



Wirral Waters

# Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters

## A Green Infrastructure Investment Framework

Newlands SSFG Project Specification  
**Draft for Consultation with HCA**

16th July 2011





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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose and Structure

- 4.1 This Project Specification provides a summary of the **'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework'**. It has been prepared by the Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Steering Group – a partnership of Wirral MBC, Peel Holdings, the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA), the Forestry Commission, and the Mersey Forest.
- 4.2 The 'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework' and its projects form part of the Forestry Commission and Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) Newlands (2) Setting the Scene For Growth (SSFG) Programme which has committed £1.4m to fund the development and delivery of GI projects centred around the Wirral Waters project. This funding is essential to deliver 'early win' environmental projects and bring about a positive transformation in the environmental quality of Inner Wirral - a large scale, degraded industrial landscape enclosed by the some of the most deprived wards in the UK.
- 4.3 At the heart of the Framework is Wirral Waters - a project of national significance centred on the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock complex. Launched by Peel Holdings in 2006, Wirral Waters is the most significant component in the 'western anchor' of the Ocean/Atlantic Gateway Concept. The vision is to create a new international city waterfront destination centred upon East Float, part of the Birkenhead and Wallasey docks.
- 4.4 Wirral Waters is a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring about the regeneration of Inner Wirral and the Liverpool City Region, creating over 20,000 new jobs and 14,000 new homes over a 30 year delivery timeframe. From the start, Peel Holdings have worked closely with Wirral MBC and partners to set in place a strategy that will ensure that the investment in Wirral Waters will make a significant contribution to the regeneration of wider Inner Wirral setting. Wirral Waters has received cross party political support, David Cameron PM and Michael Heseltine MP visited and endorsed the project in January 2011, and Wirral Waters has recently been awarded Enterprise Zone status
- 4.5 Outline Planning Permission for the East Float Masterplan has been approved in August 2010, providing a flexible platform for the immediate delivery of projects. The Outline Planning Application for East Float sets out a 'Working Schedule' of possible off site green infrastructure improvements around the immediate setting. Funding for off site improvements is to be secured through a Section 106 viability tested tariff contribution, payable per dwelling or per square footage of floorspace completed. In this regard, funding for green infrastructure will become available in the mid to longer term as markets are created, values are elevated and new development begins to generate sufficient returns to reinvest in off site improvements through the viability tested tariff agreement.
- 4.6 Wirral MBC is also setting in place a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Wirral Borough as part of their Local Development Framework. This will provide the ability to co ordinate and target GI investment to complement the Newlands (2) SSFG Funding and East Float S106 tariff contributions.
- 4.7 The scale of the challenge in delivering Wirral Waters is not to be underestimated. Inner Wirral suffers from acute deprivation, particularly within Birkenhead North and the wards enclosing Wirral Waters. The locality is characterised by large tracts of derelict and underused land, which acts to reinforce embedded perceptions of Inner Wirral as a place not to invest. These characteristics act as barriers and deter investment. Without coordinated investment to transform images and perceptions of Inner Wirral in the short term, bringing forward early phases of Wirral Waters and creating higher market values and jobs is likely to take much longer.
- 4.8 The £1.4m committed funding through the Newlands (2) Setting the Scene For Growth (SSFG) Programme is additional to the East Float S106 tariff monies. It is essential to improving environmental quality in the short term by:
- Enabling the established Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Steering Group to work with the HCA to finalise the Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework and co ordinate its delivery

- Contributing to the delivery of the key 'early win' projects set out in the Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework' as the first steps to enable Peel Holdings, Wirral MBC and other partners to deliver medium to longer term projects
- Funding projects that are not included within the off-Site 'Working Schedule' of the East Float S106 viability tested tariff agreement but are recognised as essential to the regeneration of Inner Wirral

4.9 In doing so, it will:

- Set in place a clear, long term vision and investment GI Framework and Delivery Vehicle for Wirral Waters and Inner Wirral
- Bring together, co ordinate and target the resources of all public and private sector investment parties to maximise the value added, including Peel Holdings, Mersey Forest, Wirral MBC and others
- make a strategic contribution to changing perceptions and in doing so, build investor confidence, secure private sector investment and create jobs
- Create positive, attractive approaches and arrival points and define key development opportunities
- Connect investment projects, jobs, local people and community assets together, including Wirral Waters, Bidston Moss, the International Trade Centre (ITC): West Float and others
- improve access to jobs and education and encourage healthier lifestyles

4.10 This investment will build upon Newlands Programme successes to date. Through Newlands, the Forestry Commission and NWDA have worked with Wirral MBC and partners to create the 68 hectare Bidston Moss Community Woodland. In addition to creating a valuable environmental resource, Bidston Moss acts as a focal point for local community interest groups and encourages healthier lifestyles. The Newlands investment has transformed an open landfill site and eyesore on a key gateway site into the Liverpool City Region into a positive, attractive arrival point.

