



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE**

Wirral Selective Licensing Application: Supporting Evidence and Rational

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Section 1: Introduction

The private rented sector is the only housing option available to some of the most vulnerable people in society [1]. However, in some areas, properties in the private rented sector suffer from poor condition and poor management, which are both a consequence and a cause of low demand [1]. The proportion of private rented properties in Wirral increased significantly between the 2001 Census and 2011 Census, from 11% to 16%. According to the English Housing Survey, the national figure in 2017-18 was 19% but hasn't increased in the previous five years. This figure is likely to be mirrored in Wirral.

The Housing Act 2004 enabled local authorities to introduce selective licensing, if deemed appropriate, for privately rented properties in designated areas as an additional tool to improve both the lives of tenants and communities.

Local authorities are permitted introduce selective licensing of privately rented properties in areas experiencing factors such as low housing demand and anti-social behaviour (ASB) to ensure a minimum standard of management is undertaken by landlords. On 1st April 2015 the Selective Licensing of Housing (Additional Conditions) (England) Order 2015 was made law which allowed local authorities to introduce selective licensing based on further factors including poor property conditions, high levels of migration, high level of deprivation and high levels of crime. Any new schemes can now only be introduced where the proportion of private rented properties in the designated area is above the national average of 19%. The Order also makes local authorities seek confirmation from the Secretary of State for any selective licensing scheme covering more than 20% of their geographical area, or affecting more than 20% of privately rented homes in the local authority area.

Wirral introduced its first Selective Licensing Scheme in the Borough on 1st July 2015 into four designated areas in Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe and Egremont. Over 1,300 Licence applications have been granted in these areas representing over 99% of known licensable landlords. Checks have been completed to 825 privately rented properties. The compliance rate with license conditions has been found to be poor at only 30% of the properties inspected.

Following a refresh of the evidence and MCDA (Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis) process in 2017, a further four LSOAs in Wirral were designated in April 2019 to the existing four, to make eight LSOAs in Wirral where Selective Licensing would operate.

To May 2019, there have been 50 individual prosecutions so far for landlords who have failed to get a licence and other Housing Act 2004 offences. There is a requirement after 5 years of operation, to review how Selective Licensing schemes have operated. This means that the initial four areas of Wirral will shortly be up for review. This Supporting Evidence and Rationale will form part of that review process.

What is Selective Licensing?

In areas subject to selective licensing, all private landlords must obtain a licence and if they fail to do so, or fail to achieve acceptable management standards, the Local Authority can take enforcement action - e.g. issuing an unlimited fine or in some cases, assuming management control of the property. The London Borough of Newham introduced a selective licensing scheme covering *all* private rented properties in the borough in January 2013 and since this time a number of authorities have also introduced this option of introducing Selective Licensing in the entire area under their jurisdiction, rather than in selected neighbourhoods. Since the 2015 Order referred to above, it now much more challenging to do this. It is

currently unknown how many local authorities have introduced selective licensing generally as the information is not held centrally. In the Liverpool City Region, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Council and Wirral Council have introduced schemes.

What can Selective Licensing achieve?

If implemented effectively, selective licensing can increase the professionalism and quality of the private rented sector in an area by ensuring:

- That landlords are 'fit and proper persons'
- Good and fair management of tenancy relations
- Support for landlords to participate in regeneration and tackle antisocial behaviour effectively
- Protection for vulnerable tenants from the worst housing conditions and from bad landlords
- Strategic knowledge to support Local Authorities in targeting health and safety inspections
- Support for landlords to improve the worst properties by helping them to achieve decent minimum standards in housing conditions and management
- Successful schemes may also increase the supply and choice of housing stock and reverse housing market decline in housing market renewal areas when used in conjunction with other measures

Benefits of Selective Licensing

Benefits to neighbourhoods and communities

- Increasing housing demand by improving property condition and reducing antisocial behaviour will improve problem areas, making these safer, more desirable places to live
- Reducing environmental costs and costs of crime, such as street cleaning and tackling fly tipping
- Making it easier to involve all landlords in wider strategies including crime reduction initiatives, local spatial strategies and other countywide plans
- Protecting vulnerable groups, who are often occupiers of privately rented accommodation which is poorly managed and maintained

Benefits to tenants

- More professional landlords should bring improvements to the quality and management of properties
- Potential economic benefits, for example in reduced heating costs and improved likelihood of regaining deposits
- Improvements to neighbourhoods will also benefit private tenants sense of security and community and improve social capital
- Better management practices should help to increase length of tenure and reduced incidence of unplanned moves or homelessness

Benefits to landlords:

- Responsible landlords will receive training, information and support
- A level playing field, where decent landlords are not undercut by an unscrupulous minority
- Poorly performing/inexperienced landlords will receive extra support to improve
- Improved rental incomes/fewer voids as areas improve

- Improvement in the reputation of all private landlords
- Shorter void periods and reduced tenant turnover
- The option to join the accredited scheme for additional support and advice
- A discounted selective licensing fee for landlord who already have their properties accredited within the selective licensing areas.

