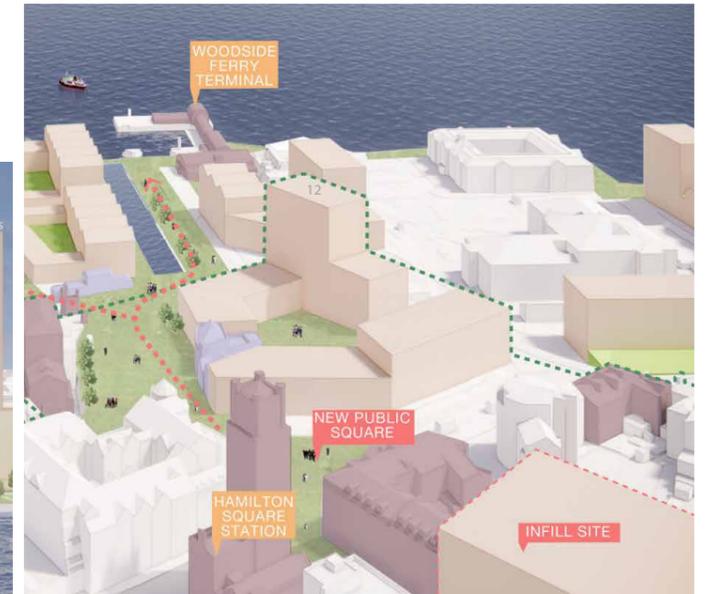
Strategically major arterial roads (Chester Street and Canning Street) will converge at Hamilton Place as a result of the reconfigured gyratory and where the urban grid patterns converge. Framed views repeatedly land at the heart of Hamilton Place and

around the site of the former Woodside Hotel site which lends itself towards a building of and height - a marker to draw views and reinforce the sense of arrival at one of the key transitional sites within the NF.

Potential scale here is tempered by the site's proximity to Hamilton Square and its relationship to the Town Hall and Hamilton Square Station towers. The existing land levels in the area also have an impact on the scale and massing considerations. Hamilton Place occupies an elevated position of approximately 10-15m AOD which quickly falls to 5-10m AOD towards Woodside Business Park. This natural topography allows for an ambitious height strategy in this location.

Low (11- 12 storey), medium (16 storey) and taller scales (circa. 22 storeys) have been tested to determine a response which maximises the falling land level and to strike the balance of building siting to cap multiple interrelationships to viewing corridors, Hamilton Square and the Birkenhead skyline.

**Figure 4.14** Hamilton Square: Testing Scale - Circa 12 storeys



**Figure 4.15** Hamilton Square: Testing Scale - Circa 16 storeys



**Figure 4.16** Hamilton Square: Testing Scale - Circa 22 storeys



## Woodside Yard

This is characterised by low-scale buildings and a long waterfront frontage opportunity of immense potential. Development of significant scale has been well tested here historically and its location adjacent the imposing scale of the Ventilation Tower, the waterfront synergy and visibility from Liverpool, its comfortable distance away from the Hamilton Square Conservation Area, all support an appropriate location for taller buildings within a vibrant and rich mixed-use neighbourhood that maximise this unique proximity to the waterfront and relationship to Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage waterfront.

A number of criteria were tested and developed for taller buildings in this area.

- Establish a positive setting to the Waterfront edge both its grade level experience and its wider setting.
- The composition of elegant and distinctive form and massing to compliment Birkenhead's unique historic skyline.
- Cluster tall buildings as a family in sequence and rhythm. Tall building arrangements were tested in two broad approaches. One as a cluster of buildings set to the side of the Ventilation Tower and the other with height stepping up and falling down to the Ventilation Tower, with the Ventilation Tower reading as part of a new development cluster. Both variants responded to the immediate influence of the Ventilation Tower as well as the consented Wirral Waters proposals.
- The siting and orientation of buildings on the riverside so that they both maximise riverfront views whilst allowing buildings set further back to also capitalise upon views, drawing value and a sense of connection with the waterfront into the heart of Woodside and further into Hamilton Place.
- Setting a bold ambition of waterfront scale and presence for Birkenhead in the context of its sister city Liverpool.
- Embracing historic street grain and views east towards the river water and vice versa from Liverpool.
- Preserve the setting of the Queensway ventilation tower as a standalone structure.

Figure 4.17 Woodside Yard: Testing Scale - Scale towards Queensway Tower



Figure 4.18 Woodside Yard: Testing Scale - Respecting Queensway Tower - avenue



Figure 4.19 Woodside Yard: Testing Scale - Respecting Queensway Tower - orthogonal



## Rose Brae Option Testing

The Rose Brae site includes a significant level differential (c. 15-20m AOD to 5-10m AOD) between a hilltop community of low-rise, tight-knit terraced streets along Church Street to contrasting with the wide open former gravings docks (buried and currently not visible) below at water's edge. It lies besides contrasting neighbours, with large urban workplace blocks and open surface car parking to the north on the one hand, and a medium scale (average 5 storeys), spiralling residential development to the south on the other.

### Placemaking, Movement & Urban Grain

The development height testing for this area has been driven by several influences including;

- Transforming the waterfront promenade into an accessible, vibrant, desirable and memorable destination
- Creating a development and access strategy which allows for independent primary access from Church Street with potential future secondary access connections to the north and south.

- Steep topography as a potential opportunity to allow views of the riverside to be visible across the site, to achieve a comfortable sense of enclosure along the riverfront as well as establishing a height datum that respects the existing ridge heights of the terrace streets along Church Street;
- Extend the historic street grid patterns east-west towards the water and conversely axially towards the Town Hall
- Strong family neighbourhood and community, focussed around the Swinging Arm pub.
- Single land ownership across Rose Brae as an opportunity to unlock deliverable development.

### Key Views, Scale and Massing

Church Street bounds the western edge of the site and marks the threshold of the hilltop plateau of Birkenhead. It offers expansive views across the river and back towards the imposing mass of the Town Hall through the fine grain Castle, Hornby and Water Streets.

Key criteria tested within the context of the spatial framework:

- The principle of striking the established 2 storey ridge height of the existing terraces eastwards across the site. The ridge datum of 2-storey street terraces corresponds to around 6-8 storey scale at the water's edge, which creates a restrained, human scale and comfortable sense of enclosure along the riverfront;
- Hornby Street in particular centres on axis with Hamilton Square and the Town Hall, seen as a logical opportunity to extend a route towards the waterfront.
- Perpendicular streets can help negotiate the steep topography to the west of the site.
- Low-scale housing typologies both consolidate the community street vernacular and protect the view setting of the Town Hall
- Medium scale (6 storeys) is commensurate with this waterfront location, maximising the waterfront opportunity locally whilst also managing heights in the context of the wider NF area and areas of height intensity (Woodside, Wirral Waters).

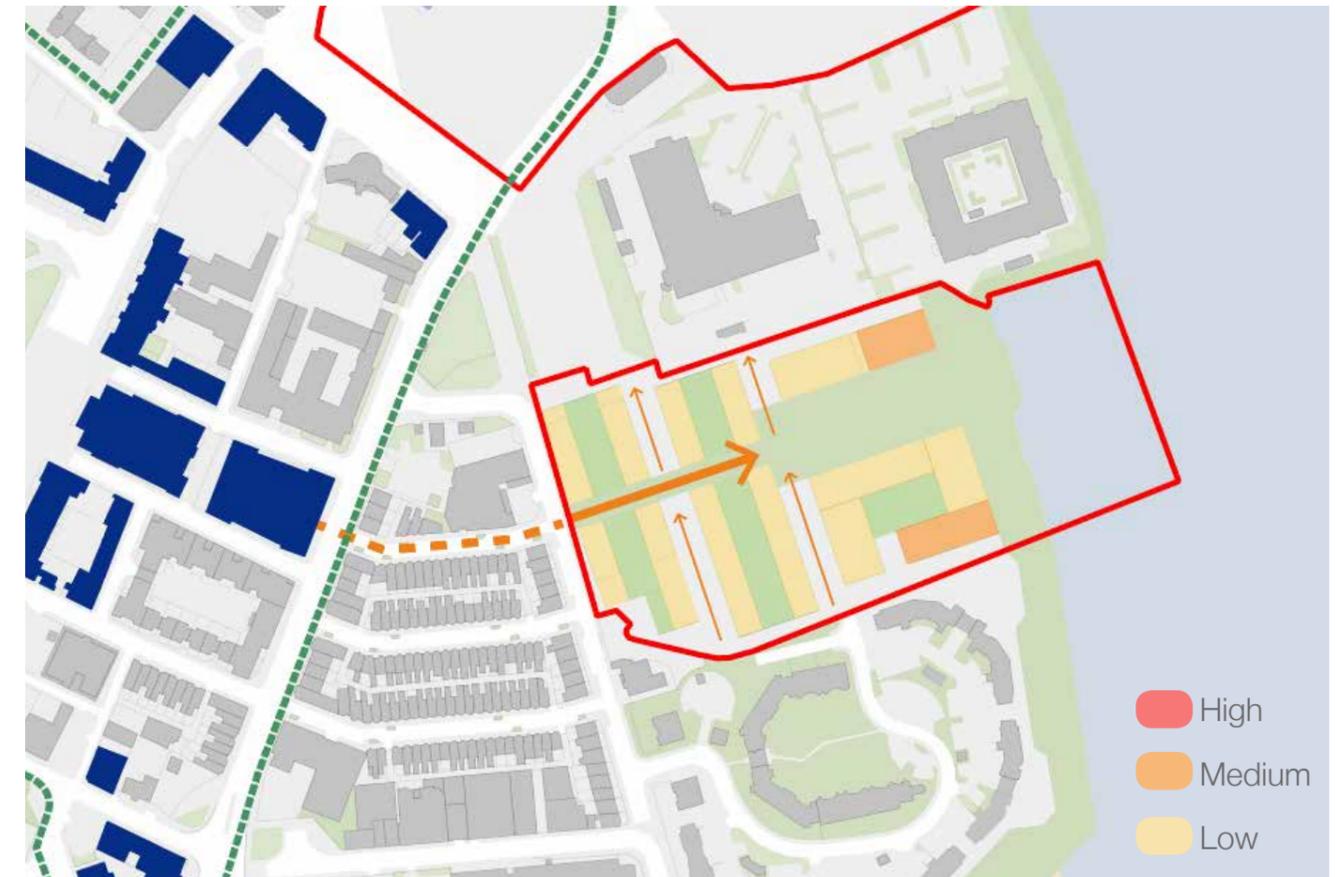


Figure 4.20 Rose Brae: Testing Urban Grain - Western streets parallel with hillside topography, medium density which opens to waterside amenity



Figure 4.21 Rose Brae: Testing Scale & Massing

## The Priory Option Testing

Hidden amongst a patchwork of ad hoc industrial units lies a historic site of profound importance to Birkenhead's identity and heritage. The oldest standing structure on this peninsular is now enveloped by light industrial and commercial units which remain in strong demand, fuelled by a relationship with Cammell Laird shipyard and the associated Engineering College.

Characterised by a plethora of small, linear landholdings the framework establishes principles of incremental change and environmental improvements. Through the option testing process and consultation with Wirral Council Officers two alternative approaches to layout and landuse were considered, taking into account approach views of the spire, surrounding building heights and the current nature of industrial uses / land ownership across the area.

### Placemaking, Movement & Urban Grain

This has been driven by;

- As identified in the spatial framework, establishing a strong east west street grain across the current Birkenhead tunnel landing area, preserving views of the spire from the Town Centre and establishing a visual connection from Birkenhead Centre to the water's edge.
- Using public realm and high-quality open space to improve the setting of the Priory and open up immediate views of the building and associated structures
- Retention and re-use of the historic warehouse buildings to the north of the priory as part of the future development response to the Priory.
- Large mature trees enclose the Priory in locations – a leafy character microcosm could be expanded, with the Wirral Circular Way (street) trees retained and enhanced along with the introduction of additional public realm and SUDs to help reinforce the east – west links with the Town Centre.
- Axial viewing corridors of the slender St Marys' church spire around Church Street, from the corner of Market Street and Grange Road beyond. The development response from these locations should ensure they allow the spire to remain as the most prominent feature in the skyline whilst also establishing a legible and interesting approach to the priory along a network of streets and spaces
- Equally the preservation of hierarchy of the spire as seen from the river side.



Figure 4.22 Existing waterfront skyline – delicate punctuations over a low-rise urban landscape



Figure 4.23 Street level view from Market Street towards the Priory Spire

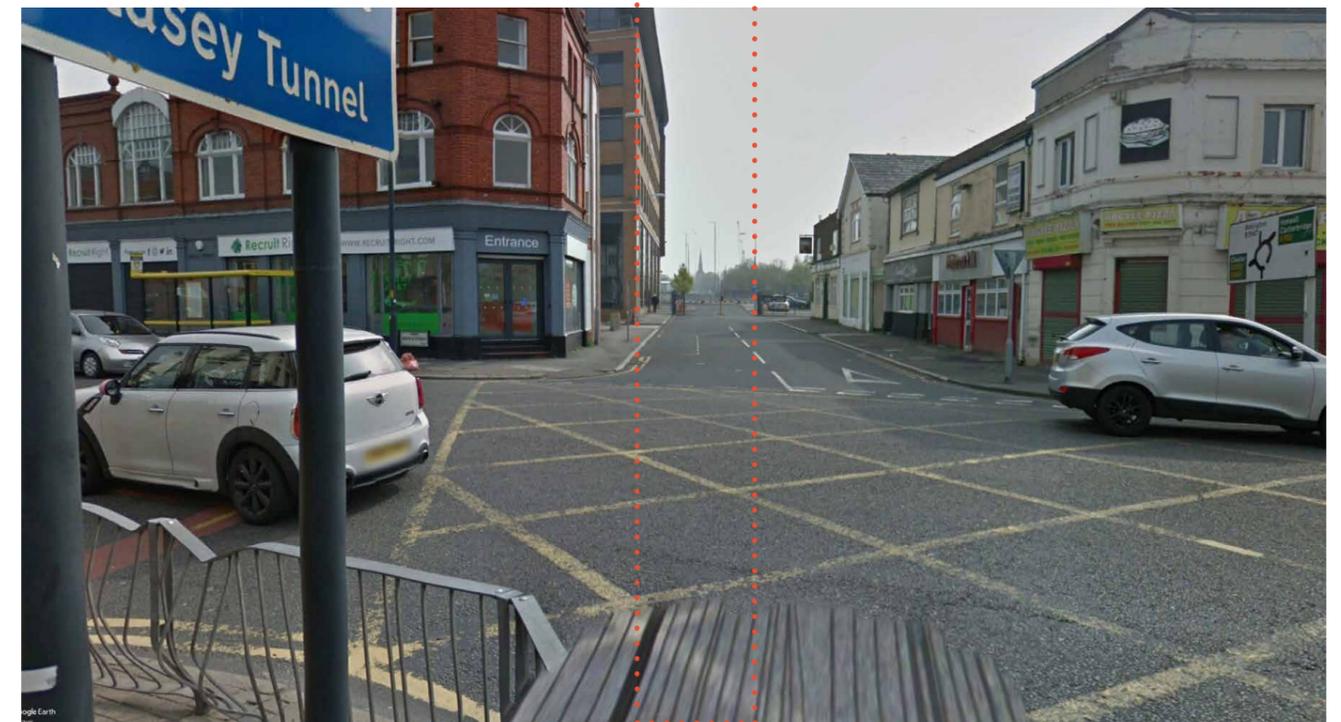


Figure 4.24 Street level view from Grange Street East towards the Priory Spire

**Key Views, Scale and Massing**

- A 'halo' of low-rise scale balancing to around 3 storeys to the north and west protects the St Mary's church spire visibility and ensures it is the most prominent vertical feature within the NF area
- Scale of no more than 10 storeys to the water's edge peaking at Monks Ferry. A variety of heights were explored from 9 - 12 stories.
- Low scale maintained towards Cammel Laird side to protect river views of St Mary's Tower.
- Working with non-designated historic structures such as the Engineering College Church Street arched wall and several historic brick warehouses.
- The Priory as a fulcrum for views, walking and cycling routes and spearheading the neighbourhood identity.