4.11 As such, the Forestry Commission, Mersey Forest and Wirral MBC are well placed to work with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Peel Holdings and Groundwork Merseyside to take forward and deliver the vision and projects set out in the 'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework'.

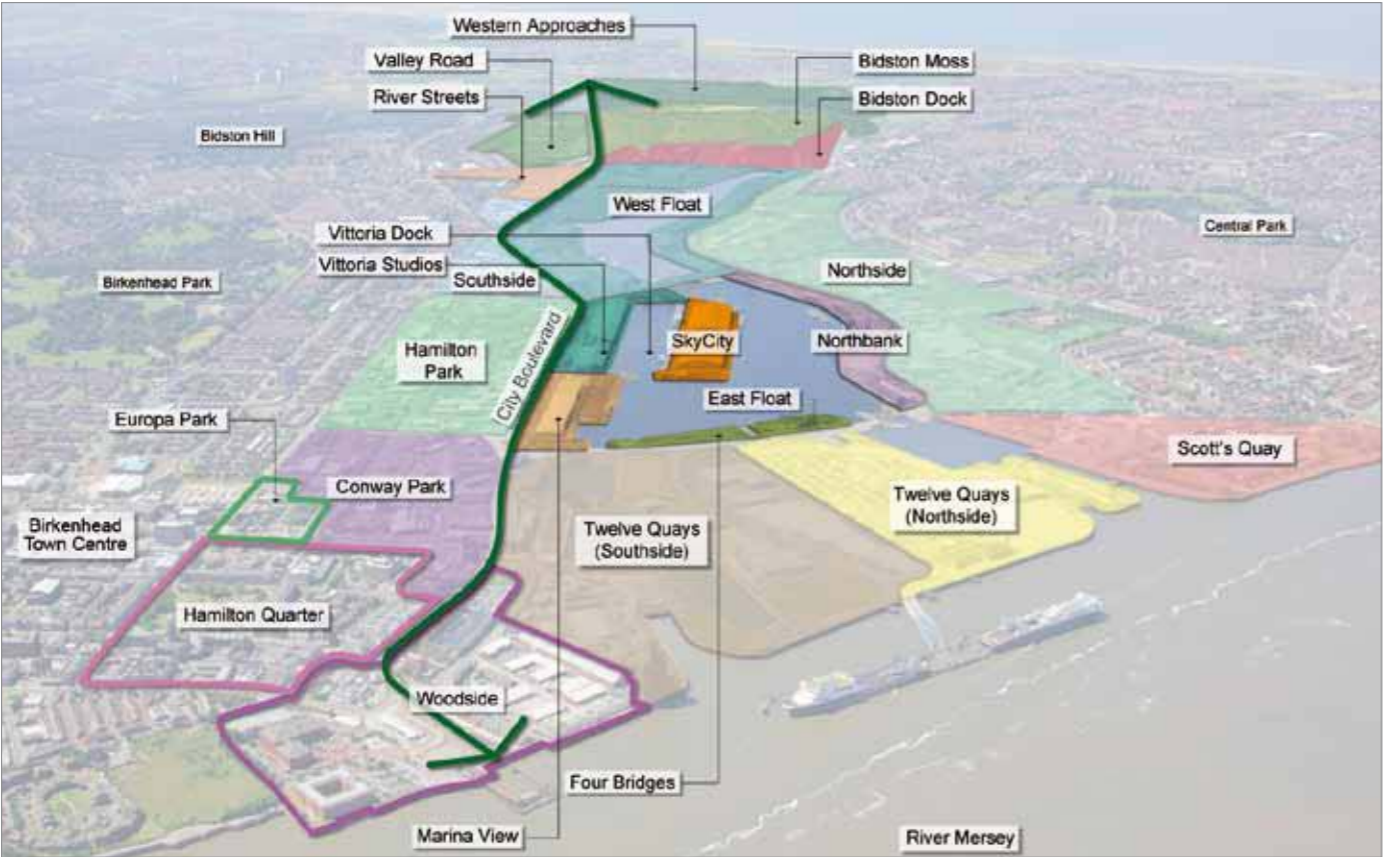
4.12 Using the prototype Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit (which is in line with the National Ecosystem Services Valuation), the Mersey Forest has provided a preliminary assessment of the £1.4m Newlands (2) SSFG Funding allocation. This shows a net present value for the projects of £29.4m, including:

- Contribution to GVA - £12.7m
- Other economic benefits - £16.7m

4.13 This Project Specification provides a summary of the 'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework' to inform the handover of the SSFG (2) Newlands Funding from NWDA to the HCA. It is set out under the following headings:

- Setting the scene for growth
- Projects and Priorities
- Programme and Funding Profile
- Delivery Structure and Governance





- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
|   | 5 |
- Wirral Waters SKF Neighbourhoods and City Boulevard
  - East Float Quarters : location
  - East Float : View to Liverpool Waterfront
  - Bdston Moss, West Float, East Float and Inner Wirral
  - East Float Illustrative Masterplan



## 2. Setting the Scene for Growth

### Wirral Waters – a 30 year vision

- 2.1 Since the initial launch, Peel have been working with Wirral MBC and stakeholders to set in place a shared regeneration strategy for Inner Wirral. A placemaking and neighbourhood approach has shaped ideas and proposals, leading to a family of 15 city neighbourhoods centred on the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock complex. East Float and Bidston Dock are being brought forward as ‘catalyst’ neighbourhoods by Peel Holdings. The enclosing ‘Partnership’ neighbourhoods surrounding East Float and Bidston Dock are in a wide diversity of land ownerships, including Wirral MBC and other public sector agencies.
- 2.2 The approach has been to ensure that all parties work together to bring about the coordinated regeneration of the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock complex, the surrounding residential and employment neighbourhoods, local shops and centres, and established leisure and tourism destinations.
- 2.3 A new ‘City Structure’ of green infrastructure is proposed to connect the 15 new city neighbourhoods together, and link them to their immediate surrounds. The key components of this proposed City Structure are set out in the Wirral Waters Vision Statement and expanded upon further in supporting documents for the East Float Outline Planning Permission (secured in August 2010). Key documents defining the green infrastructure strategy are the:
- Wirral Waters Guiding Principles Document: Landscape, Waterfront and Public Realm (15) (Peel Holdings)
  - East Float Masterplan: Design and Access Statement (Peel Holdings)
- 2.4 The East Float Outline Planning Permission includes a Section 106 (S106) agreement detailing how off site green infrastructure and public realm improvements are to be funded by Peel Holdings as Wirral Waters is developed out. The funding is to be secured through a Section 106 viability tested tariff contribution, payable per dwelling or per square footage of floorspace completed. A ‘Working Schedule’ of potential green infrastructure projects is established – as set out across the page.
- 2.5 There are two key important aspects of the S106 agreement in regard to green infrastructure:
- funding for green infrastructure will only become available in the mid to longer term as markets are created, values are elevated and new development begins to generate sufficient returns to reinvest in off site improvements through the viability tested tariff agreement
  - the ‘Working Schedule’ covers extensive derelict and underused areas and the Wirral Waters contributions are offered to form part of a wider funding package appropriate to the scale of the regeneration challenge

### Wirral MBC – Investment Strategy for Inner Wirral

- 2.6 Wirral MBC and Peel Holding face key challenges in bringing about the delivery of Wirral Waters. The areas enclosing Wirral Waters suffer from acute deprivation – as illustrated across the page. The wider environment is variable, with areas of high environmental quality a few steps away from areas of very poor environmental quality. This disparity may well be heightened when the plans for East Float with its new city parks, squares and waterside walkways are delivered. Such disparities will not serve the new development well.
- 2.7 In response to the Wirral Waters proposals and the requirements to prepare a Local Development Framework, Wirral MBC has prepared key regeneration and development planning documents. They including the:
- Birkenhead and Wirral Waters Integrated Regeneration Strategy (Wirral MBC 2010)
  - Sustainable Community Strategy: Wirral 2025 (Wirral Local Strategic Partnership)