Benefits to Wirral Council

- Increased supply of good quality homes
- Landlords who have not responded to previous voluntary measures (such as Wirral's property accreditation scheme) will be forced to engage with the Local Authority. Landlords not meeting housing and management standards will be forced to improve their practices or leave the market
- Wirral will gain more knowledge about private renting in particular areas, enabling the Council to target support, information and enforcement more effectively, and to better understand the root of the problems the areas face
- Selective licensing is not however, a panacea and benefits should be expected to be realised in the longer term, rather than straight away

A wide range of evidence from a variety of relevant data sources has been compiled in this document to help identify potential areas which would be most appropriate to become areas of Selective Licensing. Evidence must demonstrate that an area is experiencing one or more of the following factors:

- low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area);
- a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour;
- poor property conditions;
- high levels of migration;
- high level of deprivation;
- high levels of crime.

The evidence sought by Wirral Council has concentrated on indicators which together can demonstrate low housing demand and poor property conditions, which are heavily interlinked. Some of the other factors can be demonstrated by local indicators, however making a case that selective licensing will positively contribute towards these factors, or that the private rented sector could at the moment be a negative contributor to these, is more challenging. Supporting evidence related to deprivation, anti-social behaviour and crime have however been used as secondary indicators.

All data used is the most recent available for each individual indicator. Some data is provided as a snapshot at a moment in time, other data is provided by financial year or calendar year and some indicators span more than one 12 month period to provide a fuller dataset.

Data on all of the indicators (summarised in Figure 1 below) is detailed in the following sections. The data is analysed on small geographic areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs are used as they are the lowest level of geographic data for which indicators are generally produced by central Government and other agencies and allow Wirral Council to produce a more localised picture of the different areas within the Borough. All LSOAs in Wirral were ranked based on these indicators and the 10 worst performing areas for every indicator were entered onto a master matrix document. This number of LSOAs (10) was decided upon, as it represents the 5% worst performing LSOAs in Wirral. Other targeted community

projects and initiatives in Wirral have also chosen to operate in the 5% worst performing Wirral LSOAs (e.g. the Health Action Area initiative).

No LSOA where the proportion of private rented properties was below the national average reported in the most recent English Housing Survey was included in the tables in the following sections, complying with the Selective Licensing of Housing (Additional Conditions) (England) Order 2015 – Article 3 (1) (a) as Wirral Council is proposing to introduce selective licensing on the grounds of property conditions (as well as low housing demand). The 2017-18 English Housing Survey Headline Report released in January 2019 stated the national average was 19%.

Figure 1.1:
Evidence used to
determine the
appropriate
LSOAs for
Selective
Licensing in
Wirral



Each of the indicators scored either one or two points. Those indicators which according to Government guidance [2] demonstrate low housing demand and poor property condition scored two points. Supporting indicators (e.g. which demonstrate deprivation) scored one point. The indicators and scoring differ from that used in the 2015 selective licensing scheme's Supporting Evidence and Rationale written in 2014 due to the release of the 2015 Government guidance referred to above. The indicators also differ slightly from those used in 2017 for the Selective Licensing scheme begun in April 2019 due to the availability to the Council of certain data sources. The combined data sources and weightings applied remain a strong method for indicating of low demand and property condition within LSOAs.

Table 1.1 below shows the list of indicators and points awarded for each in the matrix (see end of this document for matrix).

Table 1.1: Matrix points awarded per indicator

2 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House sales • House prices • Long Term Empty property • Time property spent empty • Private rented property (%) • Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 1 hazards (%) • Deliberately started fires • Environmental Health Complaints • Housing Team Interventions
1 point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit rates • Criminal damage • Deprivation (overall 2015 IMD) • Deprivation (Living domain of 2015 IMD) • Workless benefits (ESA/UC) • Workless benefits (JSA/UC) • Injuries (sustained in the home) • Educational Attainment (KS4)

Section 2: Privately rented properties in Wirral

Only privately rented properties are subject to Selective Licensing, therefore, those LSOAs in Wirral with the highest concentrations of this kind of housing are likely to be candidates for the scheme. The ten LSOAs with the highest concentrations are shown in the table below.