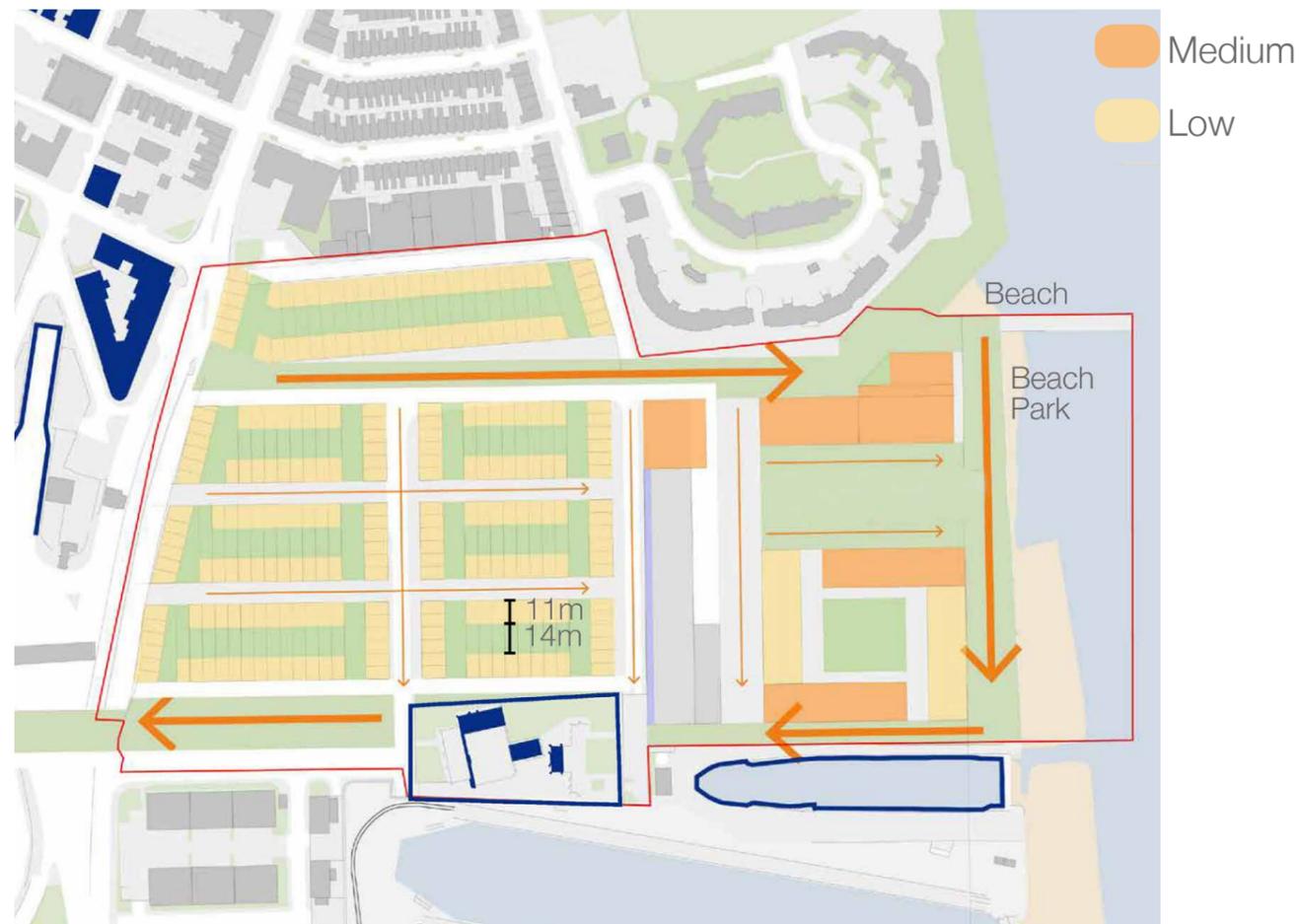


Figure 4.25 Priory: Testing Urban Grain - Gradual urban repair and consolidation towards a worth historic Priory setting. Fine grain domestic scales to the west rise in scale and open public realm to waterfront



Figure 4.26 Priory: Testing Scale - 9 storey waterfront building



Figure 4.27 Priory: Testing Scale - 12 storey waterfront building

## Introduction to the Neighbourhood Framework

The final Waterfront NF is comprised of a series of layers, ultimately combining to articulate a long term comprehensive and coordinated plan for change for this critical area of Birkenhead, shown in Figure 4.28. These layers have been built upon the 2040 Framework vision and principles for the Waterfront, and the optioneering undertaken as part of this NF process.

The scale of change identified across the NF area is significant - with the potential to deliver the following:

- Over 2,300 new homes including over 1,600 new apartments and over 600 new homes;
- In the region of 74,000sqm of new commercial floorspace to include at least two new hotels from budget to high end standard, a range of business space including flexible, small and medium clean light industrial, innovation space and office floorspace, accommodation to house leisure, culture and arts uses, and food and drink establishments;
- A new second entrance to Hamilton Square railway station; and

- New and improved public realm.

The remainder of this section articulates each of the layers as they exist within the masterplan, including:

- **Place and urban design:** identification of development plots and urban structure;
- **Land use:** identification of land use mix across the NF area;
- **Approach to density:** overall approach to density identified through the BRF;
- **Building heights:** following the sensitivity testing within the sub-neighbourhood areas, a framework for building heights to be applied to new development proposals across the area;
- **Movement and access:** overall approach to strategic and key plot access, active travel networks, public transport provision and car parking; and
- **Public realm and landscape:** Identification of the network of spaces critical to deliver alongside the development and movement projects.



Figure 4.28 Waterfront NF Illustrative Masterplan

The following images taken from Wirral's 3D model set the scene for the scale of ambition proposed through regeneration across the Waterfront NF, illustrating what could be achieved:



Credit: Digital Urban

## Green infrastructure linking to the Docks

An elevated view looking along Hamilton Street towards Woodside Yard and onwards to the Liverpool UNESCO World Heritage riverside. Dock Branch Park can be seen to the left linking up towards Wirral Waters.



Credit: Digital Urban

## Re-connecting Birkenhead with it's waterfront

An elevated view over Hamilton Park looking towards Woodside Yard and Hamilton Place. Woodside Yard sits to the left of the arrangement with Hamilton Place sitting adjacent and the Rose Brae site sitting to the right.

West Float  
 Queensway Tunnel  
 Ventilation Shaft  
 Proposed Tower  
 Dock Branch Park



Credit: Digital Urban

An elevated view looking along Canning Street, with Dock Branch Park to the right and the buildings of height and scale focused around ventilation tower and current gyratory location.

## A Waterfront Destination

New Developments  
 at Waterfront

Royal Liver  
 Building  
 Royal Albert  
 Dock



Credit: Digital Urban

Birkenhead becomes the distinguishable sister city to Liverpool, with the combination of building scale, an active ground floor public realm and riverside gateways that brings life to the waterside. Wirral Waters, sitting just behind the Waterfront, brings further profile and scale, combining with Liverpool to create a world-class riverside destination.

## Completing the Mersey Story

## Place & Urban Design

The plan opposite identifies key existing and proposed urban design features, which will be delivered through the framework.

The Waterfront NF will deliver transformational change to this key part of Birkenhead, creating a distinctive and interesting place, through a combination of place interventions including:

- Public realm transformation along existing streets and spaces, as well as creating new people focused spaces;
- Contemporary new development, accommodating a variety of uses, designed to high standards and which responds to its local context;
- Reconfiguration of existing highways infrastructure to improve connections to the waterfront and allow for sustainable and active travel movement.

The introduction of new development plots, will help to create a logical, connected and legible network of streets, continuing the

principles of the regular and celebrated Laird Grid structure to the west out toward the river edge.

This positive permeable development structure will be reinforced by the introduction of high quality buildings, typically on corner locations, framing local views. These will create interest across the area and help to add variety in the composition of buildings.

Where existing buildings and structures are retained, new development should look to respond to and respect their setting, for example the existing terraced dwellings along the cluster of Water / Castle / Hornby Street.

The development response to the river edge and inland docks should orientate to overlook these spaces, with activity on the ground floor and positive spill out spaces and environments where appropriate to activate the public realm.

The masterplan identifies opportunities for taller and more distinctive landmark buildings along the river edge. Achieving a blend and variety in scale, orientation,

materiality and massing will help to create a diverse and expressive character, albeit managed to ensure all development respects and enriches the overall vernacular of Birkenhead and its distinct scale and built form.

New and retained streets should be animated and well overlooked by development, creating a sense of enclosure which is comfortable at the street level and provides good levels of passive surveillance.

The existing built heritage of the area, particularly the listed buildings and buildings of interest should be celebrated and integrated as part of any new development.

New development should work to positively contribute to their character in certain, creating an overall townscape character which works in balance and reinforces the historic character of the place. The NF expects innovative design and materiality of development to be progressed across the Waterfront area in response to the challenges of new alongside retained buildings.



Figure 4.29 Proposed Urban Design and Placemaking Features

## Land Use

New development should work to positively contribute to their character in certain, creating an overall townscape character which works in balance and reinforces the historic character of the place. The NF expects innovative design and materiality of development to be progressed across the Waterfront area in response to the challenges of new alongside retained buildings.

The NF has identified multiple development plots across the area anticipated to be delivered through direct public intervention or by the private sector over the next 15 - 20 years subject to market conditions.

As across all of the NF areas and the Birkenhead 2040 Framework generally, residential development forms a critical component of the land use strategy for the masterplan.

The context of being proximate to the water - with the potential to deliver active leisure integrated within the built environment, a vibrant mix of supporting uses, and the views of the iconic Liverpool waterfront - creates the conditions for higher land values here than perhaps anywhere else across Birkenhead.

Critical to this land use strategy though is the need to deliver a vibrant mix of uses - supporting residential development, attracting people to and through the area, and creating a distinct, modern and exciting neighbourhood. The masterplan does not simply envisage mix at the neighbourhood scale but encourages mix at plot and building scale. Single use development proposals will not be encouraged across the area.

Key commercial opportunities identified include:

- Cultural, leisure and arts:** The Waterfront forms a key part and ultimate destination of the East-West Cultural Axis catalyst project identified within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. This project envisages the delivery of a series of spaces and buildings connecting the high street with the waterfront, focused on cultural and arts-based uses. This offer needs to complement the wider strategy for Birkenhead, which includes ambitions for enhanced museum space, the delivery of Eureka!Mersey, and a new Birkenhead Market alongside potential re-imagination of Birkenhead Town Hall as a community and arts hub. As part of the Central Birkenhead strategy there may be a

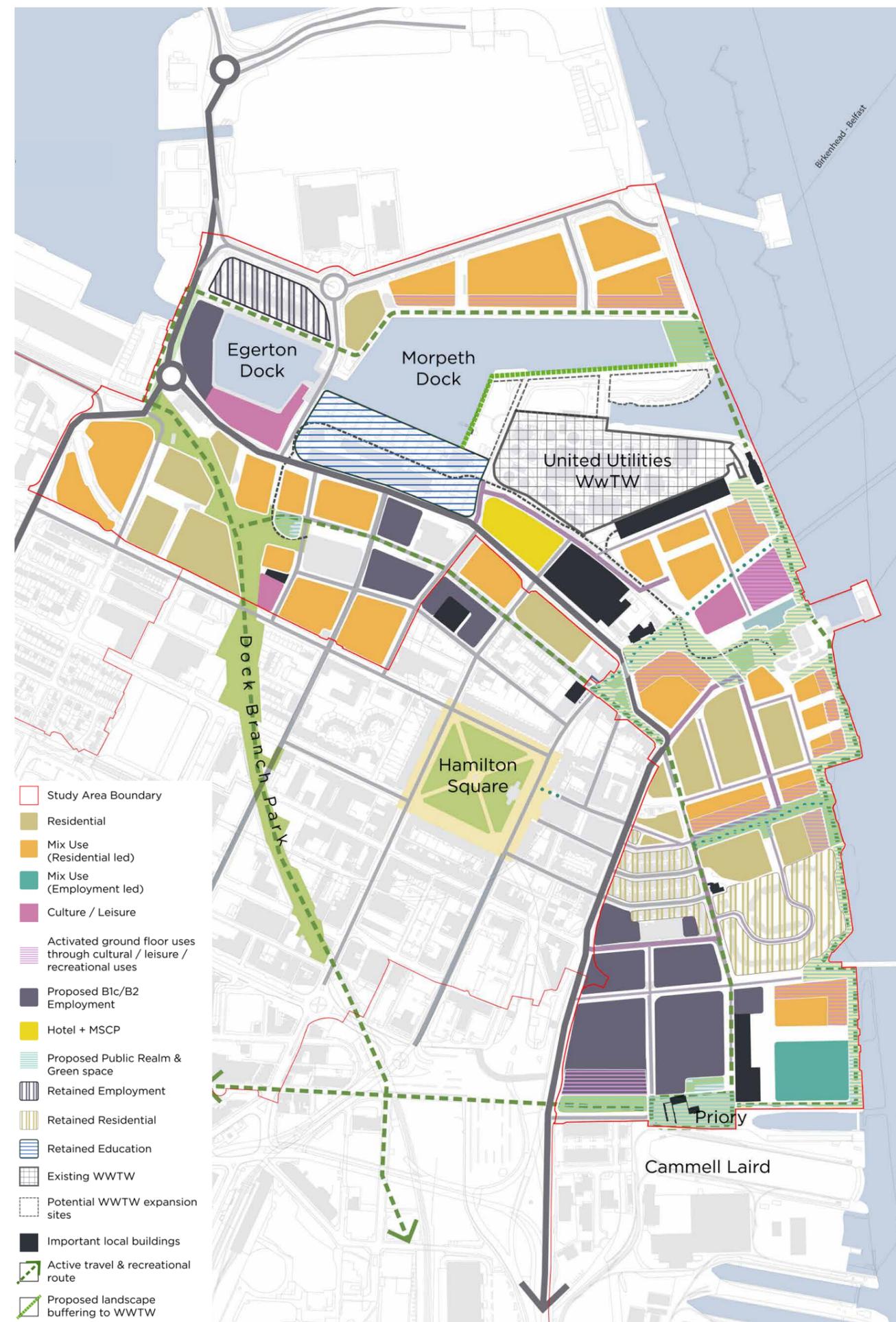


Figure 4.30 Proposed Land Use

need to accommodate the potentially displaced cinema offering, but the Waterfront can be even more ambitious. Emerging market opportunities including active, competitive and digital leisure should be explored as a unique visitor attraction, alongside ensuring a footloose approach to emerging national or international visitor offer requirements, and more incremental delivery of events and arts programmes across the built and public realm.

- Business space:** The masterplan identifies the potential to deliver an offer complementary to the commercial offer being progressed within the Commercial District and Wirral Waters large floorplate Grade A space coming forward within the Waterfront. There is an existing business community within the area, and signs of the emergence of grassroots creative businesses clustering around the Priory. The masterplan acknowledges this important business potential across the area and assumes retention of some business uses to the south of the area, with new development accommodating clean and flexible business uses as

appropriate. In the north of the Waterfront NF these uses are considered potentially significant as buffers between residential and visitor uses and the Waste Water Treatment Works, and to the south to buffer and protect the heavy industrial character of Cammell Laird.

- Hotels:** Birkenhead is significantly under served by hotels. Market demand is driven by visitors to the Wirral, and will grow as the commercial offer increases in Birkenhead. In addition the area is well connected to Liverpool via Hamilton Square station and indeed with the potential to enhance water-based connections, the Waterfront is the perfect place to deliver them. As part of stand alone offer, or within a mix in buildings of heights, hotels will form an important part of the town's cultural and business offer, with the added benefit of views of Liverpool. Given the noted undersupply of hotels the masterplan assumes delivery across all grades - from budget to high end.
- Food and drink:** the masterplan identifies food and drink as a critical supporting use across the Waterfront, and an attractor of footfall in its own right. The strategy

for food and drink needs to be carefully managed alongside the footfall pressures being experienced within the town centre, but active uses of this nature will be supported in this location along key routes and to frame and activate public spaces created.

- Retail:** The masterplan acknowledges that there will need to be retail delivery to support residential and the wider land use mix proposed. This retail must however be of a convenience and ancillary nature - respecting the retail hierarchy and protecting the high street in Birkenhead as being the core location for comparison retail offering.

The Waterfront NF includes the safeguarding of land that may be required to accommodate an Energy Centre as part of the Birkenhead Heat Network project.

The following plan and corresponding table illustrate the land use mix on a plot by plot basis including identified assumed dominant land use, and potential supporting mix subject to viability, market demand and requirements and scheme design in the future.