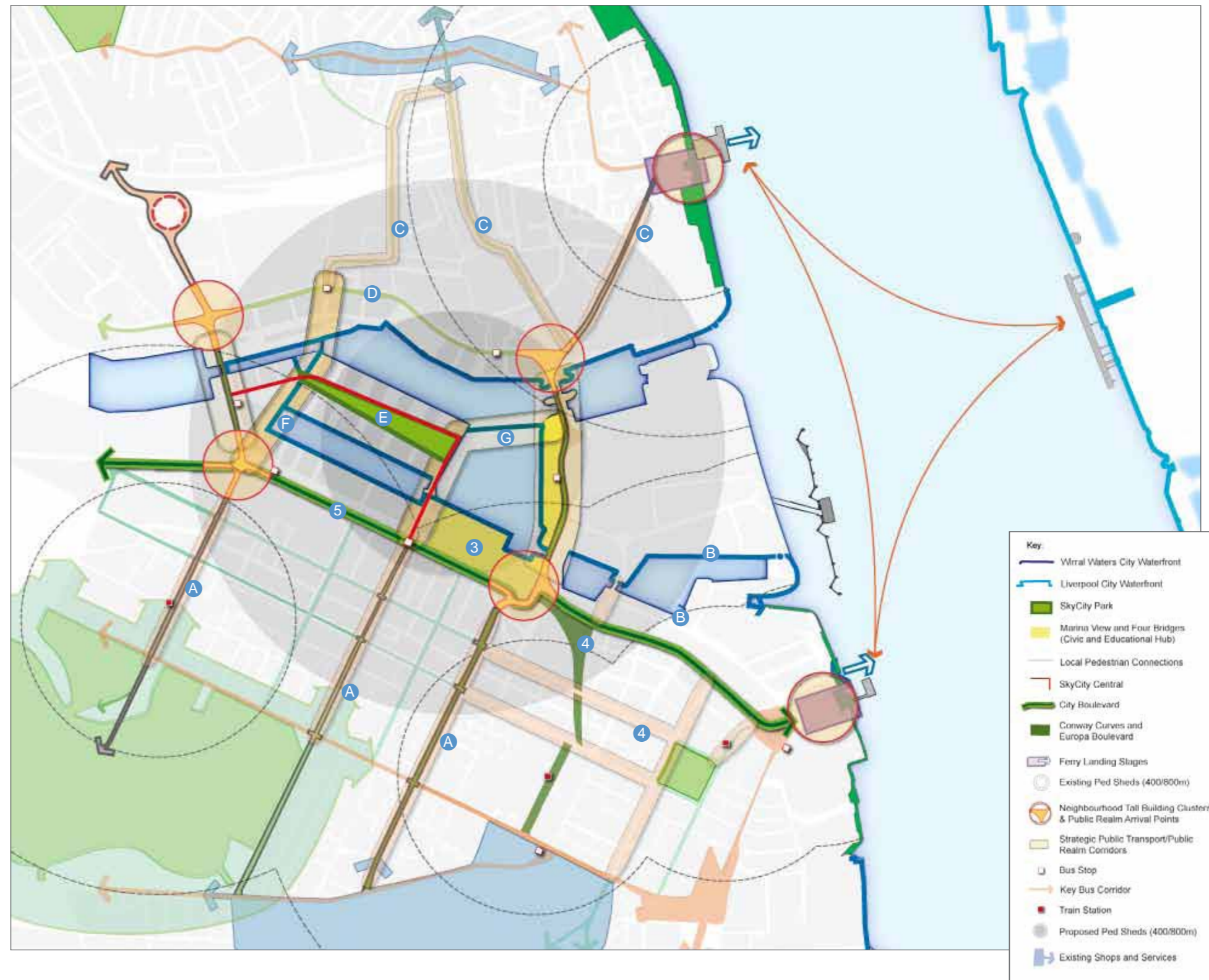
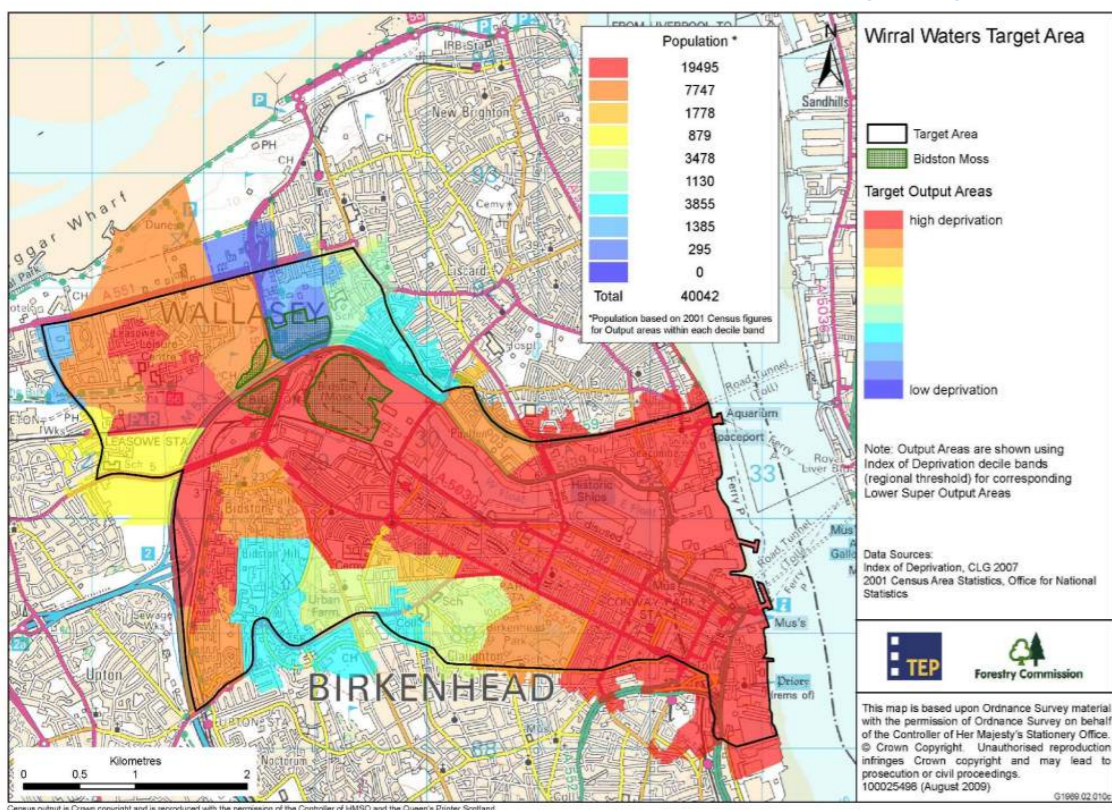
- 2.8 The importance of delivering a coordinated green infrastructure framework and delivery mechanism to attract investment and connect people and jobs is set out in both documents. The strategies also identify the need to invest in green infrastructure across Inner Wirral and beyond the ‘Working Schedule’ of projects defined by the East Float Outline Planning Permission.
- 2.9 Wirral MBC is also progressing a borough wide Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform the Local Development Framework. This will provide the ability to co ordinate and target GI investment to complement the Newlands (2) SSFG Funding and East Float S106 viability tested tariff contributions.