Table 2.1: Ten LSOAs with highest percentage of privately rented properties in Wirral (2011)

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	% private rented	No. private rented
E01007240	Oxton North	Oxton	40.9%	352
E01007130	Tranmere North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	38.8%	278
E01007238	Victoria Parade	New Brighton	38.4%	335
E01007179	Egerton North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	37.7%	231
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	37.7%	287
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	37.4%	293
E01007244	Oxton East	Birkenhead & Tranmere	37.1%	339
E01007218	Egremont North	Liscard	36.2%	237
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	35.9%	284
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	35.7%	235
Wirral average			15.8%	112

Source: Census, 2011

As the table shows, 15.8% of housing stock in Wirral is privately rented (Census 2011), with an average per LSOA of 112 privately rented properties. All of the LSOAs shown here however, have rates of privately rented properties which are more than double this figure, with more than one in three of all the properties in the LSOAs shown, privately rented.

According to the Council's Housing Stock Modelling produced by BRE (2018), private rented property in the Borough is more likely to contain Category 1 hazards (the worst rating under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System) than the owner occupied sector. High levels of private rented properties, when combined with other evidence, can therefore also indicate greater levels of poor property condition in an area.

Section 3: Low housing demand

When Wirral Council was assessing evidence for the introduction of its current selective licensing scheme, official guidance as to how the authority should measure low housing demand was less specific than the subsequent 2015 Government guidance which recommends local authorities consider the following factors when deciding if an area is suffering from, or likely to become, an area of low housing demand:

- The value of residential premises in the area, in comparison to the value of similar premises in other areas which the authority considers to be comparable (whether in terms of type of housing, local amenities, availability of transport);
- The turnover of occupiers of residential premises (in both rented and owner occupied properties);
- The number of residential premises which are available to buy or rent, and the length of time for which they remain unoccupied;
- The general appearance of the locality and the number of boarded up shops and properties.

The indicators available to the local authority to LSOA level which can demonstrate the above and which have been used in the indicator matrix are described in more detail below.

Long term empty properties

Long-term empty properties are those which have been empty for longer than 6 months. The data presented here is as of April 2019 and refers to privately owned empty property only. It shows that although *overall* Wirral has a low proportion of long term empty homes (privately owned), there are still many LSOAs with a much higher proportion of long term empties than the Borough average. Wirral's average long term vacant privately owned property rate of 1.7% (of the total stock) is very slightly higher than when this analysis was conducted in 2014 (when it was 1.6%). In 2014 Wirral Council introduced the "empty property premium" which increased Council Tax by 50% for those properties empty for more than two years in order to encourage landlords to bring empty properties back into use. In April 2019 the premium was increased to 100%.

Tackling empty homes and bringing them back into use can help tackle homelessness, prevent neighbourhood decline, improve the local economy and regenerate areas. It can also contribute providing wider housing choice and is an important part of the Government's Housing Strategy (2011) [3]. It is also seen as one of the priorities within the Government's most recent housing White Paper, "Fixing our broken housing market" (February 2017) [4].

The table below shows the ten LSOAs in Wirral with the highest proportion of private empty property in Wirral as of April 2019.

Table 3.1: Ten LSOAs with highest percentage of long term empty properties in Wirral (2019)

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	Percentage empty*
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead & Tranmere	16.67%
E01007295	Tranmere Urban Village	Birkenhead & Tranmere	9.70%
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	8.42%
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	7.47%
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead & Tranmere	6.72%
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	6.08%
E01007130	Tranmere North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	5.68%
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	5.65%
E01007139	New Ferry West	Bromborough	5.16%
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	5.08%
Wirral average (private stock only)			1.54%

*Percentage of privately owned stock empty for >6months

Note: Only those LSOAs where the proportion of private rented accommodation is in excess of 20% of all housing stock were included

Source: Wirral Council Tax data, Wirral Council Housing Services, 2019

Length of time empty properties remained empty

As mentioned above, long term empty properties are those which have been empty for 6 months or longer. The table above showed properties which fell into this category as a percentage of all privately owned properties in Wirral (by LSOA). The measure shown in the table below shows the length of time (in days)

that long term empty, privately owned property had been empty. The ten LSOAs with the largest number of empty days (to April 2019) are shown in the table and were entered onto the matrix.