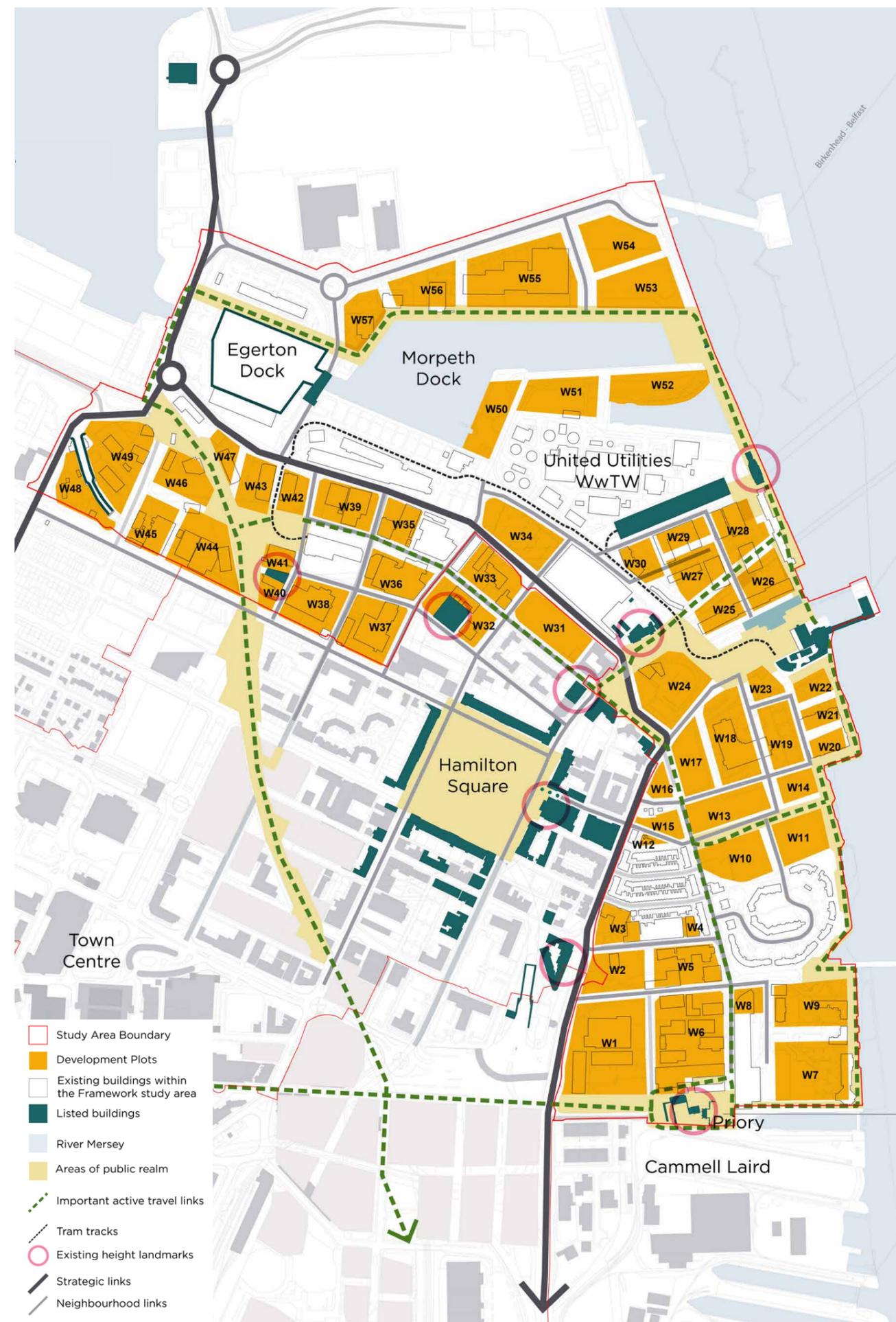


Figure 4.31 Masterplan Framework Plan

Table 4.32 Proposed Land Uses Across the NF Area

Plot Ref:	Gross Area:		Type:	Single Use:	Mixed Use:	Anticipated Primary Use:	Potential Secondary Use:	
	sq m	Ha						
W1	13,351	1.34	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W2	4,247	0.42	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W3	2,561	0.26	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W4	523	0.05	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W5	4,648	0.46	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W6	11,480	1.15	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W7	8,038	0.80	Development		Yes	B1c/B2	Residential	
W8	1,388	0.14	Development	Yes		B1c/B2	N/A	
W9	6,073	0.61	Development		Yes	Residential	B1c/B2	
W10	4,793	0.48	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W11	4,029	0.40	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W12	369	0.04	No development identified, uses retained.					
W13	4,517	0.45	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W14	1,840	0.18	Development		Yes	Residential	Leisure	
W15	1,469	0.15	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W16	1,082	0.11	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W17	3,791	0.38	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W18	6,684	0.67	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W19	3,854	0.39	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A	
W20	1,324	0.13	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W21	1,520	0.15	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W22	1,550	0.16	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W23	1,585	0.16	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W24	6,921	0.69	Development		Yes	Residential	Hotel	
W25	2,685	0.27	Development		Yes	Leisure	A1-A4, B1a	
W26	3,785	0.38	Development		Yes	Leisure	A1-A4, B1a	
W27	3,729	0.37	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W28	3,973	0.40	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, A1-4	
W29	1,960	0.20	Development		Yes	Residential	B1a, B1b, B1c	

Plot Ref:	Gross Area:		Type:	Single Use:	Mixed Use:	Anticipated Primary Use:	Potential Secondary Use:
	sq m	Ha					
W30	2,294	0.23	Development		Yes	Residential	B1a, B1b, B1c
W31	4,952	0.50	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W32	3,445	0.34	Development	Yes		B1a, B1b, B1c	N/A
W33	4,155	0.42	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W34	5,587	0.56	Development		Yes	Hotel	MSCP
W35	2,594	0.26	Development	Yes		B1a, B1b, B1c	N/A
W36	4,024	0.40	Development	Yes		B1a, B1b, B1c	N/A
W37	5,784	0.58	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W38	4,810	0.48	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4
W39	4,442	0.44	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W40	1,218	0.12	Development		Yes	Museum	N/A
W41	1,342	0.13	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4
W42	2,058	0.21	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W43	3,304	0.33	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4, B1b, B1c
W44	6,957	0.70	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W45	3,514	0.35	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W46	3,829	0.38	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W47	1,573	0.16	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W48	3,581	0.36	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W49	7,654	0.77	Development		Yes	Residential	B1b, B1c
W50	4,293	0.43	Safeguarded	N/A			
W51	5,116	0.51	Safeguarded	N/A			
W52	5,462	0.55	Safeguarded	N/A			
W53	6,166	0.62	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4
W54	5,446	0.54	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A
W55	12,325	1.23	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4
W56	4,335	0.43	Development		Yes	Residential	A1-A4
W57	3,380	0.34	Development	Yes		Residential	N/A

## Heights

The approach to scale and massing has been carefully considered across the NF area. The pressure to deliver at density is recognised as a commercial driver across the neighbourhood - with the potential to take advantage of the views out over the water but also a challenge given the notable heritage assets and pre-existing development vernacular across Birkenhead.

Detailed consideration has been given to scale and massing within the character areas identified and considered more generally across the whole NF area as well. The NF generally takes a positive view to the

introduction of height to this area, with the ambition to create iconic architecture in this area of Birkenhead.

The height framework illustrates an approach to building heights which the analysis supports as a 'comfort zone' relative to heritage considerations in particular. It is not intended as an absolute restriction on greater heights being delivered in the future, but any greater height will need to be justified and respond to noted heritage concerns within the character areas identified.

The framework and indicated heights on a plot by plot basis is not presented

to replace any need for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and/or Heritage Impact Assessments that may be required through the planning process.

At neighbourhood scale, the framework advocates a strategy which respects the characteristic consistent Birkenhead 3-5 storey height datum whilst allowing for expressions of height in locations where it is appropriate and creates a positive contribution to the wider townscape.

The strategy seeks to make the most of the falling topography from Hamilton Square Station south and east towards to the river's



Figure 4.33 Higher scale - ensure quality, with human scale ground level



Figure 4.34 Waterfront human, memorable scale



Figure 4.35 Domestic scale of characterful tight-knit streets

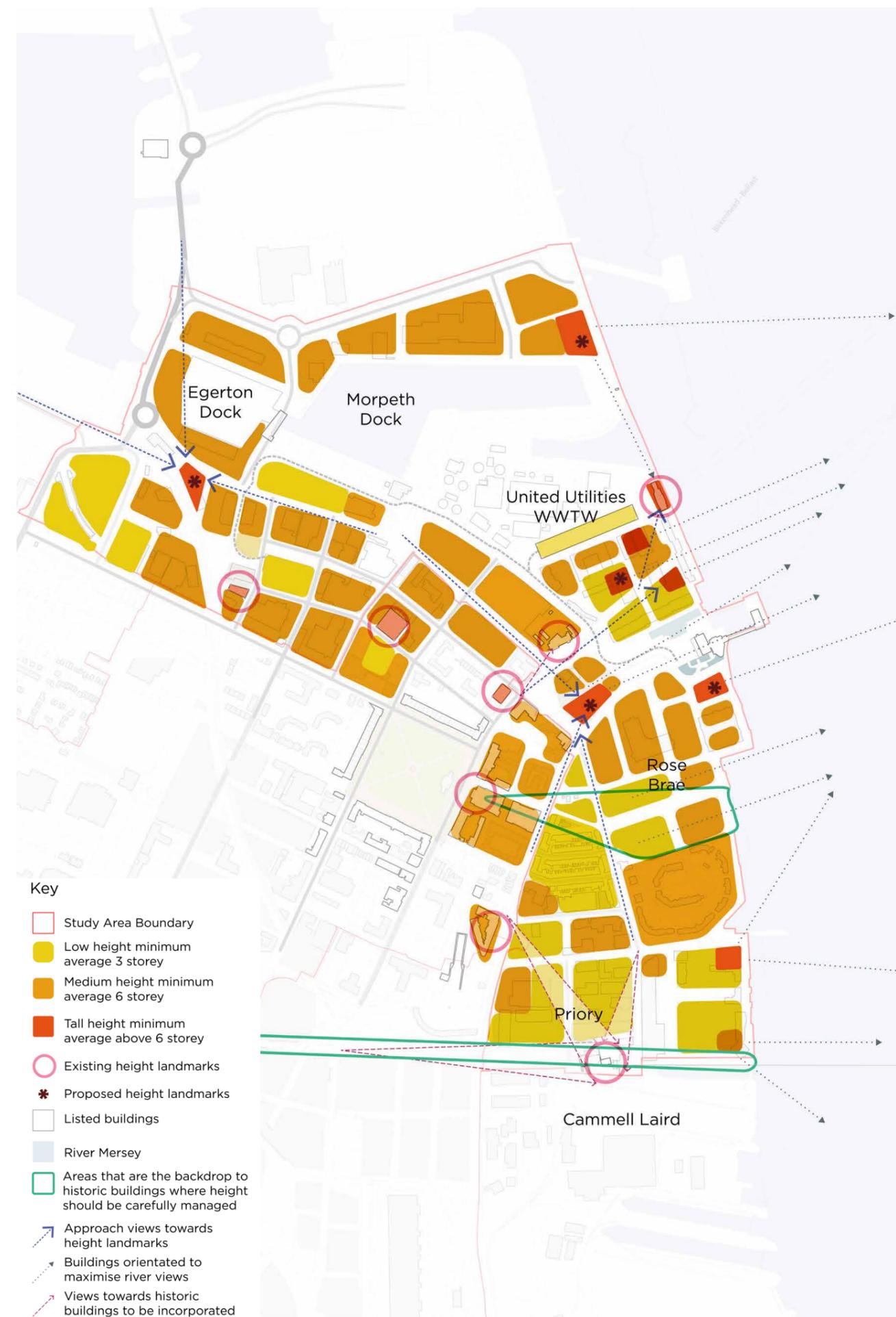


Figure 4.36 Proposed Heights Plan

edge by proposing taller elements of height whilst also sitting comfortably within the overall existing height datum of Birkenhead.

It also seeks to respect the backdrop of elegant, historic vertical features which pierce the skyline, notably the Birkenhead Town Hall, Hamilton Square

Station Tower, the Ventilation Towers and the Priory Spire, by ensuring that any new development compliment and respect the historic skyline composition. Any new development of taller scale will need to be of high quality with proportion and elegance of critical concern. Maintaining east-west viewing and movement

corridors with slender elevations facing these axes will facilitate this.

What is presented within the framework is a coordinated approach to managing height along the river front, whilst promoting height and scale in key locations. The full extent of the riverfront frontage is managed through a principle

of peaks and troughs, with peaks of height focused around existing tall features and set within the context of the proposed height within Wirral Waters.

The troughs of height still present a scale which provides good levels of enclosure and a human scale, which works with local

topography and respects the consistent Birkenhead height datum.

The Framework does not support blanket height along the frontage - creating interest through clustering and allowing views out to Liverpool from set back buildings and plots within the core of the urban area as they

are developed in the future.

Specific clusters are noted around the existing gyratory island site - identified in the framework as 'Hamilton Place' through to the Woodside area, at 'Morpeth Point' to the north of the existing Morpeth inland dock, and around the Dock Branch Park.

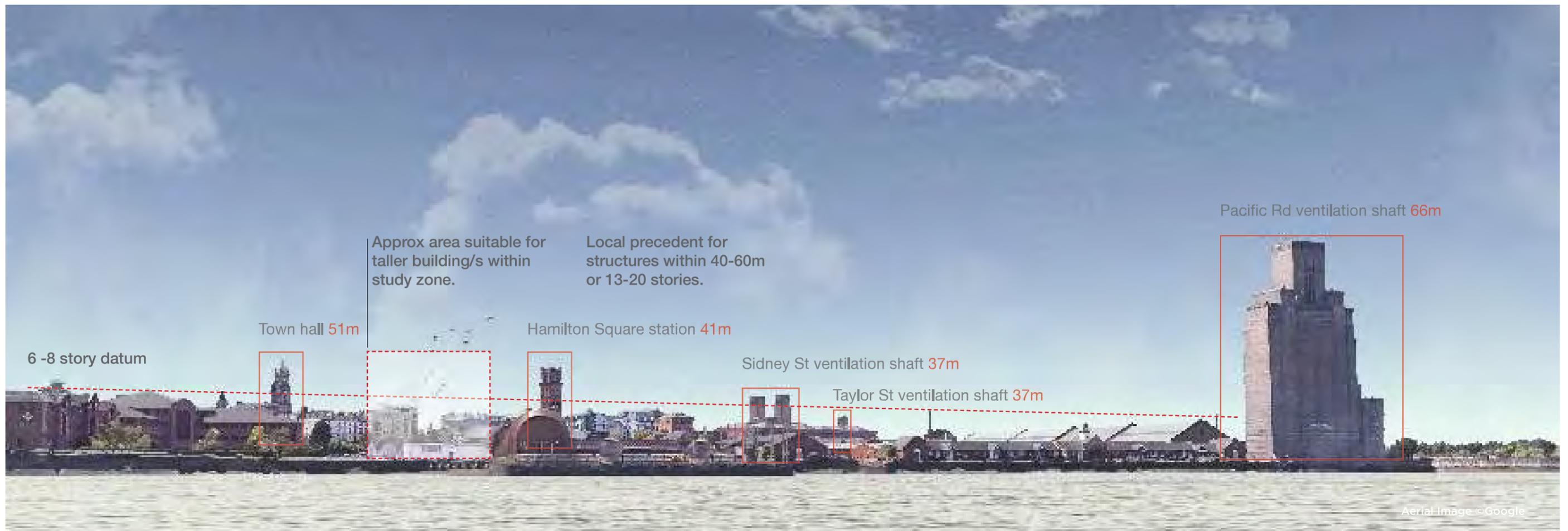


Figure 4.37 Height variations in context around Hamilton Place

Height clustered within these locations will create highly visible and impactful development frontage observable from the Liverpool dockside, but which also compliments the height profile of existing buildings including the Ventilation Tower and Hamilton Square Station. The combination of existing tall features and proposed elements of height work as a balanced set piece across the unique Birkenhead skyline.

Restrained scale is identified at Rose Brae and particularly around the sites adjacent to the scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade-1 listed Priory and Cammell Laird.

Lower height is proposed adjacent to areas of existing development, for example the terraced housing along Water and Castle Street, respecting their setting and helping development to more sensitively integrate.

