



CORE STRATEGY LOCAL PLAN

**REPORT OF CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENT
OPTIONS**

FEBRUARY 2019

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the background and results of the consultation undertaken by the Council on the review of development options undertaken to inform the preparation of the Council's emerging Core Strategy Local Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 This section of the report sets out the background to the consultation processes that were followed.
- 2.2 The Council is required to submit its Core Strategy Local Plan to Government for public examination. The Core Strategy Local Plan is intended to set out the long-term vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the Borough for a period of up to fifteen years. As part of this process, the Council must identify sites that will be able to deliver the development that is likely to be required to meet the Borough's foreseeable needs during the plan period, in line with the requirements of national policy.
- 2.3 Previous studies had indicated that there was likely to be shortfall in the amount of land that would be necessary to continue to meet the Borough's needs for new employment and housing development. The Council's Cabinet approved a review of development options in February 2017 (Minute 96 refers)¹ and resolved to publish the results of the review for public consultation in July 2018 (Minute 17 refers)², before deciding on the sites to be identified for future development in the Local Plan.
- 2.4 Although comments were received and recorded as soon as the Cabinet Report was published in July 2018, formal consultation was undertaken between 3 September 2018 and 26 October 2018.
- 2.5 The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement adopted in March 2014³.

3. Consultation Documents

- 3.1 Consultation took place on the following documents:

¹ The February Cabinet Report can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=5511&Ver=4>

² The July Cabinet Report can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=7609&Ver=4>

³ The Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/community-involvement-local-planning>

- Cabinet Report 27 February 2017
- Cabinet Report 23 July 2018
- Playing Pitch Strategy Update November 2017
- Employment Land and Premises Study Update December 2017
- Proposed Employment Allocations
- Proposed Housing Allocations
- Proposed Mixed-Use Allocations
- Initial Review of the Green Belt Revised Methodology
- Initial Green Belt Review Background Report
- Summary of Initial Green Belt Assessment
- Proposed Green Belt Sites for Further Investigation
- Proposed Green Belt Boundary Corrections

Cabinet Report 27 February 2017

- 3.2 The Cabinet Report set out the results of further consultation on the Borough's housing needs and land supply, the latest calculation of the likely future land supply for housing and a list of the available development options, including the need to undertake and consult on a review of land in the Green Belt.
- 3.3 A review of the methodology for preparing a revised Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was published for public consultation in July 2017 and a draft methodology for undertaking the initial review of the Green Belt was published for public consultation in October 2017.

Cabinet Report 23 July 2018

- 3.4 The Cabinet Report set out the results of the review of development options approved in February 2017, including a list of sites for housing, employment and mixed uses and a list of sites for potential further investigation in the Green Belt, for approval for public consultation.
- 3.5 Formal consultation on the results of the review was undertaken between 3 September 2018 and 26 October 2018.

Playing Pitch Strategy Update (November 2017)

- 3.6 The Playing Pitch Strategy Update is a technical study to assess the Borough's future need for sports pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts, to help the Council to decide on the sites that should continue to be protected and to identify an action plan for their maintenance and improvement.
- 3.7 Consultation took place on the following documents:
- Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (August 2016)
 - Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (May 2016)

- 3.8 A copy of the Delegated Report from 27 October 2017, which was approved by Full Council in December 2017 (Minute 97), was also made available for public inspection.

Employment Land and Premises Study Update (December 2017)

- 3.9 The Employment Land and Premises Study Update is a technical study which assesses sites that could potentially be brought forward to provide new employment development, to help the Council to decide whether there is an adequate supply of deliverable sites to meet the Borough's future employment needs.

- 3.10 Consultation took place on the following documents:

- Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study Final Report
- Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Consultation
- Appendix 2 – Viability Appraisal Outturns
- Appendix 3 – Gross to Net Adjustments for Employment Sites
- Appendix 4 – Site Assessment Criteria
- Appendix 5 – Sub Area Maps
- Appendix 6 – Assessed Criteria Ratings
- Appendix 7 - Site Pro-Formas

- 3.11 A copy of the Council's Cabinet Report from 26 March 2018, which was approved by Full Council in July 2018 (Minute 27), was also made available for public inspection.

- 3.12 The Study identified the sites that should continue to be protected for new employment development and sites which could potentially be brought forward for alternative uses or as part of the Borough's future housing land supply.

Proposed Employment Allocations (September 2018)

- 3.13 A map book showing red-lined boundaries for each of the sites proposed to be allocated for new employment development, with a schedule setting out their site reference, site area and Electoral Ward.

Proposed Housing Allocations (September 2018)

- 3.14 A map book showing red-lined boundaries for each of the sites proposed to be allocated for new housing development, with a schedule setting out their site reference, site area, indicative capacity and Electoral Ward.

Proposed Mixed-Use Allocations (September 2018)

- 3.15 A map book showing red-lined boundaries for each of the sites proposed to be allocated for new mixed-use development, with a schedule setting out their site reference, site area and Electoral Ward.

3.16 The schedule distinguished between sites that would be suitable for mixed uses of a primarily commercial character only and sites that may be suitable for mixed uses that could also include residential development.