Table 3.2: Length of time (in days) long term empty properties (privately owned) were empty, by LSOA to April 2019

LSOA Code	LSOA Name	Ward	Total days empty
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	32,697
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	23,388
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	21,720
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead and Tranmere	21,491
E01007244	Oxton East	Oxton	21,278
E01007130	Tranmere North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	21,253
E01007237	New Brighton North	New Brighton	18,341
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead & Tranmere	18,006
E01007139	New Ferry West	Bromborough	17,499
E01007239	Oxton North East	Birkenhead & Tranmere	17,230
Wirral LSOA Average			4,947

Source: Wirral Council Tax data, Wirral Council Housing Services, 2019

House sales

The data in Table 3.3 below refers to the total number of house sales per LSOA, compared to the total amount of private housing stock in that LSOA. The Wirral average was 8.5%, but many LSOAs in Wirral had rates significantly lower than this. The ten LSOAs with the lowest number of house sales (as a percentage of the total number of private housing stock), for the two pooled calendar years of 2017 and 2018 are shown in the table below and were entered onto the overall matrix (see end).

Table 3.3: LSOAs with the lowest rate of house sales as a proportion of private housing stock (2017-2018)

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	Percentage (%)
E01007144	Clatterbridge West	Clatterbridge	4.2
E01007277	Town Hall	Seacombe	4.5
E01007270	Poulton South	Seacombe	4.5
E01007240	Oxton North	Oxton	4.6
E01007232	Egremont Promenade North	New Brighton	4.9
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	4.9
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	5.4
E01007236	Liscard East	New Brighton	5.5
E01007180	Egerton West	Prenton	5.5
E01007181	Prenton North East	Prenton	5.6
Wirral average			8.5%

Source: HM Land Registry, 2017 and 2018

There were a total of 10,506 house sales in Wirral in 2017 and 2018, an average of 51 sales per LSOA over this period.

House prices

The average house price in Wirral in 2017 and 2018 (2 years pooled) was £184,896 (median value £173,998), but this figure hides large variations between Wirral LSOAs. For example, the average price in Heswall North was £402,900 – which was five times higher than prices in Seacombe West. It is worth noting that since this analysis was last conducted (using 2013-16 data) the average house price in the LSOA with the lowest house prices in Wirral has increased from £46,000 (in Bidston St. James East) to £85,666 in Seacombe West, so prices at the lower end of the market have almost doubled in just a few years. The ten LSOAs with the lowest average sale prices in Wirral across 2017 and 2018 are shown in the table below. These ten were entered onto the matrix document at the end of this briefing.

Table 3.4: Ten LSOAs with lowest average sold prices in Wirral in 2017 and 2018 (2 years pooled)

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	Average house price
E01007272	Seacombe West	Seacombe	£85,666
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	£89,666
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	£94,980
E01007277	Town Hall	Seacombe	£104,766
E01007271	Poultton East	Seacombe	£104,837
E01007294	Tranmere Parklands	Birkenhead & Tranmere	£105,562
E01007295	Tranmere Urban Village	Rock Ferry	£106,428
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	£107,588
E01007296	Tranmere Well Lane	Rock Ferry	£108,840
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	£108,875
Wirral LSOA (average)			£184,896

Source: HM Land Registry, 2017 and 2018

Deliberately Started Waste Fires

Deliberately started small waste fires involve wheelie-bins and fly-tipped waste. They can destroy property and be a threat to life as well as being another indicator of the poor appearance of an area due to the fly-tipping. There was a total of 637 deliberately started fires between February 2017 and February 2019. This is an average of 4 per LSOA in Wirral, but as the table shows, the top LSOAs have more than double this number, with the highest LSOA having more than 7 times the Wirral average.

Table 3.5: Number of deliberately started reported fires by LSOA in Wirral, 2 pooled years: top 10 LSOAs

LSOAs	LSOA Name	Ward	Number (both years)
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead and Tranmere	30
E01007155	Birkenhead Park East	Claughton	24
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	19
E01007269	Seacombe Docks	Seacombe	19
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead and Tranmere	15
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead and Tranmere	14
E01032903	Birkenhead North	Bidston & St James	13
E01007125	Bidston St James South	Bidston & St James	12
E01007131	West Tranmere	Birkenhead and Tranmere	11
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead and Tranmere	11
Wirral average per LSOA			4
Wirral Total			637

Source: Wirral Council, Waste Reduction Team, 2019

Environmental Health Complaints

Wirral Council's Environmental Health Team receives complaints on a range of subjects, much of which can indicate an area having a poor quality environment or poor housing conditions. The type of complaints used to compile the data include complaints against private landlords, low level private rented housing repair complaints, vermin and noise.