### Newlands – a trigger for growth and long term strategic investment

- 2.10 For all parties, there is fundamental need to ensure that Wirral Waters brings about a positive change in the wider borough and adjacent neighbourhoods. Green Infrastructure is recognised as being of fundamental importance to the delivery of Wirral Waters and the regeneration of Inner Wirral and the Liverpool City Region.
- 2.11 This has been recognised from the inception of the project, and translated into specific principles and proposals in the Wirral Waters strategic and planning documentation, and Wirral MBC’s Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Development Framework.
- 2.12 These frameworks are endorsed, in place and are able to guide a coordinated approach to deliver a cost effective Green Infrastructure programme that is able to:
- Drastically improve the image and perceptions of Inner Wirral by improving the approaches, arrival points and first phase development sites to build confidence, attract financial interest and investment, and encourage new employers and residents to locate and invest in Inner Wirral
  - Create a new and strengthened network of attractive, functional, productive greenways and greenspaces
  - Provide a more unified and equitable environment to improve the health and well-being of adjacent deprived communities and bring people together
  - Open up connections to places of work and education
- 2.13 Since the granting of the East Float Outline Planning Permission in August 2010, the Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group has begun the task of bringing together key investors and delivery partners to agree how to target available resources and maximise value.
- 2.14 Newlands has enabled the Mersey Forest to draft the ‘Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework’. This brings together the vision and objectives of Peel Holdings, Wirral MBC and Newlands, identifies key actions, projects and priorities to deliver this vision. This draft schedule of projects and priorities provides the starting point for future discussions with the HCA.
- 2.15 This approach is wholly in line with the new Environment White Paper – Natural Choices – Securing the Value of Nature. This sets out the importance of creating and managing green infrastructure to deliver a range of benefits for urban areas.



Inner Wirral Index of Multiple Deprivation





## 3. Projects and Priorities

### GI Projects

3.1 The **'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework'** sets out a portfolio of early, medium and long term projects. In response to the allocation of SSFG Newlands (2) over the Financial Years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, a number of projects have been shortlisted and explored in further detail to ensure they are capable of delivery within the 3 year timeframe.

