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Core Strategy - Draft Settlement Area Policy for Hoylake & West Kirby

1 Settlement Area Policy

Policy CSx.x - Priorities for Hoylake and West Kirby

The overall strategy for Settlement Area 6 will be to:

1. Maintain attractive residential areas with good access to Birkenhead, Liverpool and Chester
2. Safeguard and enhance the role of West Kirby as the main convenience and comparison retail, office and service centre for the Area
3. Safeguard and enhance the role of Hoylake as the focus for district-level shops, offices, services and community facilities
4. Maintain Carr Lane Industrial Estate for small and medium scale industrial and commercial activities to provide additional local employment
5. Maintain the Victorian and Edwardian heritage of the coastal resorts, while maintaining and improving the facilities for visitors including provision for leisure, tourism, coastal recreation and water sports, golf and the facilities and open spaces associated with the coastal promenades and North Wirral Coastal Park
6. Focus local improvements on the area of need at Greenbank Road, West Kirby
7. Maintain and enhance the national and international nature conservation value of the intertidal foreshores and the Hilbre Islands
8. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Hoylake, Caldy and West Kirby and the setting of other designated heritage assets; the woodland setting of Caldy and Newton; the visual importance of the natural open coastline; and open (hilltop) views across the Dee Estuary to North Wales
9. Minimise tidal, river and other flood risks associated with the coastal waterfronts, the low-lying north Wirral coastal plain and surface water
10. Monitor and manage traffic flows to maximise highway efficiency
11. Address any local limitations on the supply and disposal of waste and surface water and take account of the capacity of the North Wirral Wastewater Treatment Works
12. Maintain the physical separation between Newton and Greasby; Meols and Moreton; and the distinctiveness of Frankby Village

2 Vision Statement

Vision Statement

By the end of the plan period, the distinct character, historic value and natural environment associated with the settlements of Hoylake and West Kirby will have been sustained, supported by high quality facilities for leisure and tourism including rejuvenated promenades and improvements to the key service centres at Hoylake and West Kirby.

3 Reasoned Justification

3.1 Settlement Area 6 includes the commuter settlements of Hoylake and Meols; and West Kirby, Newton and Caldy, with strong transport links to Birkenhead, Liverpool and Chester. Hoylake and West Kirby also function as coastal resorts of Borough-wide significance, with provision for formal and informal recreation including golf, watersports and sand yachting. The whole of the coastline is subject to national and international designations for nature conservation and the low-lying land to the south and east of Hoylake also provides a high tide roost for wintering birds.

3.2 The Area was home to 24,700 people in mid-2010, of which 14,500 or 59% are of working age. The population has an older age-profile, with one of the lowest proportions of younger adults and one of the highest proportions of older working age adults in the Borough. Almost a quarter of the population is of retirement age or above. The population has declined from 24,800 since mid-2008⁽¹⁾ and longer term trends could see the population reduce further, to 24,400 by 2027⁽²⁾.

3.3 The majority of the Area is relatively wealthy. Over half the population lives in areas of higher value housing at West Kirby, Caldy, Newton and Meols and only 6% of the population lives within an area of need, associated with the post-war social housing estate at Greenbank Road in West Kirby⁽³⁾. Distinctive areas of large detached dwellings at Kings Gap, Meols Drive and Caldy; and the nucleus of the old medieval village at West Kirby are designated as Conservation Areas.

3.4 157 new homes were built within the Area between April 2003 and April 2011, with a further 48 dwellings provided through conversions and changes of use. Only 18 properties were demolished. Social Housing accounts for just over 4% of the

1 based on ONS Mid-Year Estimates

2 based on the national 2008-based population projections

3 ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation for England 2010

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housing stock or 730 homes, the lowest proportion in the Borough. 2.5% or 291 residential properties⁽⁴⁾ and just 4 previously developed sites (1.23 hectares) were registered as vacant in April 2011⁽⁵⁾.

3.5 The Area could accommodate between 193⁽⁶⁾ and 308 new homes. Underlying long-term changes in population and households mean that both figures could lead to a further loss of between 500 and 800 people by 2027⁽⁷⁾. The main opportunities to provide new housing are associated with infill plots within the curtilage of existing properties. Achieving the higher level would involve providing new housing on greenfield sites and on sites designated for employment uses.

3.6 The Area currently provides approximately 5,200 jobs⁽⁸⁾. A third of residents in employment travel to jobs outside the Borough, of which almost two thirds travel to Liverpool⁽⁹⁾.