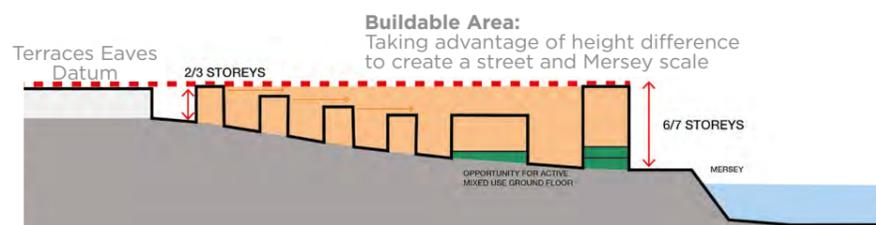
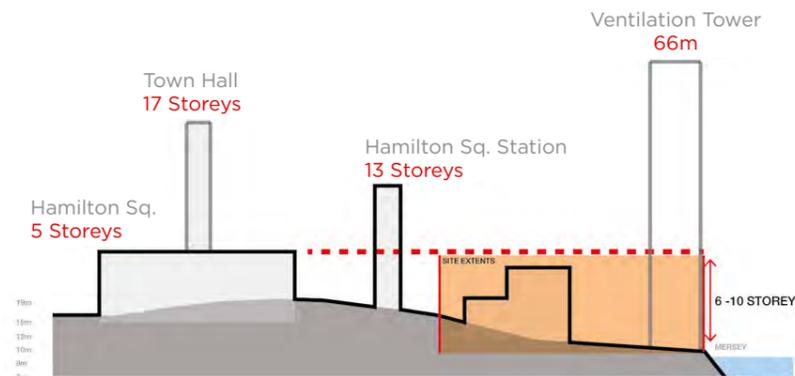


Figure 4.38 Maintaining a consistent height whilst maximising the sloping topography at Rose Brae

### Approach to Density

The BRF outlines an overarching approach to density across the regeneration programme. This approach recognises that there needs to be a balanced approach to delivery of new homes across Birkenhead – ensuring family housing delivery alongside higher density. This is fundamental to ensuring that housing needs are met across the plan period.

The BRF is ambitious in this context – it assumes relatively high density for homes, but it includes examples of where this has successfully been delivered. This strategy is intention, to create a vibrancy within the urban area, and to maximise the potential of the brownfield assets identified.

The residential development outputs assumed across the plots identified in the NF have been considered in the context of the BRF approach to density. Development outputs are presented for each plot, including assumed density. These density assumptions are not fixed but do illustrate an assumed balanced cross the programme between apartments and houses.

In line with the BRF, the NF has included a range of densities from 50 dph to 240 dph. These densities have been identified in the BRF as being appropriate across Birkenhead, with the overarching ambition to achieve the noted desired balance between apartments and houses. The specific mix assumed in applying these densities across the Waterfront includes:

- **50 dph:** contemporary 2 storey 3 and 4 bed terraced family housing
- **85 dph:** predominantly 3 story Contemporary terraced family housing and low-rise apartments
- **135 dph:** higher density 3 and 4 storey multigenerational housing with some ground floor garden space shared courtyard garden and 5 storey apartment blocks
- **180 dph:** higher density stacked housing with private outdoor space e.g patio or balcony and shared courtyard garden and 6 storey apartment blocks
- **240 dph:** minimum 6 storey apartment led with some dual aspect ground floor apartments with outdoor space

## Movement and Access

### Overcoming Infrastructure Barriers

Woodside Gyratory has long been a significant barrier between the town and waterfront. It is oversized and over-engineered, creating a poor environment for both pedestrians and cyclists. We will remodel the gyratory and remove the bus interchange.

In doing so a continuous high-quality public realm active travel connection between the waterfront and Hamilton Square will be created. Through delivery of this project the town centre and water will be stitched back together and major development opportunities will be released.

The NF has explored options for the remodelling of this space and has identified a preferred alignment for a new 'scaled-back' connection

between the A41 and A554 (Project Reference W11). Figure 4.39 shows the potential road alignment and public realm arrangement as a result of this analysis.

Whilst the gyratory will be remodelled, it is recognised that the A41 and A554 will remain strategically important routes and are identified as a City Region key route.

The connection between these routes will be remained, but their impact on the local physical environment will be significantly reduced.

To do this, the following projects will be delivered using high quality materials and appropriate green infrastructure to protect, screen and buffer the street environment to reflect this windy marine edge environment:

- Explore options for the relocation of the Woodside bus layover/ interchange area (Project Reference W12).
- Creating a direct and legible route between Hamilton Square and Woodside, with new active travel super-crossings on primary desire lines across the A41/A554 (Project Reference W13).
- Remove the connection to Shore Road (Project Reference W14).
- Subject to further public engagement on the LCWIP, wider proposals for high-quality segregated cycle infrastructure through this space will be integrated (Project Reference W15).



Figure 4.39 Indicative Option 3 - testing the feasibility of the alignment and any potential associated land take for Gyratory Remodelling

### Access to Development Areas

As an existing built up area, the waterfront is already well connected to the local and strategic highway network. However, there are likely to be some changes to the highway network required to facilitate safe vehicular access to development plots.

These vehicular and active travel connections to include but not be limited to those identified below:

- A554 Canning Street/ Shore Road (Project Reference W16): Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities, including a dedicated pedestrian crossing on the northern arm (Shore Road).

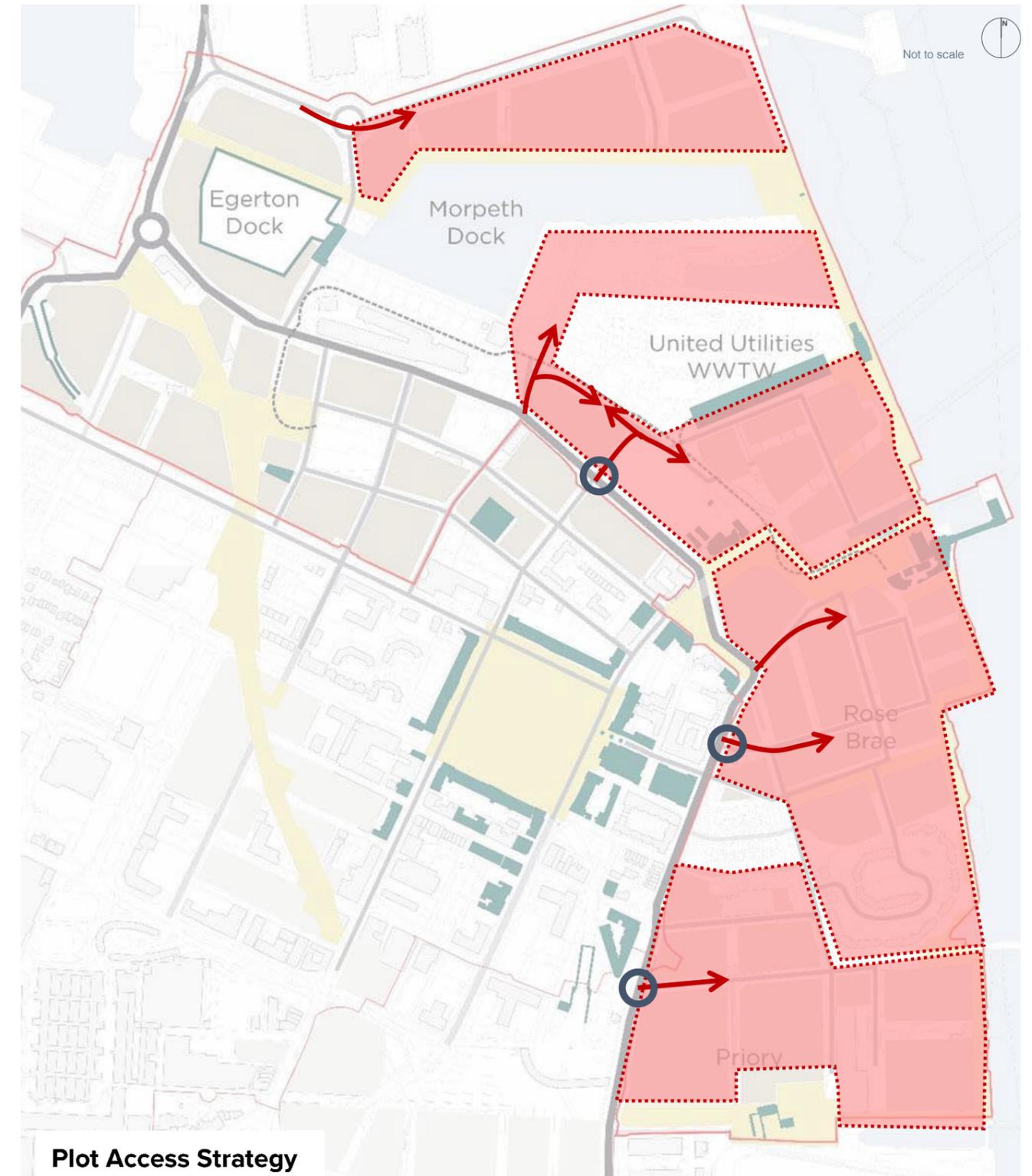
- A41 Chester Street/ Church Street (Project Reference W17): Full signalisation of junction, as a primary vehicular access to multiple development plots.
- A41 Chester Street/ Ivy Street (Project Reference W18): Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities, including a dedicated pedestrian crossing on the northern arm, to facilitate direct pedestrian movement between Pilgrim Street and Market Street.

Additional need for investment in junctions may be identified through the planning process based on project specific transport modelling, to be delivered

as required through development plots coming forward.

Future developments will be required to demonstrate their impact on the highway network in accordance with the scale of their proposals. Car free developments, which will be encouraged, and as such will be factored into development contributions to wider highways upgrades.

Proposals should also consider modal filters, where appropriate, to reduce the potential for rat running through the area - particularly along Church Street.



- Development Zone
- Vehicular Access Route
- Junction Requiring Upgrade

### Vehicular Access & Parking

The approach to vehicular access and car parking has a significant impact upon the form of development and local environment created.

An approach to car parking has therefore been developed to complement our spatial strategy, underpinning our ambition to create and complete a world-class waterfront.

The approach to car parking is broadly defined by three zones, each with differing treatments to vehicular access and storage as shown on Figure 4.41.

#### Car Free Zone

Centred around Hamilton Square Station and what is presently Woodside gyratory and ferry terminal. As a highly accessible and sustainable location, we propose this area would contain no publicly available car parking.

Development plots should be largely free of private car parking (bar strictly limited operational provision) and there will be no on-street parking. Streets would be largely pedestrianised, with access and servicing only between restricted hours. This area is the core of our waterfront, and its quality should broadly mirror that of Pier Head and Kings Parade, on the opposite side of the river.

#### Consolidated Car Parking Zone

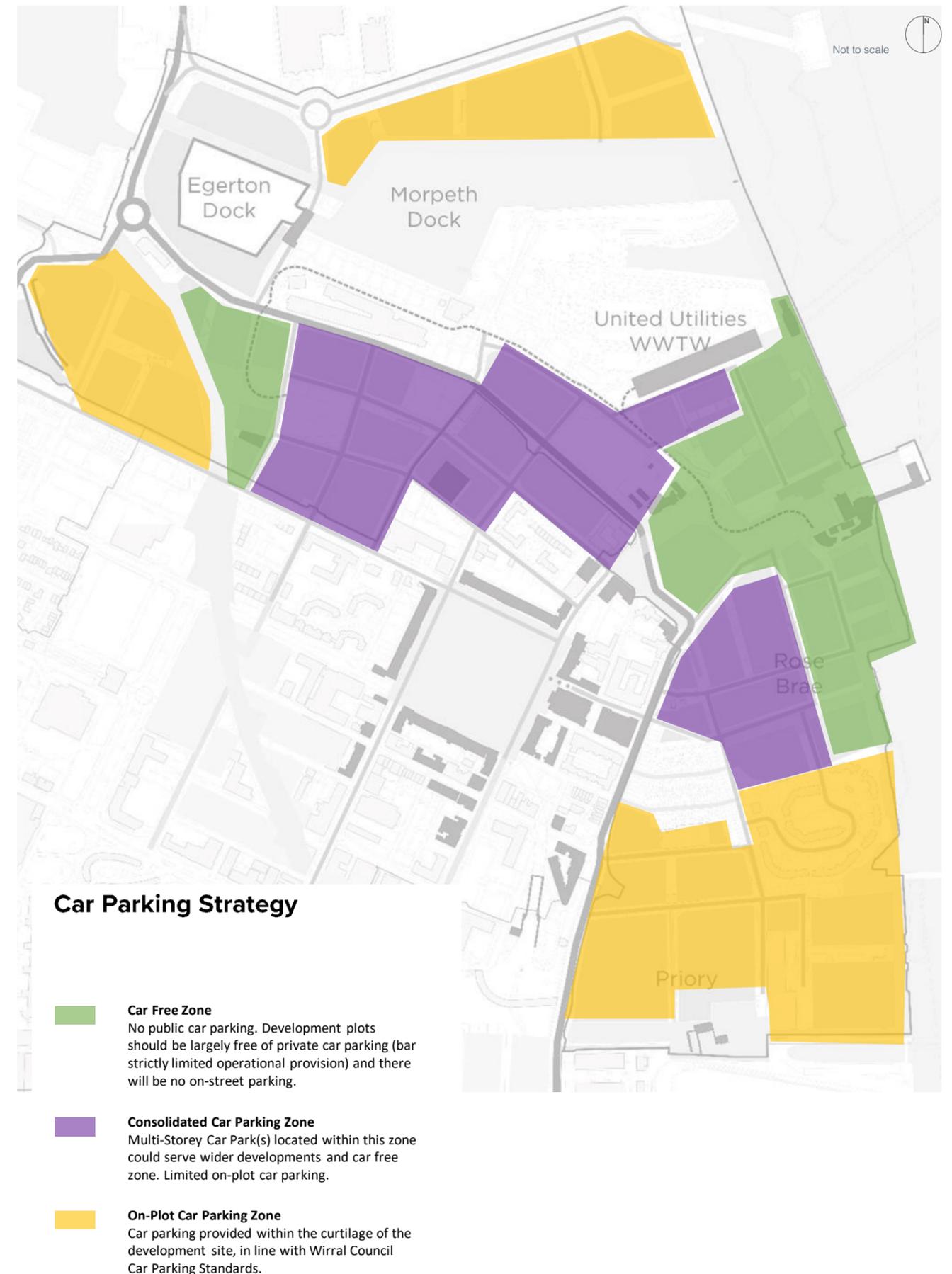
Areas that still enjoy good levels of accessibility but are outside of the core waterfront zone. There is potential to locate one or more Multi-Storey Car Park(s) within this zone to serve the Car Free Zone and surrounding developments. On-plot car parking should be limited, and surface level parking should be avoided. Some formalised on-street provision may be provided where deemed suitable, with disabled parking, coach parking and taxi rank provision prioritised.

#### On-Plot Car Parking Zone

We recognise that these areas, primarily around Egerton and Morpeth Docks and The Priory, are less accessible to public transport and therefore require a different approach to the above. Car parking should be provided within the curtilage of the development site, in line with Wirral Council Car Parking Standards.

The above strategy will require further refinement as detailed development proposals are brought forward. The Council are commissioning a Parking Strategy for the Birkenhead urban area which will explore these proposals further.

The intention is to ensure that parking is not provided at the detriment to the quality of place but is tiered to reflect accessibility and provide flexibility of choice to the market.



## Public Transport

### Hamilton Square Station

Alongside public realm interventions identified below, we will explore the feasibility of providing an additional entrance to the station, in the proximity of Shore Road. Whilst more exploratory work is required, this has the potential to forge a much stronger relationship between the station and waterfront, and further support new development here (Project Reference W19).

### Woodside Ferry Terminal

Woodside Ferry Terminal is in need of major investment to fulfil its full potential. At present, there is a limited commuter service or market here, and it is largely reliant upon leisure trips.

The future of this service is reliant upon a clear route map to deliver major regeneration at surrounding sites, but the timeline for this is now critical as the life expectancy of the landing stage is 2022. The Framework envisages bringing back a shuttle service between here and Pier Head once surrounding development and land use change has been delivered at an appropriate scale to support this service (Project Reference W110).

Whilst the ferry and railway would serve similar geographies, we consider

their role and potential markets to be different. Providing a truly multimodal offer, including the historic Mersey Ferry, will significantly strengthen the waterfront as a destination and better support the visitor economy.

### Bus Layover & Routing

The masterplan assumes that the existing bus layover and turning facilities at Woodside will be relocated in the medium to long term – predominantly to enable the landowners to realise greater value, and as part of wider re-routing of buses as a result of new development coming forward and the realignment of the gyratory. Further detailed proposals will need to be developed in partnership with Merseytravel and the bus operators to define the nature of facilities required and potential locations (identified previously as Project Reference W12).

Following removal of the existing infrastructure, it is proposed that buses that previously served at Woodside will turn left out of Bridge Street, using Canning Street and Argyle Street to loop back towards the town centre or head west towards Wirral Waters.