3.2 The Newlands SSFG funded projects are:

- **Green Streets and Gateways:** a community led programme to create greenways and urban tree planting along important approaches and arrival points connecting Wirral Waters to Inner Wirral and the River Mersey waterfront. The proposal is to plant 35km of Green Streets/Greenways.
- **Meanwhile Land Planting:** planting of temporary, fast growing coppice or forest trees to produce a biomass crop in 3-5 years. The objective is to bring about significant improvements to the environmental and visual quality of the docklands and the wider setting by removing/screening key eyesores and improving prominent sites. This will focus upon improving the appearance of development sites and may also include food growing and wildflower sowing. Proposals will be designed to enable 'meanwhile' planting around the site boundary planting to be retained as sites are developed. The proposal is to create 11 hectares of Meanwhile Land Planting.
- **Long Term Green Infrastructure:** planting of new greenways and greenspaces as woodland, parks and gardens to deliver a wide range of GI functions. The proposal is to create 18 hectares of Long Term Green Infrastructure
- **Bidston Moss:** Bidston Moss is an underutilised asset, one that becomes even more important as new homes and jobs are created at Wirral Waters and across Inner Wirral. The existing Millennium Way cycleway connects West Wirral to Bidston Moss. At present, the cycleway ends at Bidston Moss. The focus is upon connecting Bidston Moss and the cycleways to Inner Wirral and Wirral Waters. The proposal is to provide a new car park (park & cycle) at Bidston Moss, along with signage and new cycleway connections to Wirral Waters across Bidston Dock
- **Intermediate Labour Markets:** providing training and work for people in Birkenhead and Inner Wirral is a key opportunity. Groundwork Merseyside are a key partner and will lead in delivering ILM's with support from other partners.

3.3 The proposed Newlands SSFG GI projects will focus upon those areas surrounding the East Float Outline Planning Permission 'Working Schedule' of potential green infrastructure projects. Where it is considered appropriate by the **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group**, Newlands SSFG funding may be used to support Wirral Waters 'Early Win' projects – given the recognised to bring forward GI projects before new development begins to generate sufficient returns to reinvest in off site improvements through the viability tested tariff agreement. The overall funding made available through the East Float Section 106 viability tested tariff contribution will not be diminished by the Newlands SSFG funding. As funding becomes available, in the medium to longer term, the **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** will direct investment to additional green infrastructure projects to complement and support earlier Newlands SSFG Funding projects.

3.4 The Newlands SSFG funded projects will be focus around Wirral Waters and also extend beyond the East Float Outline Planning Application 'Working Schedule' of projects to include the wider partnership neighbourhoods, as illustrated across the page.

### GI Priority Areas and Wirral Waters 'Early Win' Projects

3.5 The **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** has considered the full extent of potential GI projects and has identified priority areas for delivery within the 3 year timeframe (to end of FY 2014/15) – these provide the starting point for more detailed discussions with the HCA.

3.6 A key imperative is the need to support the delivery of four key 'Early Win' projects being brought forward as the first phases of Wirral Waters. In isolation, given the scale and poor quality of the enclosing dockland environment, the Early Win projects will remain disconnected. Targeting GI projects and investment around these Early Win projects creates a connecting landscape structure - improving key approaches and arrival points, building investor confidence and improving access to jobs.

3.7 The four key Wirral Waters 'Early Win' projects and associated GI projects being considered are:

- **Four Bridges and Hydraulic Tower:** the Hydraulic Tower is one of two historic dock buildings within East Float. It is a prominent landmark along the busy Tower Road, and is close to rail and ferry stations, Birkenhead Town, and Hamilton Square. It includes education, commercial, leisure and cultural uses creating over 400 jobs. The HCA owned site at Egerton Dock is central to this project.

Green Infrastructure Projects will be targeted to improve connections to the rail and ferry stations at Woodside, Hamilton Square, and links to Birkenhead Town Centre. Improved greenway approaches and arrival points, and access to the waters edge will also be created.

- **Northbank and Northside:** the historic Grain Warehouses occupy the centre of the proposed East Float 'Northbank city quarter'. They have been converted into apartments. The Northbank is a prominent arrival point from the Queensway Mersey Tunnel and M53. Key gateway sites and those enclosing the Grain Warehouses are being brought forward as early win projects.

The Green Infrastructure Projects will be targeted to improve approaches and arrival points, and access to the waters edge will also be created. Meanwhile Land Planting may be used for the large, prominent vacant sites within Northbank. Long Term Infrastructure Projects will be used to significantly improve the wider Northside neighbourhood between Wirral Waters and Seacombe. This is essential to improve the poor visual quality and create attractive pedestrian connections to jobs.

- **The International Trade Centre (ITC) and City Boulevard (West):** the ITC is a new and unique concept within the UK and western Europe. It is of international importance, creating a global trading facility in a strategically accessible location. Located in West Float, it will create over 650 jobs.