Initial Review of the Green Belt Revised Methodology (September 2018)

3.17 The Methodology set out how the initial review of the Green Belt would be undertaken by the Council and the matters that would be taken into account, to help the Council to decide whether there were any areas within the existing Green Belt that may potentially be suitable for further investigation.

3.18 Consultation took place on the following documents:

- Initial Review of the Green Belt Revised Methodology
- Appendix 1 – Map of Settlement Areas
- Appendix 2 – Map of Green Belt Parcels
- Appendix 3 – Map of Submitted Sites
- Appendix 4 – Map of Flood Zone 3
- Appendix 5 – Map of Core Biodiversity
- Appendix 6 – Map of Wetland Bird Survey Core Count Areas
- Appendix 7 – Map of High Quality Agricultural Land

3.19 The methodology set out the requirements of national policy; the history of the Green Belt in Wirral; how settlement areas, sites and parcels would be identified; the method to be used to undertake the initial assessment against the five purposes of including land in a Green Belt; the method for assessing boundary strength; and the identification of additional physical or policy constraints.

3.20 The methodology also provided for boundary corrections and the identification of areas that may be suitable to accommodate additional infill development.

Initial Green Belt Review Background Report (September 2018)

3.21 The Initial Green Belt Review Background Report is a technical report which sets out the results of the Council's initial high-level review of the Green Belt and the background to the parcels and sites that had been identified by the Council as potentially suitable for further investigation, subject to further research and consultation.

3.22 Consultation took place on the following documents:

- Background Report
- Appendix 1 – Map of Settlement Areas
- Appendix 2 – Map of Green Belt Parcels
- Appendix 3 – Initial Background Information
- Appendix 4 – Containment Analysis

- Appendix 5 – Separation Analysis
- Appendix 6 – Separation Commentary
- Appendix 7 – Constraints Analysis
- Appendix 8 – Map of Green Belt Sites
- Appendix 9 – Initial Background Information
- Appendix 10 - Containment Analysis
- Appendix 11 - Separation Analysis
- Appendix 12 - Separation Commentary
- Appendix 13 – Constraints Analysis
- Appendix 14 – Map of Sites for Further Investigation
- Appendix 15 – Potential Capacity Calculations
- Appendix 16 – Potential Infill Villages
- Appendix 17 – Potential Boundary Corrections
- Appendix 18 – Map of Potential Boundary Corrections
- Appendix 19 – Map of Areas of Greatest Need
- Appendix 20 – Map of Areas of Highest Accessibility

3.23 The report also identified potential boundary corrections to the Green Belt and potential opportunities to accommodate additional infill development, which if agreed, would be the subject of further consultation with affected residents.

Summary of Initial Green Belt Assessment (September 2018)

3.24 The Summary of Initial Green Belt Assessment set out a summary of the information that the Council had so far collected as the basis for its initial high-level assessment of land within the existing Green Belt.

3.25 It also included a summary of the Council's findings on the options that were currently likely to be available for each parcel and site in the Green Belt.

Proposed Green Belt Sites for Further Investigation (September 2018)

3.26 A map book showing red-lined boundaries for each of the sites proposed for further investigation in the Green Belt, with a schedule setting out their site reference, some existing known constraints and their Electoral Ward.

Proposed Green Belt Boundary Corrections (September 2018)

3.27 A map book showing red-lined boundaries for each of the potential boundary corrections to the Green Belt, with a schedule setting out their site reference, location and Electoral Ward.

4. Scope of Consultation

- 4.1 Comments in writing were invited on any part of any of these documents and their associated evidence base.

5. Method of Consultation

- 5.1 The consultation documents, including copies of the notification letter, the associated Cabinet Report and 'Frequently Asked Questions', were placed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan-6>
- 5.2 The Frequently Asked Questions were updated on 7 September 2018, in response to questions received at early briefing sessions.
- 5.3 A link to the consultation was also placed on the Council's Local Planning Consultations webpage at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-planning-consultations> and on the Council's Core Strategy landing page at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan>.
- 5.4 The documents on the Council's website were accompanied by an on-line questionnaire on Survey Monkey, to allow comments to be captured more easily.
- 5.5 From 3 September 2018, the on-line questionnaire was amended to mirror the 2-page Feedback Form, to accompany the formal consultation.
- 5.6 A link was also provided to a guide, produced by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, with advice on how to respond to consultation exercises.
- 5.7 Printed copies of the consultation documents, including copies of the notification letter, the associated Cabinet Report and 'Frequently Asked Questions', were also placed on deposit for public inspection at the Council's Regeneration and Planning Service at the South Annexe of Wallasey Town Hall and at all 24 public libraries across the Borough, during their normal opening hours.
- 5.8 A 2-page paper and 16-page 'Have Your Say' paper booklet were also made available in Council Sports Centres and One Stop Shops, to allow comments to be submitted more easily.
- 5.9 A slightly revised 2-page paper Feedback Form was made available from 3 September 2018, to accompany the formal consultation.
- 5.10 The revised Feedback Form simply asked respondents to provide their comments and explain their reasons, provide their contact details and indicate whether they would like to be notified of future local plan consultations.