### Active Travel

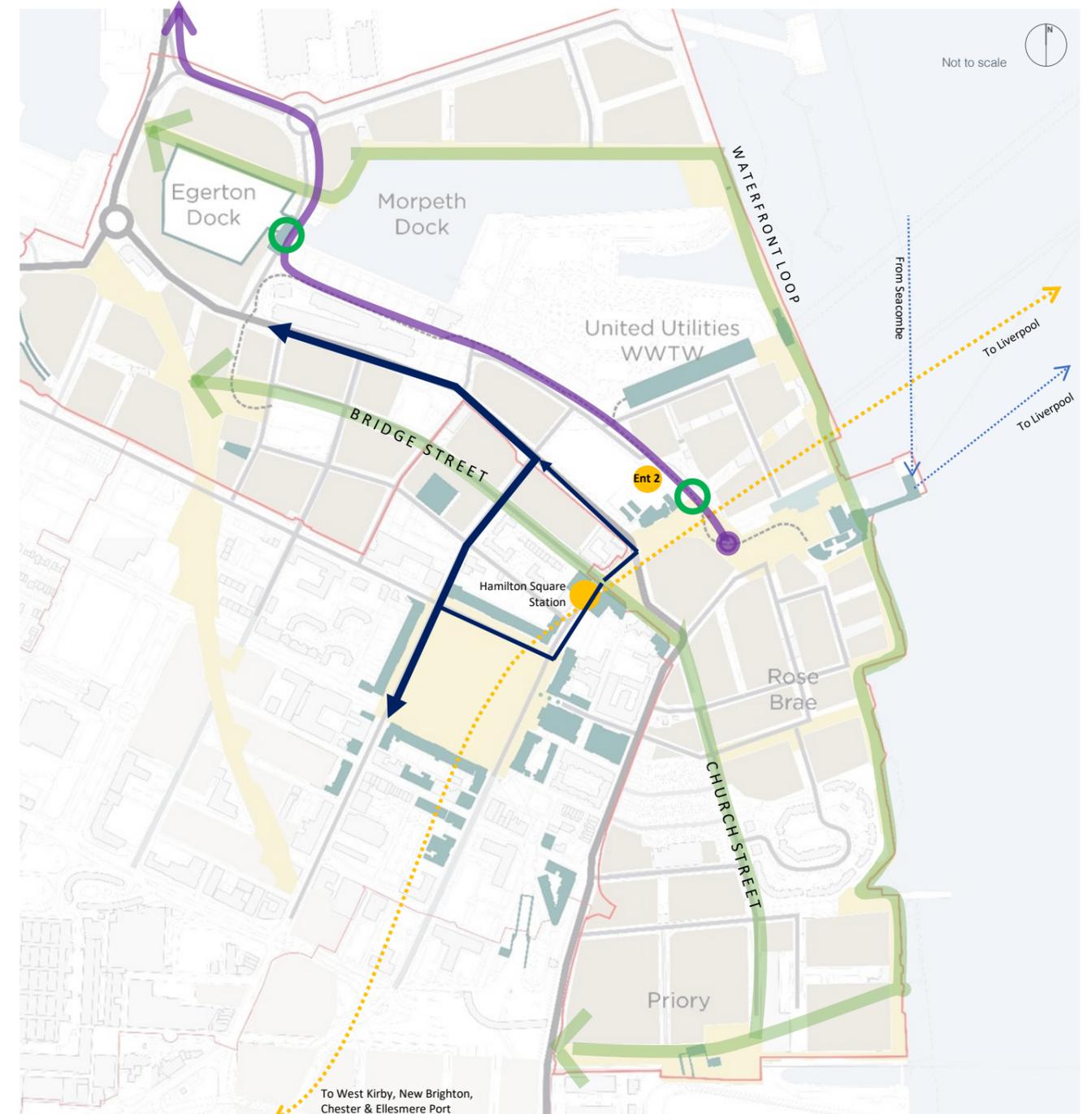
The waterfront will be an important public space for walking and cycling, and

detailed design proposals will need to be further developed to ensure this space works for, and is accessible to, all active modes. Specific public realm projects identified within this NF Framework are identified below as a connected network of spaces to create active resources for the Waterfront and wider Birkenhead and Wirral communities.

### Responsible Development

In line with our wider ambitions around active travel, we would require all developments within this area to provide best practice cycling facilities. Whilst detailed standards are presently under development as part of the Local Plan process, this is likely to mean:

- For publicly accessible developments, high-quality on-street cycle parking should be provided in primary locations, such as adjacent to main entrances, with quantities to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Further employee cycle parking should be provided at a ratio in line with the requirements of the emerging Local Plan.
- For private developments, secure on-plot cycle parking at a ratio in line with the requirements of the emerging Local Plan.
- Employment uses should also provide lockers, showers and accessible changing and drying facilities, with quantities defined on a case-by-case basis upon consultation with Wirral Council.



## Public Transport & Active Travel Strategy

- Green Corridor & Waterfront Loop
- Potential Modal Filter
- Potential Mass Transit System
- Primary Bus Routing
- ⚡ Merseyrail
- Ent 2 Potential Secondary Entrance to Hamilton Square Station
- ⋯→ Mersey Ferries

Figure 4.42 Public Transport & Active Travel Strategy

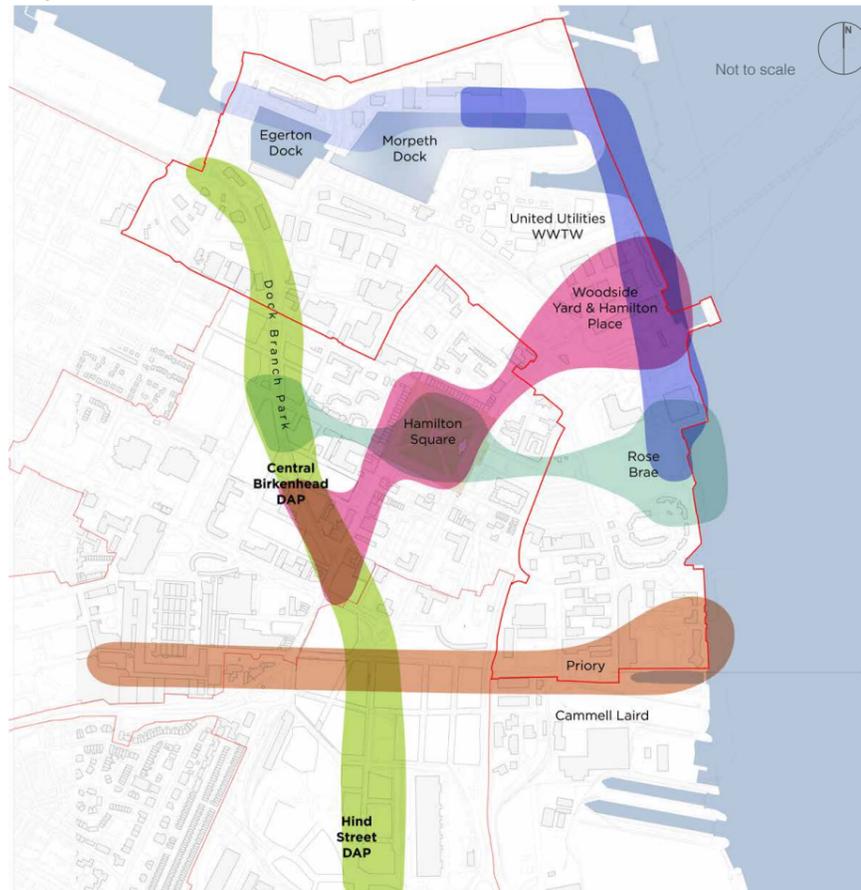
## Public Realm and Landscape

The public realm strategy for the Waterfront NF will reconnect the area with Central Birkenhead, Hind Street and Wirral Waters, creating more legible, people focused and high quality links across the area. The strategy also looks to reconnect Birkenhead with its waterfront, establishing new connections to the river's edge and opening up the river bank, creating a new series of destinations along Birkenhead's riverside.

The strategy is broadly focused around four character areas, described as:

- Vibrant Streets:** streets full of life and activity, with a variety of ground floor uses and urban character that seamlessly connect Birkenhead Town Centre with a Waterfront via Hamilton Square. A landmark riverside space next to the ventilation tower forms part of the sequence of east - west cultural attractions.
- Green Connections:** a network of streets and spaces which provide a legible connection between the Dock Branch Park, Hamilton Square and the Riverfront.

Figure 4.43 Public Realm Concept



- Recreational Docks:** an exceptional series of linked riverfront spaces, designed to provide space and setback from the river's edge and which allow people to experience a mix of activity and environments along the riverfront. An exclusively pedestrian and cycle focused environment.
- Celebrating Heritage:** an important east -west link between the Town Centre and the Priory. A legible and direct high quality streetscape, which will also overcome significant infrastructure challenges and provide a new connection to the riverfront. Streets and spaces will enhance and celebrate the area's currently hidden history.

- Celebrating Heritage
- Green Connections
- Vibrant Streets
- Recreational Docks



Figure 4.44 Public Realm Strategy

**Recreational Docks**



Dockside Boardwalks



Waterside Parks

**Vibrant Streetscene**



Museum Square



Vibrant Promenade



Events Square & flexible spaces



**Green Connections**



Dock Branch Park



Greener Waterfront

**Celebrating Heritage**



Pontoon Park



Priory Gardens



Priory Square



**Public Realm Projects**

The following image is a reference plan of the identified public realm and open space projects identified across the NF. These are explained in more detail in the subsequent text on the following pages.

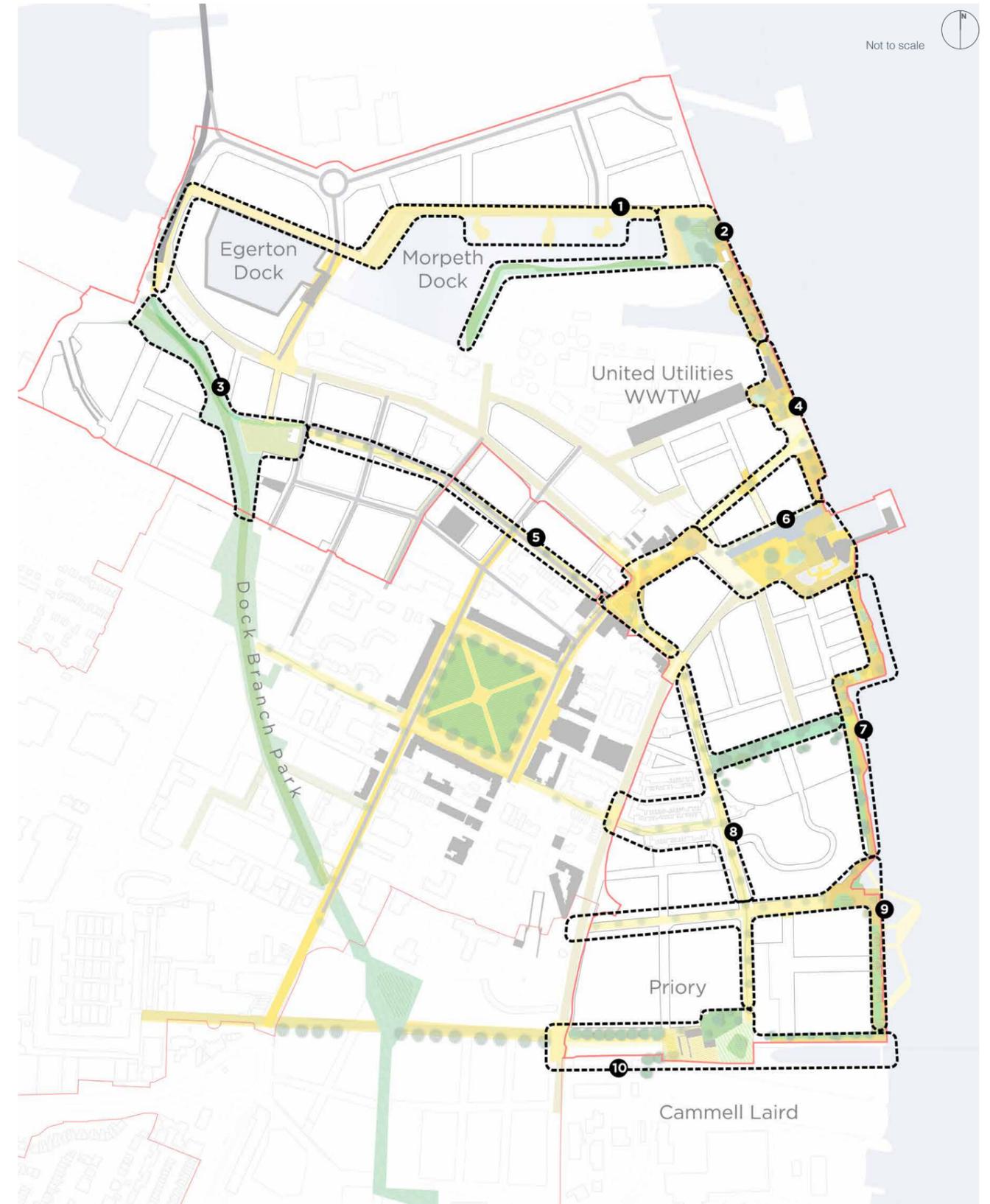


Figure 4.45 Public Realm Projects

**1. Dockside Boardwalks** – boardwalks and new public realm which brings people closer down and onto the waters at Morpeth Dock. A combination of informal seating areas, active play spaces and a new type of public space that interacts and explores the waters edge. Could be linked to a series of recreational uses on the water (i.e. paddle boarding, urban kayaking, water-based assault courses). There will be a need to ensure measures are implemented to address water quality to support the uses.

**2. Time Gun Park** – a new riverfront urban park focused around the historic 1 o'clock Gun. A naturalised, ecological and sustainable landscape, providing a place of contemplation and rest along the sustainable active travel links that follow the riverfront. A new bridge provides pedestrian and cycle connections across the inlet to Morpeth Dock. The bridge itself will be designed as a series of spaces and platforms to dwell and experience uninterrupted views towards Liverpool and offering a new perspective of the Ventilation Tower.

**3. The Dock Branch Park** – a natural greenspace that provides a setting for a new museum offer, referencing the historic street cars, outdoor food and drink and new residential communities.

**4. Woodside Yard** – a new, iconic riverside plaza, wrapping around the Ventilation Tower and opening up towards the river front. This space will become a cultural and civic landmark events space, forming part of the diagonal series of transformative, catalyst projects across the 2040 Framework. A direct and attractive pedestrian boulevard will provide a legible connection back towards Hamilton Square Gardens, guided by the attractive historic pump houses, police gates and Hamilton Square Train Station.

**5. Bridge Street Link** – a tree lined, sustainable corridor where pedestrian and cycle movement is prioritised. It will provide local residents and commuters with safe and direct access to local employment areas, transport links and areas of existing and proposed residential development. It will also connects two of the areas key destinations – the Priory & Dock Branch Park.



**6. Hamilton Place** – an important linking series of spaces and streets which will help to stitch and repair the area, providing a safe, direct and comfortable link between the historic Hamilton Square and the Woodside ferry landing, Woodside Business Park and the Riverside. With the reconfiguration of the gyratory infrastructure, a new arrival space will be created adjacent to Hamilton Square Station. This busy urban square, enclosed by a blend of attractive historic and modern architecture, provides a crossing point to the re-aligned Chester Street. A linear pedestrian boulevard will provide a direct and clear link towards the river front.

**7. Birkenhead's Waterfront** – an animated, colourful, multi-functional, flexible and vibrant riverfront, defined by activity on the ground floor, spilling into the public realm. A generous riverfront space setback from the river's edge will offer opportunities for active travel, exploration by day and night, play spaces for children and families, dwell spaces and comfortable seating designed to respond to the climatic conditions along the river front.

**8. Water Street and Clover's Park** – improved public realm and streetscape interventions along the historic terraced Water Street and around the Swinging Arm Public House. A linear greenspace – Clover's Park, will align to the covered position of the historic graving docks, and provide direct access to the riverfront, it will reconnect existing communities with the River Mersey. A public open space will serve existing and new local residents, it will provide play spaces, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and amenity space.

**9. Ivy Way and Monks Ferry Park** – Streetscape upgrades to Ivy Street and the junction with Chester Street, will provide enhanced east – west connectivity and opportunities to access the riverfront from the town centre. A new playful park – Monks Ferry Park which sits on the location of the Monks Ferry terminus and slip. The pontoons will extend into the river, a playful reference to the former coal stages which existed in the area. A series of boardwalks will provide a unique view along the river Mersey and back onto the new Birkenhead Waterfront.

**10. Priory Gardens** – a transformative public realm project which reveals and celebrates the Grade II listed former St.Mary's Church and Priory. A series of public spaces will be designed to enhance the setting of the Priory whilst also providing clear links to the riverfront. Enhancements to the streetscape along St. Marys Gate to Chester Street will improve links between Hind Street and the Town Centre. The proposed network of open, high quality hard and soft landscaped spaces and tree lined streets, will re-connecting this historic asset with both it's riverside setting and back to the town centre.



## A High Quality Link to the Waterside

The link between Hamilton Square and the Waterfront has been identified as an important link across the Birkenhead urban area. It creates the opportunity to connect the town centre with its waterfront and to draw some of the character and vibrancy supported at the Waterfront back towards other important areas, such as the Dock Branch Park.