3.7 West Kirby town centre and the district centre at Hoylake provide the key retailing and services for the Area, supported by tourism and the evening economy. Both of the resorts have been identified as offering potential opportunities for new tourist and visitor facilities⁽¹⁰⁾. In West Kirby, the main development opportunities centre around the Marine Lake Sailing School and the potential redevelopment and reconfiguration of West Kirby Concourse. In Hoylake, the main focus will be the completion of public realm improvements, including the promenade and associated open spaces and the Hoylake Station gateway and passenger interchange⁽¹¹⁾. Hoylake Village Life are also preparing neighbourhood planning proposals for Hoylake.

3.8 The densely developed Carr Lane Industrial Estate (13 hectares), one of few designated employment areas to the west of the M53 Motorway, has a limited number of remaining infill sites, sufficient to accommodate up to five years development at past rates, unless additional sites become available⁽¹²⁾.

3.9 The Area is generally well-provided with open space. A shortage of outdoor sports facilities within the urban areas is largely made up within the surrounding Green Belt, although approximately 15% of football teams still travel to sites in neighbouring Mid-Wirral for home fixtures⁽¹³⁾.

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- 4 Wirral Council Tax Register April 2011 - Total Housing Stock 11,900
 - 5 National Land Use Database April 2010, to be updated to April 2011
 - 6 sites with planning permission and previously developed sites with no conflicting designation
 - 7 these figures, based on the SHLAA 2008, will be updated to April 2011
 - 8 Business Register Employment Survey 2010
 - 9 ONS Commute-APS and Census 2001
 - 10 Economic Strategy for Rural Merseyside Wirral Summary 2009
 - 11 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study 2009 and Town District and Local Centre Study and Delivery Framework 2011
 - 12 Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 and Update 2011 (forthcoming)
 - 13 Wirral Open Space Assessment 2011 (forthcoming)

3.10 The majority of natural and semi-natural open space has significant visual value, providing a woodland setting for areas such as Newton and Caldy and hilltop views across the Dee Estuary and the Irish Sea, as well as value for nature conservation and/or earth science. The Area is particularly important for golf, hosting international tournaments at the Royal Liverpool Golf Course and options for developing a Golf Resort in the adjoining Settlement Area 8 are being considered. The Hilbre Islands are being considered for designation as a new Marine Conservation Zone.

3.11 The waterfronts around the coast and the flat, poorly vegetated, low-lying land, associated with the north Wirral coastal plain and the lower Birket valley, are liable to flooding. Surface water may need attenuation and infiltration systems may be limited by Environment Agency Source Protection Zones. Separate assessments, to consider all sources of flooding, will need to be carried out on a site-specific basis⁽¹⁴⁾.

3.12 Parts of West Kirby have only medium water resource availability. The sewer network across the Area is limited by pumping stations, storage tanks and impacts on Combined Sewer Overflow discharges. The Area is also subject to the limitations associated with the North Wirral Wastewater Treatment Works at Meols, which may affect the location, scale and phasing of development over the plan period. Developers will need to seek clarification from the utilities provider and from the Environment Agency to ensure that appropriate capacity is available⁽¹⁵⁾.

3.13 [This list of transport corridors will be replaced by a map in the finalised publication draft] The main transport corridors include passenger rail services from Liverpool to West Kirby; A553 from Hoylake to Birkenhead; A540 from Hoylake to Chester, North Wales and the M56 Motorway; B5139 Frankby Road from West Kirby to Birkenhead; and Saughall Massie Road from A5027 to West Kirby. Other main public transport routes include Greenbank Road, Anglesey Road and Orrysdale Road to West Kirby.

3.14 Department for Transport Traffic Master Data highlights existing traffic congestion on routes to Hoylake and West Kirby Town Centre⁽¹⁶⁾. There is little scope to implement major highway infrastructure improvements, so the focus will be on monitoring traffic levels, traffic management measures and minor highway improvements along with enhanced provision for public transport, walking and cycling.

3.15 The Wirral Way provides an off-road cycle route from West Kirby through Thurstaston and Heswall to Parkgate, Willaston and Hooton in adjoining Cheshire West and Chester. A dedicated cycle lane is provided along sections of Column

14 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 and Wirral Water Cycle Study 2011 (forthcoming)

15 Wirral Water Cycle Study 2011 (forthcoming)

16 Travel in Merseyside 2010

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Road between Black Horse Hill and Montgomery Hill and an off-road route between Anglesey Road and Hoylake. There is a need for improved cycle links between West Kirby and Greasby.

3.16 Merseytravel have identified the need for improvements to the bus station/interchange at West Kirby. Full details of the infrastructure requirements for Settlement Area 6 can be found in Appendix X.