Table 3.6: LSOAs with the highest ratio of environmental health complaints related to privately owned properties (ratio of complaints to privately rented properties), 2017 and 2018 (2 pooled years)

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	No. of complaints	Ratio of complaints
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	44	4.6
E01007131	West Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	43	5.9
E01007220	Egremont Central	Liscard	25	6.3
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead & Tranmere	37	6.5
E01007175	Egerton Park	Rock Ferry	34	6.6
E01007176	Rock Ferry West	Rock Ferry	25	6.7
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	33	7.0
E01007144	Clatterbridge West	Clatterbridge	16	7.1
E01007270	Poulton South	Seacombe	34	7.4
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	23	7.7
Wirral average per LSOA			21	11.6

Source: Wirral Council, Housing Services, 2019

As Table 3.9 shows, the average number of interventions per LSOA in Wirral between 2017 and 2018, was 21 and the average ratio was 11.6. The ratio of interventions per private rented units takes into account the amount of private rented accommodation in the area, so allowing for differences in the housing composition, a true comparison is possible. The ratio means that in the worst LSOA in Wirral (Seacombe St. Pauls), there was one intervention for every 4.6 (privately rented) houses in that LSOA. Just for comparison, the average for Wirral was that there was only one intervention for every 11.6 privately rented properties in the borough.

Section 4: Properties in poor condition

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of local residents, Local Authorities have the duty to ensure that remedial action is taken on private properties where there are serious hazards that affect the health, safety and wellbeing of the occupiers. They carry out this duty using the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) during inspections, a risk-based evaluation tool to help identify and protect against potential risks and hazards from deficiencies in residential properties. This was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 [5]. The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that, *"any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor"* [5]. There are two categories of hazards in the HHSRS with category 1 hazards being the most severe (see the [Housing, Health & Safety Guidance](#) for more information on what these categories refer to).

Housing Services interventions due to poor property condition

Given that a decision to enforce remedial action has financial implications for both the owner and the occupier (and such decisions may be subject to legal challenge and scrutiny), inspections clearly record information and are robust enough to provide evidence to support action. Decisions to intervene are not undertaken lightly and as such, are a good indicator to areas where housing in a state of poor repair may be concentrated. In addition to enforcement action, interventions may be informal such as a Healthy Homes visit, or request for help with heating via the former Cosy Homes heating grant. These measures are also an indicator of poor property condition in the private rented sector and so are included as interventions in the data below.

There was a total of 774 interventions in the two years of 2017 and 2018 (that could be matched to an LSOA). The ten LSOAs with the highest number of interventions as a ratio of all private housing stock, are shown in the table below.

Table 4.1: LSOAs with the highest number of interventions due to poor condition, 2017 and 2018

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	No. of interventions	Ratio of interventions to private rented
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	66	7.5
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	56	10.8
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	51	12.1
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	34	19.7
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	10	40.6
E01007220	Egremont Central	Liscard	15	42.4
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	10	43.4
E01007294	Tranmere Parklands	Birkenhead & Tranmere	9	47.9
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead & Tranmere	4	51.0
E01032903	Birkenhead North	Bidston and St James	12	52.6
Wirral average per LSOA			5	228

Source: Wirral Council, Housing Services, 2019

An average for Wirral of 228 means that there was one intervention for every 228 privately rented properties. As the table shows therefore, a ratio of 7.5 for Egerton North means that there was 1 intervention for every 7.5 privately rented houses in that LSOA, indicating severe issues with housing quality. Some of the top ranked LSOAs are already existing selective licensing areas, reflecting the concentration of activity in these areas over the past two years.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 1 Hazards

In 2018, the Building Research Establishment produced an Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling & Database for Wirral Council. This provides an overview of house condition at various levels of geography, including to LSOA level, for the different housing tenure types. Although the database is produced on modelled data, it provides a relatively accurate picture of the geographic and tenure differences for house condition. Amongst the indicators, the database provides the rate of those homes with hazards classed as Category 1 under the HHSRS. The highest rates amongst private rented sector stock within LSOAs is shown below.

Table 4.2: LSOAs with the highest rates of HHSRS Category 1 hazards in privately rented properties

LSOA code	LSOA Name	Ward	Percentage (%)
E01007141	Port Sunlight North	Bromborough	27
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	27
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	26
E01007216	Liscard South	Liscard	24
E01007234	Magazine Promenade	New Brighton	24
E01007219	Egremont West	Liscard	23
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	23
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	22
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	22
E01007218	Egremont North	Liscard	21
Wirral average			15

Note: Only those LSOAs where the proportion of private rented accommodation is in excess of 20% of all housing stock were included

Source: Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling & Database for Wirral Council, BRE, 2018

Section 5: Supporting indicators

Supporting indicators have been identified which help provide a wider picture of areas that might additionally be experiencing three of the alternative factors which the Government stipulate can be used to introduce selective licensing: deprivation, anti-social behaviour and crime. Wirral Council however is not specifically introducing selective licensing to tackle any of these factors but a by-product of the scheme will be to have a positive impact on them.