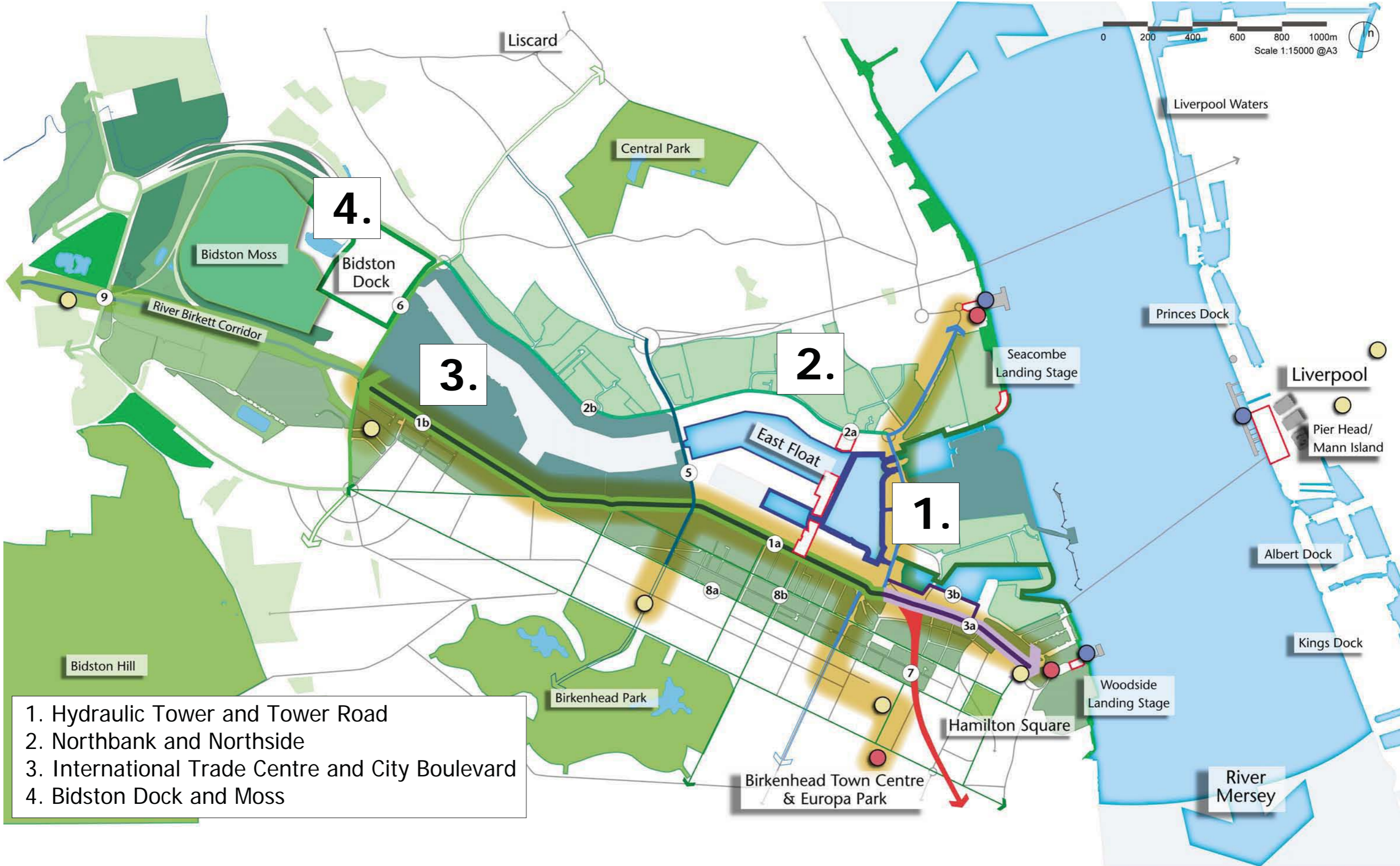
The Green Infrastructure Projects will improve greenway approaches and arrival points. This will include contributions to 'City Boulevard' - a new strategic east west greenway connecting Bidston Moss and the deprived neighbourhoods of Birkenhead North to East Float, Birkenhead Town and Hamilton Square. The Boulevard creates a new public transport corridor and cycleways linking the national Millennium Way cycle route at Bidston Moss to Wirral Waters and Liverpool. The western extents of City Boulevard are directly relevant to the ITC.

- **Bidston Dock and Bidston Moss:** Bidston Dock is to be brought forward as a new retail and leisure destination as part of the Wirral Waters project. Concept ideas are yet to be developed. The Dock occupies a pivotal location between the Bidston Moss Community Woodland and 'City Boulevard'.

The Green Infrastructure Projects will be targeted to create a new car park and cycleway to assist in connecting the ITC and City Boulevard to Bidston Moss and the cycleway connections to the west.