A combination of the re-modelling of the gyratory infrastructure as well as establishing new development plots and claiming back some of the over-engineered highway spaces allows a safer, more legible active travel orientated experience from Hamilton Square to the water front.

The experience of making the journey from Hamilton Square to the Waterfront is enriched and well defined. Based on the principles of serial vision, a sequence of spaces, safe crossing points, historic buildings, new development frontage and linear public

spaces create an interesting approach to the Waterfront. The main elements of this important link include;

- An upgraded Hamilton Street with improved materiality, tree planting and pedestrian footways providing a clearer link between Hamilton Square and the Train Station.
- A new arrival space – Hamilton Place – located to the south east of the Hamilton Square Train Station Entrance, created through the re-configured gyratory. Framed by the historic building facades to the west, the attractive Hamilton Square Station Tower and new development frontage from the east. The area is decluttered, creating opportunities for ground floor spill out space.
- Potential to reclaim land currently occupied by the gyratory for increased development footprints and to create a new linear space which leads

down towards the Grade II listed former Police Booth and Gate Piers. This attractive, tree lined route, with an animated active ground floor frontage sits alongside the Grade II Listed Shore Road Pumping Station. From here views towards the Ventilation Tower are visible as well as longer range views towards the Liverpool riverside.

- A secondary space which provides choice to continue through to the waterfront via the Woodside Yard or to continue past the historic lairage and towards the Ferry Terminal through a pedestrian space framed by new development.
- A linear space provides a direct and clear link from the Police Booth towards the waterfront. A mix of active ground floor uses, SuDS, tree planting and attractive materials guide people to the waterfront, where views of both the ventilation tower and the UNESCO World Heritage river front are revealed.



Figure 4.46 A better balance of space shared between active travel and public transport



Figure 4.47 Creating opportunities to dwell and introducing a variety of landscape features



Figure 4.48 Prioritising pedestrian movements across infrastructure to create a connected pedestrian realm



Figure 4.49 Principles for Creating a High Quality Link to the Waterside

The following 3D axonometric images illustrate the network of vibrant public realm, active travel routes and new development opportunities, based on the strategies detailed on the previous pages. These will work together to create an exciting waterfront environment.

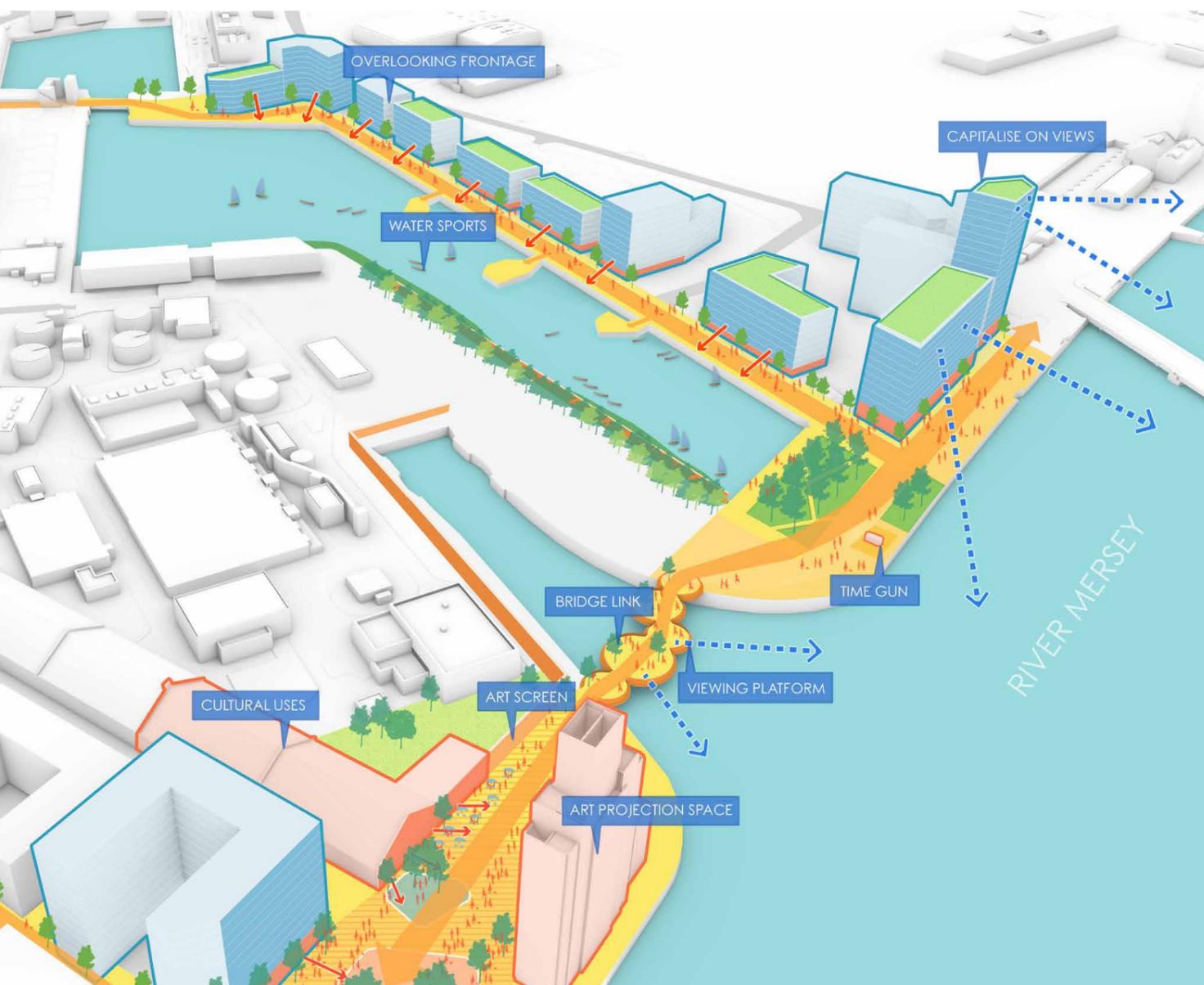


Figure 4.50 Time Gun Park & Bridge

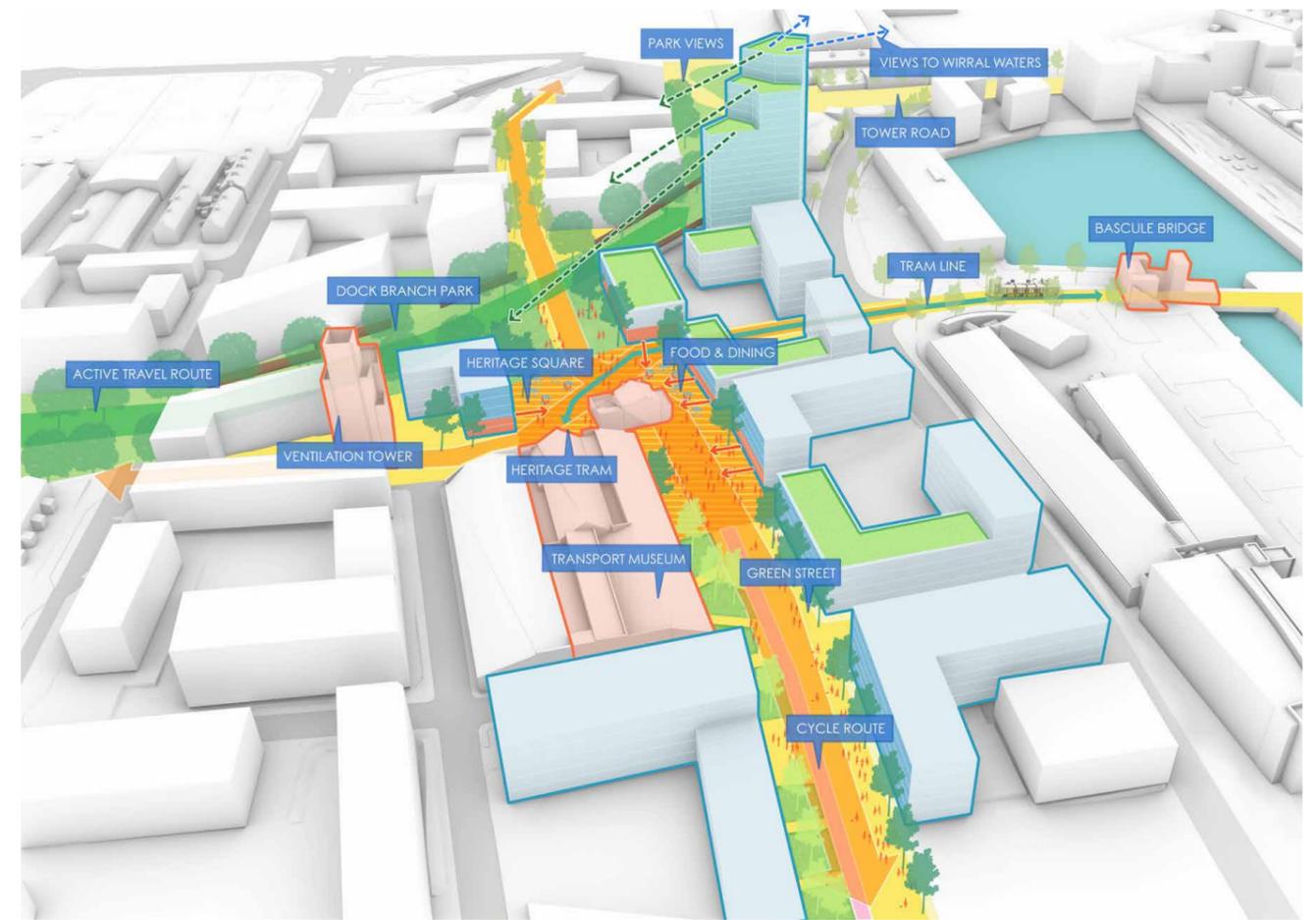


Figure 4.51 Bridge Street Link to Dock Branch Park

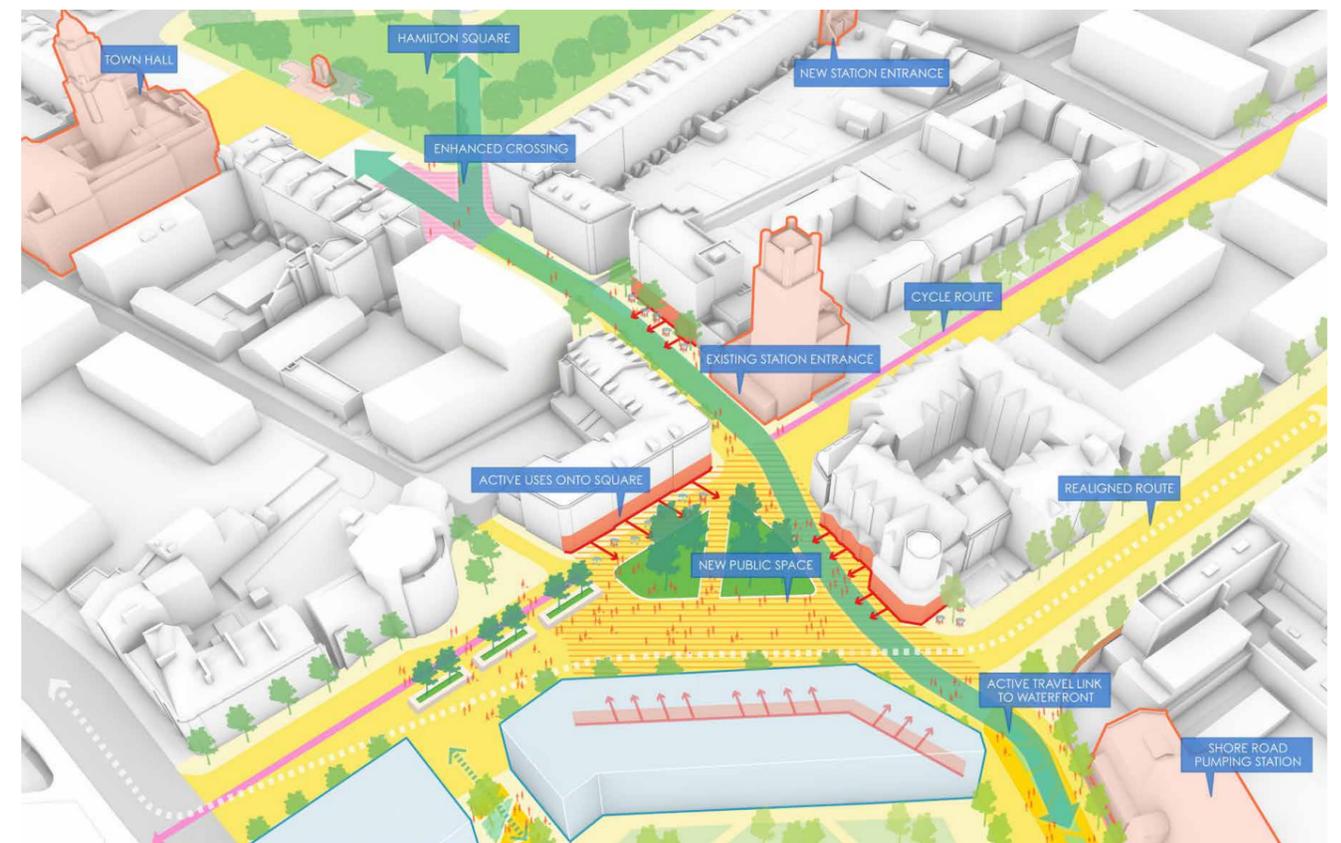


Figure 4.52 Hamilton Place

# Delivery and Next Steps

## Introduction

The preceding sections of this report have outlined the context and drivers for change within the Waterfront NF area culminating in a vision and objectives for change and have then set out the option process followed to establish the preferred option for regeneration.

The NF has identified the need for considerable change over the next 15 years. This includes the potential to deliver just under 2,500 new homes and modernise the commercial offer across retail including a new home for Birkenhead Market, leisure, culture and office uses to truly bring the Central Birkenhead core back to life within a high quality, modern, welcoming, safe and useable public realm and open space network. This includes residential outputs captured within the Commercial District masterplan area.

The NF recognises that future more detailed masterplanning for key project areas including Dock Branch Park and St Werburgh's could identify additional residential units beyond those identified at the NF scale. Any impact of these masterplans on the NF output figures will be noted within the masterplan documents produced.

The remainder of this section

sets out further detail on how the NF will be delivered including specific actions required to be progressed by the Council and key partners. These are grouped as follows:

- Overarching actions – being those that address the NF generally; and
- Key actions by neighbourhood – being those that are required to ensure delivery is achieved in line with or exceeding that set out in this NF.

Successful implementation of the NF requires the progression of the following, in no particular order:

- Infrastructure delivery;
- Future sub-area masterplanning to be progressed;
- Additional key actions by neighbourhood;
- Establishing a robust planning framework;
- Place management and long-term stewardship;
- Governance, delivery vehicles and partnerships;
- Strategic approach to securing funding;
- Delivery of the catalyst projects;
- Delivery of supporting

actions identified within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework; and

- Monitoring framework.

## Neighbourhood Framework Outputs

The Neighbourhood Framework includes areas of development, redevelopment and retention of existing buildings. In the case of the latter, key buildings and/or areas are earmarked for improvements to bring buildings back into use or diversify existing use to contribute to the wider strategy for change.

The Neighbourhood Framework assumes the following headline outputs, detailed in the remainder of this section:

- **Over 2,300 new homes, including just under 1,700 apartments and over 620 homes;**
- **Over 75,000 sqm new non-residential space including potential for business, retail, leisure, hotel, education and learning and wider community uses; and**
- **Over 5 ha of focused public realm projects alongside the delivery of public realm improvements across the NF (including highways work).**



## Waterfront by Phase

The NF process has identified an intended phasing plan associated with the Waterfront masterplan. Phasing has been considered across three periods, all building on the baseline, Phase 0, being the existing built landscape of the neighbourhood:

- Phase 1 is assumed to be captured within a delivery period up to year 5;
- Phase 2 is assumed to be captured from years 6 to 10; and
- Phase 3 is assumed to be captured from years 11 and beyond.

In addition, the masterplan has identified a number of sites that are classified as 'safeguarded' in that their future potential is linked to an existing operation - in this case the Waste Water Treatment Works - which

may need to expand in the future. These sites are captured underneath the phasing strategy as safeguarded in that context.

The NF is identified as a programme of change for a 15-year period, but it is recognised due to market forces that the ultimate implementation of change could extend beyond year 15.

The NF also safeguards land for the potential accommodation of an energy centre linked to the wider Birkenhead Heat Network catalyst project.