Overall Indices of Deprivation (2015)

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation at a small area level, important in identifying disadvantaged areas so that limited resources can be targeted where they are most needed. The IMD covers a broad range of issues and refers to unmet need caused by a lack of resources of all kinds, not just financial resources. The IMD attempts to capture deprivation in its broadest sense, using seven distinct 'domains' (which together form the overall IMD).

Wirral's 2018 Housing Stock Modelling reported that the highest rates of poor housing conditions were in the geographical areas with the highest levels of deprivation. Table 5.1 shows the 10 most deprived LSOAs in Wirral by name and ward they fall within. These ten LSOAs were entered onto the overall matrix.

Living Environment deprivation (2015)

One of the seven individual 'domains' (or different dimensions of deprivation) which together make up the overall IMD includes 'Living Environment' and this measures the quality of individuals immediate surroundings, including housing quality. There is a domain titled, 'Barriers to housing and services', but this is a less appropriate indicator for this work, since it deals primarily with distance and accessibility to local services. The IMD Living Environment domain is therefore a relevant and appropriate measure to use when

considering areas for Selective Licensing. See Map 5.1 and Table 5.2 below for information on where the most areas of most acute need in Wirral are according to this measure.

Table 5.1: Ten LSOAs with most acute levels of deprivation according to the *overall* IMD (2015)

LSOA	LSOA Name	Ward	IMD Score*
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead and Tranmere	78.2
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead and Tranmere	75.7
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead and Tranmere	75.6
E01007220	Egremont Central	Liscard	69.5
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead and Tranmere	69.4
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	67.6
E01007123	Bidston St James West	Bidston and St James	66.3
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead and Tranmere	65.8
E01007131	West Tranmere	Birkenhead and Tranmere	60.9
E01007290	Tranmere Esplanade	Rock Ferry	60.3
Wirral average			42.4

*higher score indicates greater deprivation

Table 5.2: Ten LSOAs with most acute needs according to the IMD Living Environment domain

LSOA	LSOA Name	Ward	IMD Living Domain Score
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	53.51
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	53.41
E01007234	Magazine Promenade	New Brighton	49.85
E01007276	Poulton North	Seacombe	49.48
E01007216	Liscard South	Liscard	48.99
E01007296	Tranmere Well Lane	Rock Ferry	47.96
E01007130	Tranmere North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	47.55
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	46.00
E01007233	Earlston Gardens East	New Brighton	44.95
E01007277	Town Hall	Seacombe	44.89
Wirral average			23.24

*higher score indicates greater deprivation

Housing benefits data

As Selective Licensing aims to tackle properties which are privately rented and in poor condition, rates of Housing Benefit claimants (renting from private landlords only) is likely to be an important indicator of where problems may be most acute.

Housing Benefit data for this indicator is sourced from the DWPs own data tool (Stat-Xplore) and is for November 2018.

Table 5.3: Wirral LSOAs with the highest percentage private rented households claiming Housing Benefit

LSOA	LSOA name	Ward	% Households
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	30.6%
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	23.6%
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	20.3%
E01007277	Town Hall	Seacombe	17.4%
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	17.4%
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	17.1%
E01007131	West Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	16.7%
E01007271	Poulton East	Seacombe	15.9%
E01007272	Seacombe West	Seacombe	15.6%
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead and Tranmere	15.5%
Wirral Average			5.7%

Source: Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Stat-Xplore tool, November 2018

The ten LSOAs with the highest percentage of housing benefit claimants (renting from private landlords only) are shown in the table above. As the table shows, all of the LSOAs shown had rates that were around three times the Wirral average of 5.7%, whilst in the LSOA with the highest rates (Egremont Promenade South LSOA, in Liscard Ward), the claimant rate was six times higher than the Wirral average. As the table shows, one in three households in the LSOA (30.6%) claimed Housing Benefit. These ten LSOAs were the areas entered into the overall matrix.

Out of work benefits

Those receiving out of work benefits are particularly vulnerable to poor housing conditions. The main out of work benefits are Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and those who have been moved onto Universal Credit. The ten LSOA's with the highest proportions of people of working age in receipt of these benefits are shown in the tables below (and have been entered onto the overall Matrix in Section 14).