- 5.11 Notification letters, inviting comments on the consultation documents and detailing where they could be inspected, were sent to four hundred and forty four contacts registered on the Council's Local Plan Contacts Database, by email where an email address had been provided or otherwise by post.
- 5.12 A list of the people and organisations contacted is provided in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 5.13 Eight thousand nine hundred and forty three notification letters were also sent to properties within or neighbouring each of the sites identified for housing, employment or mixed uses, for potential further investigation in the Green Belt or which could be subject to potential boundary corrections or additional infill development.
- 5.14 The Council Leader also wrote individually to every resident, to encourage them to get involved in the process and to submit their views to inform the development of the Local Plan.
- 5.15 Public notices were published for two consecutive weeks in the Wirral Globe on 5 September and 12 September 2018.
- 5.16 Press releases included invitations to a series of public briefing sessions, which were held across the Borough in the initial weeks of the consultation period. Residents were also informed of where they could view the consultation documents, either in the Council's offices at the South Annexe of Wallasey Town Hall or at one of twenty-four public libraries across the Borough.
- 5.17 The consultation also received coverage in the Wirral Globe, the Liverpool Echo and the Council's own publication; Wirral View.
- 5.18 Electronic notifications, containing a link to the consultation documents on the Council's webpage, were sent to each of the sixty-six Elected Members of Wirral Council and to each of the four Members of Parliament for Wirral on 31 August 2018.
- 5.19 Additional electronic notifications, containing a link to the consultation documents on the Council's website, were also sent to members of the Council's four Constituency Area Committees; the Wirral Partnership and Wirral Plan Delivery Group; the Council's Corporate Mail Chimp database; and were included in the Community Action Wirral monthly e-newsletter to third sector contacts.
- 5.20 Twelve public briefing and drop-in sessions were held on six different dates at five different venues across the Borough at:

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Venue	Date	Times
Wallasey Town Hall, Seacombe	03/09/2018	Drop-in: 11am – 7pm Public briefings: 10:00am 4:30pm 7:00pm
Floral Pavilion, New Brighton	05/09/2018	Drop-in: 11am – 7pm Public briefings: 10:00am 4:30pm 7:00pm
Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight	10/09/2018	Drop-in: 11am – 7pm Public briefings: 4:30pm 7:00pm
Pensby Boys School, Irby Road	12/09/2018	Drop-in: 11am – 7pm Public briefings: 10:00am 4:30pm 7:00pm
Pensby Boys School, Irby Road	13/09/2018	Drop-in: 4:30 – 5:30pm Public briefing: 6:00pm
West Kirby Concourse	18/09/2018	Drop-in: 11am – 7pm Public briefings: 10:00am 4:30pm 7:00pm

5.21 Attendance was high with several of the events at full capacity. Demand was such that an extra event was scheduled at Pensby School on 13 September 2018 to ensure more residents could attend. Residents were able to enrol on the events using an electronic booking system which ensured that the numbers attending did not exceed the individual venues capacity.

5.22 At each briefing, attendees were given a presentation about the Development Options Review followed by a public questions and answers session. There was

also the opportunity to speak to planning officers whilst viewing copies of large scale maps and a full set of consultation documents before and after each session.

5.23 A copy of the presentation was provided on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan-6>

6. Consultation Responses

6.1 The consultation drew 3,221 responses from 2,989 individual respondents. The number of respondents is smaller than the total number of responses received, as 232 of the responses submitted were multiple responses from the same respondents.

6.2 A list of respondents is provided in Appendix 1 to this report.

6.3 A summary of all the responses received is set out in three volumes, in Appendix 2 to this report.

6.4 3,085 responses (96%) were from local residents; 54 were development interests such as landowners, developers and/or their agents (2%); 14 were amenity societies; 4 were local interest groups; 4 were Wirral Councillors; 3 were statutory consultees; 2 were utilities operators; and 2 were local community groups. There were also single responses from a local business and from a neighbouring local authority. 51 anonymous responses were also received.

6.5 1,045 responses were received by e-mail and 296 by letter.

6.6 1,049 responses were submitted using the online Feedback Form. An additional 65 people submitted a paper copy of the Feedback Form.

6.7 643 responses were received using the initial online questionnaire.

6.8 98 respondents used the original 4-page paper questionnaire; and 25 the 'Have You Say' booklet.

6.9 957 respondents asked to be added to the Council's contact database to be notified of future consultations.

6.10 904 respondents made their request to be notified through Survey Monkey, 40 by paper questionnaire, 8 by email and 5 by letter. The majority of additional requests came from local residents and a few consultants.

7. Content of the Remainder of the Report

7.1 Appendix 1, attached, lists all the people who responded to the consultation who added their name or contact details to their response.

- 7.2 Appendix 2, attached, summarises each of the comments received in response to the consultation.
- 7.3 Appendix 3, attached, sets out the people and organisations that were initially notified of the consultation, who were included on the Council's pre-existing Local Plan contact database.
- 7.4 Further information on the content of the consultation and on the Council's emerging Local Plan can be provided by the Forward Planning Team at PO Box 290, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH27 9FQ or at forwardplanning@wirral.gov.uk