The phasing plan is not intended to be a rigid or fixed programme in this context - rather it is a means to understand prioritisation of activities, funding discussions, and public sector intervention, and ensures a clear narrative to the build up of change across the Waterfront.

The phasing strategy outlined is linked to an understanding of viability and funding requirements. Specifically, the phasing builds up to enable greater viability within later phases - following delivery of the catalyst projects and other early years project delivery. There are instances therefore where sites could be delivered within an earlier phase, where market conditions allow.

This acceleration of delivery would be supported, assuming implementation is in line with the wider ambitions established within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the Waterfront NF - specifically in relation to the design standards that are expected.



Figure 5.1 Plot Reference Plan

### Phase 1 NF Programme

The reconfiguration of Woodside Gyratory is identified as one of the most important projects across the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. At that strategic scale the project is recognised to have ‘catalyst value’; with its delivery intrinsically linked to the aspiration for improved physical links between Central Birkenhead and the water side area.

In reality the project is much more than an infrastructure project – albeit at its heart it is the realignment of a road resulting in the release of dominant highways in this area. It is also much more than a project designed to improve the pedestrian environment between Central Birkenhead and Hamilton Square and Birkenhead’s waterfront.

Whilst it is both of those things, it is also the project that will kick-start regeneration in this key area. It will completely change perceptions and experiences within this key area, and in doing so it will raise the bar for adjacent and nearby development sites.

In its immediate area, the realignment of the road will release the existing ‘gyratory roundabout’ (W24) unlocking an area referred to within the NF as ‘Hamilton Place’ – being a collection of land ownerships with the potential for landmark and iconic design solutions to deliver a space and buildings of exceptional quality.

The more detailed study of this zone within the Waterfront identified the potential for a circa 22-storey tower on the eastern extent of this plot – and the framework notes the opportunity for this to be a home to a high quality 4\* plus hotel offer alongside residential development. Any release of highways land as a result of the implementation of the Woodside Gyratory project could see the development potential in this location strengthen – subject to agreement between landowners.



Figure 5.2 Phase 1 Development

## Hamilton Place Development Principles

Key development principles for Hamilton Place include:

### Access

- Comprehensive approach to servicing and access, with a single point of entry/exit preferred and no through route dissecting the site;

### Heritage

- Consideration taken to the existing non-designated heritage buildings as assets.
- The site lies within the Conservation Area with specific reference to development impacts to Hamilton Square.
- A landmark opportunity, as catalyst to the wider area, setting a benchmark for development going forward.

- Scale seen appropriate towards the lower east corner to a height of circa 65m.

This location dissects views from several major viewing and arterial road axes which will need to be tested in detail

- High quality of built form and materiality required
- Acting as a fulcrum to holistic development connecting the waterfront with the centre.
- Slender, elegant proportion and form strongly desired, complementing the unique Birkenhead skyline – particularly as seen from east and west sides.

### Urban Grain

- Complete the city block with defined urban edges to all sides taking into consideration human scale, the historic context and

both viewing and desire lines

### Lower Scale

- Respecting Hamilton Square Conservation area setting to the west.

### Public Realm

- Fundamentally enhance connectivity from upper Hamilton Square with the lower waterside
- A cohesive approach to placemaking and definition of perimeter streets and particularly open spaces.
- Currently overly wide open spaces to be redefined as active places and streets. Intimacy, personality and human scale of primary importance.
- Encourage movement and viewing corridors east-west towards the waterfront and back to Hamilton Square found in the historic urban grain.



Figure 5.4 Brooklyn Park bears many parallels with Birkenhead



Figure 5.3 Rotterdam's New York Hotel restaurant is a major attractor



Credit: Digital Urban

Figure 5.6 Longer range views across the Great Floats towards Hamilton Place



Figure 5.5 Hamilton Place Gateway

### Rose Brae development Principles

Rose Brae is identified as a key development opportunity within Phase 1. The masterplan identifies the potential to access the site through enhancements to Church Street including a junction upgrade to improve the pedestrian crossing environment over Chester Street.

The sites context and topography lends itself to a range of homes including houses and apartments – with the latter noted to the waterfront edge, and the former terraced up to Church Street. Although known to have potential contamination and ground condition issues as a result of the historic filling of graving docks, the site is considered to be deliverable in Phase 1 subject to securing grant based on its single and willing ownership.

Whilst the site can be delivered in isolation, its relationship to the existing Land Registry and Child Support Agency (CSA) buildings to the north (Plots 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) is significant. Permeability between these two areas in the future will be important from a pedestrian and cycling perspective, if not car access. Rose Brae should be designed with this long-term interface in mind.

Key development principles for Rose Brae include:

#### Public Realm & Movement

- A linear neighbourhood greenspace providing a connection down to the water's edge.
- Provision of amenity greenspace within the site to serve existing and future residents

- An enhanced waterfront public realm with a generous setback from the river edge to allow for dwell time and variety of uses
- Primary vehicular access taken from Church Street

#### Urban Scale & Grain

- Build on the intimate streets and strong community to the hillside terraces at Hornby, Castle and Water Streets in contrast to the Town Hall scale. Use the topography to advantage both to improve views and access.
- Opportunity for owner-occupier houses and mews typologies to hillside
- Density and active uses encouraged to water's edge to a scale of circa 6-8 storeys
- Encourage east-west permeability and views again also historically the case.



Figure 5.7 Kirkstall Forge, Leeds successfully works with sloping sites



Figure 5.8 Reconnecting existing neighbourhoods with the Riverside

In addition, the NF identifies other Phase 1 delivery potential to include:

- Morpeth Point – the potential for water frontage residential development based on single ownership and vacant use at the current time;
- Church Street – infill development potential on existing vacant site, likely to progress following or alongside improvements to Church Street as access for Rose Brae; and

- Dock Branch Park Phase 1 – considered in more detail within the Dock Branch Park Masterplan, with plots identified as priorities for Council intervention at the northern arrival of the linear park. Likely progression of strategic land assembly within this area to create a critical mass of high-quality development and supporting public realm environment alongside the ambitious plans for the

Dock Branch Park within the disused railway cutting.

Supporting this development trajectory, the NF identifies a number of key public realm and highways interventions including those listed out in the following table. These combine strategic public realm and infrastructure assumed to be delivered as part of development, and those identified as being critical to unlock wider development and investment.

Table 5.9 Phase 1 - Development Schedule

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description	Assumed Density (dph)	Residential Output (Total)	Residential Trajectory					Non-Residential Outputs
					Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	
Rose Brae	W10, W11, W13, W14	Residential	85-240	188		48	48	48	43	
Hamilton Place	W24	Mixed Use	240	133			133			150 bed 4* Hotel, Ground floor F&B / amenity
Morpeth Point	W53, W54	Residential	240	223			223			
Church Street	W12, W15, W16	Residential	50	10				10		
Dock Branch Phase 1	W44, W45, W46	Residential led Mixed Use	240	275					275	New Dock Branch Park Transport Museum
Total				829	0	48	404	58	318	

Table 5.10 Phase 1 - Key Public Realm and Highways Interventions

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description
GS1	Wirral Circular Trail - Priory Approach	An active travel prioritised link along the Wirral Circular Trail with retained tree planting and improved hard and soft landscape features providing a connection to the Priory Grounds and the Town Centre.
GS2	Priory Gardens	An enhanced public realm creating a series of historic gardens and events spaces, which provide an improved setting for the Priory and a space which supports ongoing cultural uses.
GS3	Water Street and Clovers Park	A linear greenspace providing amenity to existing and proposed residential areas. Functional landscape with areas of play and SUDs integrated.
GS4	Riverside Promenade	Enhanced riverside walkway and public space providing links towards the Priory. Development setback required to facilitate variety of uses and dwell spaces along the riverside.
GS5	Hamilton Place	A new urban square created from the re-alignment of the gyratory. This space provides opportunity for ground floor uses to spill out and create an arrival to the Train Station entrance.
GS6	Bridge Street Link	A tree lined, sustainable active travel corridor with integrated SUDs and high quality materiality, linking the Woodside Business Park and Hamilton Square Station.
GS11	Monks Ferry Park	A riverside public park which sits on the location of the Monks Ferry terminus and slip. Pontoons extend into the river, a playful reference to the former coal stages which existed in the area. A series of boardwalks provide a unique view along the river Mersey and back onto the new Birkenhead Waterfront.
WI1	Woodside Gyratory	Remodelled road link between Canning Street and Chester Street.
WI 3	Hamilton Square/ Woodside crossing improvements	New active travel super-crossings on primary desire lines across the A41/A554
WI 4	Shore Road	Modal filter for Shore Road connection allowing active travel routes through.
WI 7	A41 Chester Street/ Church Street	Full signalisation of junction, as a primary vehicular access to multiple development plots.
WI 9	Hamilton Square Station	Delivery of an additional entrance to the station, on Shore Road to create direct links and interface with waterfront itself.

## Phase 2 NF Programme

Phase 2 builds on the change achieved in Phase 1. By year 6 there is an assumption within the programme that the full extent of Phase 1 has been delivered, and pre-commencement activities relating to Phase 2 have completed or are underway. This process of Phase 2 'readiness' is considered in more detail within Section 6 of this document, but includes activities such as business decant, strategic stakeholder engagement, and where appropriate and necessary public sector land assembly. It also assumes market uplift and momentum achieved during Phase 1 will increase private sector appetite to deliver a greater extent of change, including where appropriate securing vacant possession to enable development as proposed.

More specifically, and on a project by project basis, the Phase 2 trajectory assumes:

- Woodside: Business decant has been completed and Peel Holdings are in vacant possession of Woodside Business Park to enable redevelopment from year 6 onwards including potential for a residential led mixed use development area, with the NF specifically noting the potential for strategic leisure provision within this area fronting on to the new Ferry Terminal area;
- Ferry Side: Land Registry and CSA have vacated their premises (potentially for an alternative location within Birkenhead), and Arriva have agreed to release their land adjacent, with potential strategic public sector
- land acquisition across these three existing plots to enable comprehensive and holistic redevelopment from year 8 onwards;
- Dock Branch Park Phase 2: The full Dock Branch Park environment has been created in cutting, alongside the delivery of Phase 1 development and supporting public realm to create sufficient market demand to encourage the private sector to progress direct delivery across these (and other) plots;
- Cheshire Lines Car Park: Phasing assumes that by this time the car park has been identified to be surplus to requirements. If car park is still required this development plot would shift into being a later phase opportunity; and
- Bridge Street Car Park: Assumes the Council has completed a Birkenhead-wide review of car parking provision and this site has been identified as being surplus to requirements.



Figure 5.11 Phase 2 Development

## Woodside Yard Development Principles

Key development principles for Woodside Yard include:

### Access

Maintaining simple and effective servicing and access points from Shore Road and the reconfigured gyratory, Hamilton Place.

### Heritage

- Take cognisance of Hamilton Square Conservation Area with specific reference to development impacts to Hamilton Square.
- Consideration taken to the existing designated and non-designated heritage buildings as assets, for example the former Police station, Cheshire Lines and unique galleried office parallel to Shore Road.
- Recognising the opportunity to frame, protect and enhance key views of Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage Waterfront

### Scale and Massing

- The area has an opportunity to bear strong waterfront kinship status with Liverpool and views back across the Wirral Peninsula, including buildings of taller scale and massing.
- Taller scale will need to respect the character of the Queensway Tunnel ventilation shaft as a standalone structure on the one hand, with the historic Birkenhead skyline on the other.
- The creation of a clear identity or family of building scales, with heights rising and falling away from the ventilation tower, with a focus on clustering buildings of scale within key locations alongside and across the Waterfront.
- This location sits perhaps most visibly from Liverpool and as a gateway to Wirral Waters and Birkenhead centre - a major opportunity to define the

next era of Birkenhead's bright future. A high quality of built form and materiality will be required as a result.

- Slender, elegant proportion and form are strongly desired, to complement the unique Birkenhead skyline - particularly as seen from east and west sides creating and drawing views and movement to and from the water.
- A lower scale is seen to the western side towards the Cheshire Lines Goods Station and historic legacies to this area.

### Urban grain

Complete the city block with defined urban edges to all sides taking into consideration human scale, the historic context and both viewing and desire lines

### Public Realm

Two priorities exist;

- 1. To radically improve connectivity from Hamilton Square to the waterside

- 2. To create a highly memorable, world-class waterfront destination, a highlight of a longer waterfront health and wellbeing route.
- The re-opening of the former pontoon water canal already in existence could form a conduit to making connectivity a reality, as would a route

through Woodside Yard on axis, potentially, with a Three Graces view.

- A plethora of wide-open spaces can be redefined as a selective number of active places and streets - intimate in character, personality and human scale.

- Investment should focus on a breath-taking waterfront promenade experience filled with memorable leisure, cultural and a re-opened pontoon canal.
- Encourage movement and viewing corridors east-west towards the waterfront and back to Hamilton Square found in the historic urban grain.



Figure 5.12 San Francisco Waterfront - avoiding high-rise with vibrant frontage



Figure 5.13 Aarhus active waters edge creates a high-value landscape



Figure 5.14 Woodside Yard Views



Figure 5.15 Woodside Yard Views from Hamilton Square



Figure 5.16 Woodside Yard Views from the River Mersey

As within Phase 1, supporting this development trajectory, the NF identifies a number of key public realm and highways interventions including those listed out in the following tables. These

combine strategic public realm and infrastructure assumed to be delivered as part of development, and those identified as being critical to unlock wider development and investment.

Table 5.17 Phase 2 - Development Schedule

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description	Assumed Density (dph)	Residential Output (Total)	Residential Trajectory					Non-Residential Outputs
					Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	
Woodside	W25, W26, W27, W28, W29, W30	Mixed Use	240	230		100	100	30		Ground floor active uses, strategic leisure, office / flexible business spac. Part of 26 is safeguarded for Energy Centre development.
Ferry Side	W17, W18, W19, W20, W21, W22, W23	Residential led Mixed Use	50-240	207			48	48	111	Ground floor active uses, office / flexible business space
Dock Branch Phase 2	W47, W48, W49	Residential led Mixed Use	135	138	48	90				Ground floor active uses, office / flexible business space
Cheshire Lines Car Park	W34	Hotel & MSCP	0	0						100 bed budget hotel, multi-storey car park. Part of site is safeguarded for potential Energy Centre development
Bridge Street Car Park	W31	Residential	135	53			49	5		
Total				628	48	190	404	58	318	

Table 5.18 Phase 2 - Key Public Realm and Highways Interventions

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description
GS7	Woodside landing and Lairage	In combination with WI2 the bus layover and interchange and surrounding areas are reconfigured as an open public space. A new linear water feature links Hamilton Place to the waterfront
GS8	Ventilation Tower Public Space	A hard scaped, flexible public events space at the base of the ventilation tower
GS12	Riverside Promenade	Enhanced riverside active travel route and public space providing a link between the Ventilation Tower and Rose Braw. Development setback required to facilitate variety of uses and dwell spaces along the riverside.
GS13	Woodside Yard	Iconic riverside plaza space along the river's edge. Spill out space is accommodated within a generous setback and characterised by hard landscaping and trees for shelter from prevailing winds??
WI2	Woodside Bus Layover	Relocation of the Woodside bus layover/ interchange area (relocation site not yet identified).
WI 6	A554 Canning Street/ Shore Road	A dedicated pedestrian crossing on northern arm (Shore Road).
WI 10	Woodside Ferry Terminal	Woodside Ferry Terminal is in need of major investment to fulfil its full potential. - refurbishment of external and internal improvements e.g. new toilets, waiting rooms, ticket offices etc.

### Phase 3 NF Programme

By Phase 3 public sector intervention is considered to be relatively minimal in the area, with the market now directly intervening within underutilised and vacant land to bring it forward for higher value uses.

The development areas identified within Phase 3 are largely infill opportunities responding to this context of increasing market values and natural decant of businesses as the economic pull of West Float, MEA Park and Northside become more established as strategic business locations within Birkenhead.

Phase 3 includes the completion of ambitions around the Priory, referred to within the NF as being the 'Priory Cluster'. The NF envisages that this area will remain as an employment zone - creating a buffer between the pressure of residential development along the waterfront and the important Cammell Laird to the south.

It also reflects activity on the ground at the time of writing, including the emergence of a creative cluster within this location. In reality we envisage intensification of clean, vibrant and creative businesses within this area from Phase 1 onwards, but its delivery will be incremental and likely only fully established by Phase 3.



Figure 5.19 Phase 3 Development

**Priory Development Principles**

The Priory was one of the key focus areas within the NF process, and as such the following summarise the key development principles established:

- Recognise the profound historic significance of the site, expanding a 'halo' of commensurate development and green spaces;

Public Realm & Movement

- Create clear and legible movement corridors to the town centre as well as north towards Rose Brae and Hamilton Place;
- Manage heights in this location from other approach locations i.e. Market Street so that the Priory Spire remains visible above development roof lines
- The waterfront promenade connects with the grounds of the Priory to create a connected urban realm which provides links onwards to Priory and into the town centre.
- Protect the mature green assets outwith the Priory walls and create a landscape which enhances the ongoing cultural uses and historical setting of the Priory.