Table 5.4: Wirral LSOAs with the highest percentage of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (combined) claimants (numbers rounded to nearest 10) as of March 2019

LSOA	LSOA name	Ward	Claimants	% LSOA population*
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead & Tranmere	220	14.8%
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	130	12.6%
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	130	11.9%
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	100	11.8%
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	110	10.9%
E01007220	Egremont Central	Liscard	85	10.6%
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead & Tranmere	130	10.5%
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	105	9.7%
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	90	9.5%
E01007295	Tranmere Urban Village	Rock Ferry	80	9.4%
Wirral average			37	3.4

*working age population

Source: NOMIS, June 2017

Disability Benefits

Disability benefits were included for much the same reasons as outlined above (see out of work benefits). See table below for top 10 LSOAs for working age claimants of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit (disability element) as of March 2019.

Table 5.5: Wirral LSOAs with the highest percentage of Employment Support Allowance claimants, 2019

LSOA	LSOA name	Ward	Claimants	% LSOA population*
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	230	22.7%
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	240	22.5%
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead & Tranmere	295	19.9%
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	210	19.5%
E01007155	Birkenhead Park East	Claughton	220	19.4%
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	145	17.2%
E01007290	Tranmere Esplanade	Rock Ferry	200	16.8%
E01007270	Poulton South	Seacombe	185	16.4%
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	160	16.2%
E01007138	New Ferry East	Bromborough	165	16.1%
Wirral average			77	8.1%

*working age population

Source: NOMIS, 2017

Criminal damage

Crime results in unsettled communities, undermines efforts to regenerate areas and is associated with other social and economic problems including deprivation. Criminal damage was chosen as an indicator to demonstrate crime levels due to its overlap with anti-social behaviour, both of which are further factors in considering whether or not to introduce selective licensing into an area. The table below shows the 10 LSOAs with the highest rates of recorded criminal damage in 2018-19 (January 2018 to January 2019).

Table 5.6: Rate of reported criminal damage and arson by LSOA in Wirral in 2018-19: top 10 LSOAs (rate per 1,000 population)

LSOAs	LSOA Name	Ward	Rate (per 1,000) 2018-19
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	5.9
E01007272	Seacombe West	Seacombe	4.6
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	4.5
E01032903	Birkenhead North	Bidston & St. James	3.2
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	3.1
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	2.9
E01007176	Rock Ferry West	Rock Ferry	2.5
E01007139	New Ferry West	Bromborough	2.4
E01007138	New Ferry East	Bromborough	2.4
E01007271	Poulton East	Seacombe	2.4
Wirral Average			1.3

Source: <https://data.police.uk>

Note: January 2018-January 2019

All of the ten LSOAs in the table have rates of criminal damage which are considerably more than the Wirral average of 1.3 per 1,000 – and one, Birkenhead Central, has a rate which is more than four times the Wirral average.

Injuries (sustained in the home environment)

Data on injuries sustained in the home environment were provided by the [Trauma, Injury Intelligence Group \(TIIG\)](#). Clearly, not all home injuries are due to people living in non-decent, dilapidated homes. It is however, a contributory factor. It is therefore appropriate to include this indicator as part of the rationale for selective licensing in Wirral. Rates were calculated for the previous 2 years (2017/18 to 2018/19) and the table shows the ten LSOAs with the highest rates of home injuries in Wirral.

Table 5.7: Rate of A&E attendances for home injuries by LSOA, 2017/18 to 2018/19 (2 pooled years)

LSOA	LSOA name	Ward	No. home injuries	Rate per 1,000
E01007155	Birkenhead Park East	Claughton	211	120.8
E01007123	Bidston St James West	Bidston & St James	140	91.9
E01007290	Tranmere Esplanade	Rock Ferry	178	91.2
E01007144	Clatterbridge West	Clatterbridge	127	91.0
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead & Tranmere	157	86.0
E01007236	Liscard East	New Brighton	113	83.4
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	125	80.5
E01007175	Egerton Park	Rock Ferry	143	78.8
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	131	77.7
E01007296	Tranmere Well Lane	Rock Ferry	122	76.6
	Wirral average (per LSOA)		99	60.1

Source: TIIG ([Trauma, Injury & Intelligence Group](#)), 2017

Section 6: Matrix

All of the criteria examined in this briefing are show in the matrix below and indicate (via highest scores), those areas which are potentially the most suitable locations for Selective Licensing in Wirral.