3.8 The four Wirral Waters 'Early Win' projects and associated GI Priority Areas are illustrated across the page.





- 1. Hydraulic Tower and Tower Road
- 2. Northbank and Northside
- 3. International Trade Centre and City Boulevard
- 4. Bidston Dock and Moss

EXISTING CITY STRUCTURE

- Train Station
- Bus Station
- Ferry Station
- Public Realm
- X
- Underlying City Structure

PROPOSED CITY STRUCTURE

- River Mersey City Reaches
- Local Greenspace
- Western Approaches
- River Birkett Corridor
- City Parks

PROPOSED CITY STRUCTURE

- 1a City Boulevard East
- 1b City Boulevard West
- 2a Northside Boulevard East
- 2b Northside Boulevard West
- 3a Woodside Boulevard
- 3b Egerton Route

PROPOSED CITY STRUCTURE

- 4 Tower Road (Parkway)
- 5 Duke Street (Parkway)
- 6 Poulton Bridge (Parkway)
- 7 Conway Park Curves

CATALYST NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 8a Town Boulevards East-West (Laird Town Plan)
- 8b Town Boulevards North-South (Laird Town Plan)
- 9 Western Approaches - River Birkett
- Public Realm

CATALYST NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Green Infrastructure within New Development
- Strategic Public Realm
- Northbank
- Vittoria Dock
- Vittoria Pool

PARTNERSHIP NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Green Grid
- Working Woodlands
- Operational Port: urban woodland opportunities



# 4. Programme and Funding Profile

## Early Actions

- 4.1 The **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** has commissioned the ‘**Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework**’ to identify how the allocated SSFG Newlands (2) may be best spent to enable the delivery of the Wirral Waters ‘Early Wins’ projects.
- 4.2 This, together with the Birkenhead and Wirral Waters Integrated Regeneration Strategy; the Sustainable Communities Strategy: Wirral 2025; Wirral Waters Vision Statement; the supporting Landscape, Waterfront and Public Realm Guiding Principles document; and the East Float Masterplan Design and Access Statement, provides a robust and flexible platform to explore GI Priority Areas and Wirral Waters ‘Early Win’ projects in greater detail.
- 4.3 The ‘**Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework**’ sets out a number of early actions for the Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group to finalise before April 2012 including:
- **Working Group Development:** developing the existing partnership, identifying negotiating roles, identifying any gaps and seeking partners or mechanisms to fill gaps.
  - **Project Development:** liaise with land owners, identify constraints and co ordinate project specifications and details
  - **Resource Gearing:** co ordinate additional funding resources for capital and management costs
  - **Intermediate Labour Market:** develop an ILM programme including a management and maintenance company
- 4.4 The Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group will work with the HCA to progress these early actions.

## Phasing

- 4.5 At present, the proposals is to progress the four key Wirral Waters ‘Early Win’ projects and associated GI projects as summarised below and illustrated across the page.

### Phase 1 – FY 2012 to 2013

- Bidston Dock and Bidston Moss
- Intermediate Labour Markets

### Phase 2 – FY 2013 to 2014

- Green Streets and Gateways
- Meanwhile Land Planting
- Long Term Green Infrastructure
- International Trade Centre and City Boulevard West
- Northbank and Northside

### Phase 3 – FY 2014 to 2015

- Green Streets and Gateways
- Meanwhile Land Planting
- Long Term Green Infrastructure
- Four Bridges and Hydraulic Tower
- International Trade Centre and City Boulevard West
- Northbank and Northside

## Funding Profile

- 4.6 The projected Funding Profile is:

• Phase 1 – FY 2012/13	£400,000.00
• Phase 2 – FY 2013/14	£500,000.00
• Phase 3 – FY 2014/15	<u>£500,000.00</u>
	<b><u>£1,400,000.00</u></b>



# 5. Delivery Structure & Governance

## Coordinating Executive and Working Groups

5.1 The **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** has been progressing ideas to date. There is a clear relationship between this Group and the Strategic Delivery Group and other Working Groups established as part of the Wirral Waters Partnership Working agreement between Wirral MBC and Peel Holdings.

5.2 The **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** will be expanded to include the HCA. It is proposed that the Working Group will have the responsibility of working with the HCA to deliver the following responsibilities:

- Establishing a Technical Team to work up ideas and proposals and deliver projects in partnership with Wirral MBC Technical Services and local community groups
- Direct the delivery of the **'Setting the Scene for Wirral Waters GI Framework'** by briefing and reviewing design proposals brought forward by the Technical Team
- Keeping the Investment Prospectus under review and amending/refreshing it as appropriate and reporting updates to other Wirral Waters Working and Executive Groups

5.3 The structure of the **Wirral Waters Green Infrastructure Working Group** and its relationship with the wider Wirral Waters Working and Executive Groups is illustrated across the page.

Current Wirral Waters Partnership Working Arrangements