Urban Scale & Grain

- Protect the delicate St Mary's church spire skyline setting.
- Gentle density encouraged - fine grain streets with lower scale development around 2-4 storeys.
- Embrace the east-west historic and ownership grain to improve deliverability, connectivity and views to river.



Figure 5.20 Auckland Waterfront



Figure 5.21 Landscape Park, Duisberg



Figure 5.22 Priory Views and Connections to the Riverside

Table 5.23 Phase 3 - Development Schedule

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description	Assumed Density (dph)	Residential Output (Total)	Residential Trajectory					Non-Residential Outputs
					Y11	Y12	Y13	Y14	Y15	
Morpeth Wharf	W55, W56, W57	Residential led mixed use	240	385	100	100	100	85		Ground floor active uses
Priory Cluster	W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, W6, W7, W8, W9	Business cluster with residential frontage	135	181	42	42	42	42	13	Clean, light industrial, flexible business space, creative business space
Dock Branch Phase 3	W31, W42, W43	Residential led mixed use	135-240	190	90	100				Ground floor active uses, office / flexible business space
Cleveland and Argyle	W32, W33, W35, W36, W37, W38, W39	Industrious living	135	107			42	42	23	Clean, light industrial, flexible business space
Total				863	232	242	184	169	36	

Table 5.24 Phase 3 - Key Public Realm and Highways Interventions

Project Ref:	Plot Ref:	Project Description
GS9	Time Gun Park & Bridge	A naturalised, ecological and sustainable riverside urban park, with a cycle and walking link running through. A new bridge provides pedestrian and cycle connections across the inlet to Morpeth Dock. The bridge itself is designed as a series of spaces and platforms to dwell and experience uninterrupted views towards Liverpool and offering a new perspective of the Ventilation Tower
GS10	Wirral Transport Museum	An attractive spill out space linked to the Dock Branch Park which provides amenity to surrounding planned residential development and supports cultural and community uses linked to the Museum.
WI8	A41 Chester Street/ Ivy Street	A dedicated pedestrian crossing on the northern arm, to facilitate direct pedestrian movement between Pilgrim Street and Market Street.

### Safeguarded Sites

The NF identifies plots W50, W51 and W52 as safeguarded sites. These areas are immediately adjacent to the existing Waste Water Treatment Works.

Engagement with United Utilities as part of the NF process has suggested that future expansion land may be required within these locations.

As such their development for alternative use is not proposed, although providing sufficient buffering and landscaping could be implemented alongside existing plans to reduce odours from the works, these sites could come forward in the future as inland dock facing residential or mixed use plots.

In addition, parts of W34 and W25 are safeguarded for potential accommodation of an Energy Centre as part of the Birkenhead Heat Network catalyst project.



Figure 5.25 Safeguarded Sites

## Infrastructure Delivery

Appended to this main report is a schedule of infrastructure projects and intended delivery strategy including estimate of budget (subject to more detailed design and cost plans being produced) (Appendix 2).

The NF recognises the importance of infrastructure delivery – including capital investment in streets, the bus station, the railway stations and their environments, the public realm and landscaping – to support wider aspirations.

The NF recognises the important role for Wirral Council in taking a leading role in implementing the infrastructure programme – including the use of public funding as a catalyst and noting the dominance of highways infrastructure and associated land which is under Council control.

There is also an existing maintenance backlog across the Waterfront and development proposals will be required to consider how this can be addressed where capital projects won't be delivered and there is likely to be additional detriment. Impact of proposed development on the existing highway network will be tested through the planning application process.

It also recognises the need to secure strategic funding to enable this programme of works to be implemented on a timely basis. For optimum delivery it is also recognised that land assembly may be required.

Detailed delivery strategies should be developed and progressed for each infrastructure project identified.

## Sub-Area Neighbourhood masterplanning

Key sub-areas identified within Central Birkenhead which require more detailed masterplanning are:

- Commercial District (through WGC, subject of current planning application, with the assumption of regular Neighbourhood Framework updates as proposals develop through the joint venture partnership to support future reserved matters applications within the outline area, and additional applications where proposals fall outside);
- Dock Branch Park (masterplanning exercise is underway at the time of writing to support Town Deal Fund submission); and
- St Werburgh's neighbourhood.

The NF does not preclude private landowners progressing sub-area masterplans as part of the development of proposals for engagement with the Council and other partners but identifies the above as priorities based on scale and nature of change identified within the NF.

## Additional Key Actions by Neighbourhood

In addition to the general actions identified through the BRF and the more detailed masterplanning noted for each project area, neighbourhood specific Wirral Council actions have been identified to ensure delivery is progressed.

These are documented below in no particular order, presented by phase within each neighbourhood. Actions are only identified for Phases 1 and 2, laying the foundation for progression of Phase 3 without the need for further intervention.

### Phase 1

In no particular order:

#### Woodside Gyratory

- Progress infrastructure design to sufficient detail to support full business case for funding including more detailed testing of potential to deliver acceptable solution within highways land (avoiding third party land interests);
- Twin-track land assembly and Compulsory Purchase Order strategy (as part of potential future strategic CPO across Birkenhead) for third party land interests

potentially impacted by the gyratory Stage 1 preferred design in the event that the land is needed to deliver the works (de-risking delivery strategy);

- Engage with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England to explore funding strategy for infrastructure delivery;
- Engage with key adjacent landowners including Boom Developments to ensure development proposals respond to the detailed design and management strategy for the gyratory reconfiguration and associated public realm;
- Engage with Merseytravel and bus operators to agree strategy for bus laybys and stops along new link road; and
- Engage with adjacent landowners to highways land to be released as a result of project delivery, including potential for land sales to generate capital receipt.

#### Hamilton Place

- Positively engage with landowners through pre-application and planning application process; and
- Engage with adjacent landowners to highways land to be released as a result of project delivery, including potential for land sales to generate capital receipt.

#### Rose Brae

- Positively engage with landowners through pre-application and planning application process;
- Support landowner in site investigation works to directly inform delivery strategy; and
- Explore funding solutions relating to viability (gap) funding and affordable housing grants alongside landowner to enable delivery.

#### Dock Branch Park

- Deliver strategy in line with the Dock Branch Park masterplan including successful submission and securing of £25m Town Deal Fund to enable project delivery.

### Morpeth Point

- Positively engage with landowner through pre-application and planning application process; and
- Explore outline business case for Time Gun Park and Bridge including scheme design and early engagement on funding strategy with key partners including Peel Holdings, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and Homes England.

### Strategic Public Realm and Highways Infrastructure Delivery

- Engage with strategic partners including LCRCA and Homes England to explore package of supporting public realm and highways interventions, funding ask and business case for support (early phase implementation or phased) to unlock development and create conditions for growth.

### **Phase 2 Enabling Actions**

The NF notes that the timely implementation of the Phase 2 strategy requires prior progression of projects with key stakeholders and landowners. The following is a summary of key actions required to enable Phase 2 development plots to progress – from Year 6 or prior. In no particular order:

- Support Peel Holdings in enabling business decant from Woodside Business Park, prioritising retention of businesses within Birkenhead or the Wirral generally whilst also securing timely vacant possession of the business park to enable its redefining in the future. Action to include progression of proposals for Northside as a strategic employment and decant location supporting the wider Birkenhead 2040 Framework;

- Identify alternative location for Arriva layovers including land swap and/or acquisition and land swap for existing site within Ferry Side development area;
- Support relocation of Land Registry and CSA into alternative offices within Birkenhead, and explore acquisition of exiting offices (direct, WGC or public sector partner) to enable delivery at Ferry Side.

### **Establishing a Robust Planning Framework**

The BRF has a critical role in the emerging Wirral Local Plan. It forms a key part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan Preferred Urban Intensification spatial option, by identifying the potential scale of brownfield development in Birkenhead. The BRF will be subject to consultation during the early part of 2021 before being finalised and endorsed as the Council's Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead.

This Neighbourhood Framework is one of a series recommended by the BRF. It has been prepared to provide further detail to the initial neighbourhood vision and spatial concepts set out in the BRF and to provide evidence of potential brownfield housing delivery for the emerging Local Plan.

The Local Plan will set out a series of Regeneration Areas. Each of these Regeneration Areas will have a specific Local Plan policy which will be informed by this Neighbourhood Framework and other NFs. Development proposals within the Regeneration Areas will need to comply with the Local Plan policy. Where appropriate, and as informed by this and other NFs the Local Plan Regeneration Area policies may require further detailed site or sub area masterplans which have been recommended. Development will also have to regard to the Birkenhead Design and Public Realm Guide Supplementary Planning Document which the Council is to prepare as part of the delivery strategy for the BRF.

### **Place Management and Stewardship**

The NF recognises the importance of place management and long term stewardship in ensuring that the benefits of intervention are felt in the long term – and to ensure that early phase development creates and maintains the right conditions to support enhanced viability and conditions for delivery across the Waterfront in later development phases.

The NF requires management and stewardship to be considered at the outset of the design process across the Waterfront area – informing physical design, use (formal, informal and meanwhile), and materiality of individual projects and development.

Consideration must be given to the interface between different projects, ensuring a continuous high-quality management regime exists across land ownerships and development boundaries.

## Governance, Delivery Vehicles and Partnerships

The Council will expect a demonstrable consideration of management to be included within planning applications across the Waterfront area, including within evidence of management having been factored into design evolution captured within Design and Access Statements supporting planning applications. Planning applications will be required to include evidence of place management and stewardship strategy to be applied across development within the Waterfront area.

On land within its control, the Council will ensure a positive and long term view of management is taken, and will positively engage with all stakeholders and landowners across the area to ensure a seamless relationship between public and private assets and management approaches to ensure a whole-place approach to management is delivered.

There is a significant level of excitement and commitment within the Council and strategic partners to deliver this comprehensive, long-term and strategically important regeneration strategy.

The Council recognises that the scale and ambition of the LeftBank regeneration programme, covering Birkenhead and the wider urban area reaching from New Ferry to New Brighton, means that it needs to adopt an enhanced, bespoke delivery vehicle model.

It further recognises the importance of its own role, and the need for clear leadership within the delivery of the NF infrastructure programme and key projects, including the catalyst projects identified in the BRF. The Council will undertake this leadership role to leverage private sector investment and involvement in the delivery programme.

Wirral Council is in dialogue with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to

explore alternative delivery models for the Birkenhead 2040 and wider LeftBank programme. It is expected this process to take in the region of 18-months to scope and design the right delivery model for the LeftBank programme, including delivery of the interventions captured within this NF.

At the time of writing the preferred model for LeftBank is not fixed but will be instrumental in delivering the town centre ambitions. This process will further complement existing resource within the Council – adding additional skills and capabilities, with a specific focus on commercial, delivery and urban design capabilities to enable implementation of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework.

Since January 2020 Wirral Council has operated a joint steering group with Homes England and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to oversee the development and delivery of the LeftBank programme including a senior Homes England Programme Lead in support.

Within the Council a newly established Regeneration and Place Board provides oversight of the LeftBank and Local Plan programme and co-ordinates the operation of external partnership groups.

The Council has established a project management hierarchy that will be in place for the duration of the NF programme and indeed across LeftBank. The Council has recently established a new Regeneration and Place Department which brings together regeneration, asset management, strategic transport, planning, housing, and PMO disciplines into a single delivery unit. It is critical that the Council assembles project teams to implement key projects, on a multi-disciplinary basis, including the catalyst projects.

In the Wirral Growth Company, the Council has an established partnership to deliver development relating to assets it owns or acquires in the centre – should it be the preferred method of delivery.

The WGC itself can acquire assets to develop out or hold as investment. Under the Wirral Growth Company Partnership Agreement, several sites were identified within an option agreement – which the WGC can draw down once certain thresholds and development principles have been agreed with the Council. Additional assets can be brought into the option agreement – following agreement by both parties. Under the Partnership Agreement it is encouraged that the WGC cross-subsidise unviable development sites through the delivery of higher value developments – this could be a mechanism which is applied to address at least in part the viability gap identified in key development sites across the NF area.

In addition to the WGC, the Council understands the importance of wider partnerships to enable delivery across the NF programme.

There is a key role for appropriate developers who share the Council's vision and ambitions for redevelopment of brownfield land. The Council will be looking to establish a developers' forum including Registered Providers to deliver the programme.

As has been noted, the Council is exploring a strategic partnership with Homes England. The Council would consider establishing future partnerships with the private sector – on a project by project basis subject to formal procurement – and recognises this does not have to mean establishing Joint Ventures.

The Council realises the importance of acting positively within its statutory responsibilities – and will seek to ensure Planning Performance Agreements are in place across all major projects where appropriate and or requested to facilitate these working arrangements.

## Strategic Approach to Securing Funding

Mixed tenure and type residential development is currently not universally viable across the Waterfront – a market failure which is prohibiting the private sector delivering the scale and quality of conditions in the comprehensive way required by the NF.

The implementation of the BRF and the Waterfront NF will address this market failure – through targeted intervention to create critical mass of development opportunity, requiring high quality design, alongside the delivery of the catalyst projects that will fundamentally change the character and appeal of the BRF neighbourhoods. The NF preferred option has not been identified based on it being the most viable, but rather being the best strategy in this wider context and taking a long-term view.

Development viability is though an important consideration in early phase delivery, and the maximisation of public funding to enable early phase delivery will therefore be key – focused specifically on addressing the viability gap within early phase development.

It is crucial that early phase delivery creates the right conditions to ensure development becomes more viable over time, this must include:

Demanding quality in design across both buildings and public realm and ensuring robust long-term management and stewardship across the built realm;

Delivering comprehensive change and creating critical mass – recognising that infill developments won't lift the market; and

Delivering the catalysts – creating the right conditions from which neighbourhood defined development can progress including establishing a unique identity across the Waterfront, commanding higher values, setting new headlines, and attracting new private sector interest and investment.

The Council are in close dialogue with Homes England and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to ensure a long term and strategic approach to funding is established to support the full BRF programme.

The Council have progressed specific dialogue to support early phase delivery of the Waterfront NF programme, including:

- Over £21.5m of infrastructure funding the subject of current Full Business Case development for submission to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority under the Transforming Cities Fund and Government under the Town Deal Fund, specific to A41 North and Phase 1 of Dock Branch Park;
- Successful approval of £8m funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to enable the demolition of the Borough Road flyovers; and
- Up to £45m Town Deal Fund sought, with Stage 1 Town Investment Plan submitted to Government in January 2021 including the proposals for Hamilton Place.

The Council is further exploring a 'Levelling Up' Fund application focused on the Waterfront area.

## Securing Catalyst Project Delivery

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework (BRF) identified seven catalyst projects. These catalyst projects are required to be delivered to enable and accelerate delivery of the full ambition and scale of change captured within the BRF.

The projects range from development projects to infrastructure delivery projects, and each has its own delivery strategy and critical pathway to success. The projects are at different stages of progression – but all are being progressed meaningfully at the time of writing. The BRF sets out the headlines of the delivery strategy for each of the catalyst projects identified – including lead responsibilities, key partner relationships, next steps and critical pathway to securing delivery. It is critical to the NF that these actions are progressed and the catalyst projects are delivered.

## Delivery of Birkenhead 2040 Supporting Actions

Within the BRF several critical workstreams are identified to progress developments and strategies to support positive investment (public and private sector) across the Birkenhead urban area. These are set out in the BRF action plan, to give an indication of the breadth of actions required and to inform early actions which need to be implemented as early as possible in the programme. It is critical to the NF that these actions are progressed in line with the action plan within the BRF.

## Other Actions

It should be noted that no site surveys relating to land conditions or detailed topography have been undertaken to inform the Waterfront NF. Progression of both on a neighbourhood-wide basis would add considerable confidence to the delivery strategy and viability analysis included herein.

## Monitoring Framework

SMART KPIs will be used to measure performance against the identified objectives. A table is included at Appendix 3 including proposed KPIs aligned with the NF objectives including proposed method for measurement and frequency. Next Steps

The BRF provides the overall strategy for the regeneration of the Birkenhead urban area and sets the spatial

and infrastructure context for the delivery of strategic development and investment accordingly.

It enables the prioritisation of public sector intervention and funding and enables positive engagement with the private sector as delivery partners for the ambitions articulated. It is the prospectus for the transformation of Birkenhead.

When complete the Framework and its NFs will be approved by the Council as the Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead. The Framework and NFs will be 'live' documents. The Council will keep them under regular review to respond to what may be rapidly changing market and political environments and newly identified opportunities and challenges.



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