LSOA code	LSOA name	Ward	Constituency	1 point										2 points										Total
				Injuries (occurring at home)	Deprivation (living)	Deprivation (overall)	Educational attainment (KS4)	Workless benefits (ESA)	Workless benefits (JSA & UC)	Housing Benefit	Criminal damage	Environmental Health	Housing Interventions	HHSRS Cat 1%	Deliberate fires	House sales	House prices	Long-term empty property	Time property spent empty	Private rented property (%)				
E01007127	Birkenhead West	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead		1	1	1	1	1		1	2	2	2	2							14		
E01007129	Birkenhead South	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead		1	1		1	1	1			2					2	2	2		13		
E01007179	Egerton North	Prenton	Birkenhead									1	2	2	2			2	2		2	13		
E01007275	Egremont South	Seacombe	Wallasey				1			1			2	2	2	2	2					12		
E01007291	Tranmere Lairds	Birkenhead and Tranmere	Birkenhead	1					1			2	2		2			2	2			12		
E01007215	Egremont Promenade South	Liscard	Wallasey						1		1		2			2		2	2	2		12		
E01007278	Seacombe Library	Seacombe	Wallasey						1				2	2				2	2	2		11		
E01007126	Hamilton Square	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead			1	1	1	1						2				2	2		10		
E01007273	Seacombe St Pauls	Seacombe	Wallasey			1	1	1	1	1	1	2					2					10		
E01007128	Birkenhead Central	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead	1		1		1	1		1				2			2				9		
E01007220	Egremont Central	Liscard	Wallasey			1	1		1			2	2									7		
E01007130	Tranmere North	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead		1													2	2	2		7		
E01007292	Higher Tranmere	Birkenhead and Tranmere	Birkenhead	1		1				1	1							2				6		
E01007277	Town Hall	Seacombe	Wallasey		1					1						2	2					6		
E01007131	West Tranmere	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead			1				1		2			2							6		
E01007295	Tranmere Urban Village	Rock Ferry	Birkenhead				1		1								2	2				6		
E01032903	Birkenhead North	Bidston and St James	Birkenhead								1		2		2							5		
E01007144	Clatterbridge West	Clatterbridge	Wirral South	1								2				2						5		
E01007272	Seacombe West	Seacombe	Wallasey				1			1	1						2					5		
E01007270	Poulton South	Seacombe	Wallasey					1				2				2						5		
E01007139	New Ferry West	Bromborough	Wirral South								1								2	2		5		
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	Wallasey		1						1			2								4		
E01007271	Poulton East	Seacombe	Wallasey							1	1						2					4		
E01007296	Tranmere Well Lane	Rock Ferry	Birkenhead	1	1												2					4		
E01007294	Tranmere Parklands	Birkenhead and Tranmere	Birkenhead										2				2					4		
E01007290	Tranmere Esplanade	Rock Ferry	Birkenhead	1		1	1	1														4		
E01007155	Birkenhead Park East	Claughton	Birkenhead	1					1						2							4		
E01007240	Oxton North	Oxton	Birkenhead													2				2		4		
E01007244	Oxton East	Oxton	Birkenhead																2	2		4		
E01007218	Egremont North	Liscard	Wallasey											2								4		
E01007176	Rock Ferry West	Rock Ferry	Birkenhead								1	2										3		
E01007123	Bidston St James West	Bidston & St James	Birkenhead	1		1	1															3		
E01007236	Liscard East	New Brighton	Wallasey	1												2						3		
E01007175	Egerton Park	Rock Ferry	Birkenhead	1								2										3		
E01007238	Victoria Parade	New Brighton	Wallasey				1													2		3		
E01007216	Liscard South	Liscard	Wallasey		1										2							3		
E01007234	Magazine Promenade	New Brighton	Wallasey		1										2							3		
E01007125	Bidston St James South	Bidston & St James	Birkenhead												2							2		
E01007180	Egerton West	Prenton	Birkenhead													2						2		
E01007181	Prenton North East	Prenton	Birkenhead													2						2		
E01007232	Egremont Promenade North	New Brighton	Wallasey													2						2		
E01007138	New Ferry East	Bromborough	Wirral South						1		1											2		
E01007237	New Brighton North	New Brighton	Wallasey																	2		2		
E01007239	Oxton North East	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Birkenhead																2			2		
E01007269	Seacombe Docks	Seacombe	Wallasey												2							2		
E01007217	Liscard Central	Liscard	Wallasey																	2		2		
E01007141	Port Sunlight North	Bromborough	Wirral South											2								2		
E01007219	Egremont West	Liscard	Wallasey											2								2		
E01007233	Earlston Gardens East	New Brighton	Wallasey		1																	1		
E01007276	Poulton North	Seacombe	Wallasey		1																	1		
				10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	260		

Those LSOAs marked in blue on the matrix denote the four LSOAs which were most recently designated areas of selective licensing. Those in yellow are the initial 4 areas which are coming up for review.

Section 7: Conclusions & Maps

As the matrix shows, excluding the four LSOAs marked in blue (second wave selective licensing areas, not currently due for review), there are a further 6 LSOAs which are either:

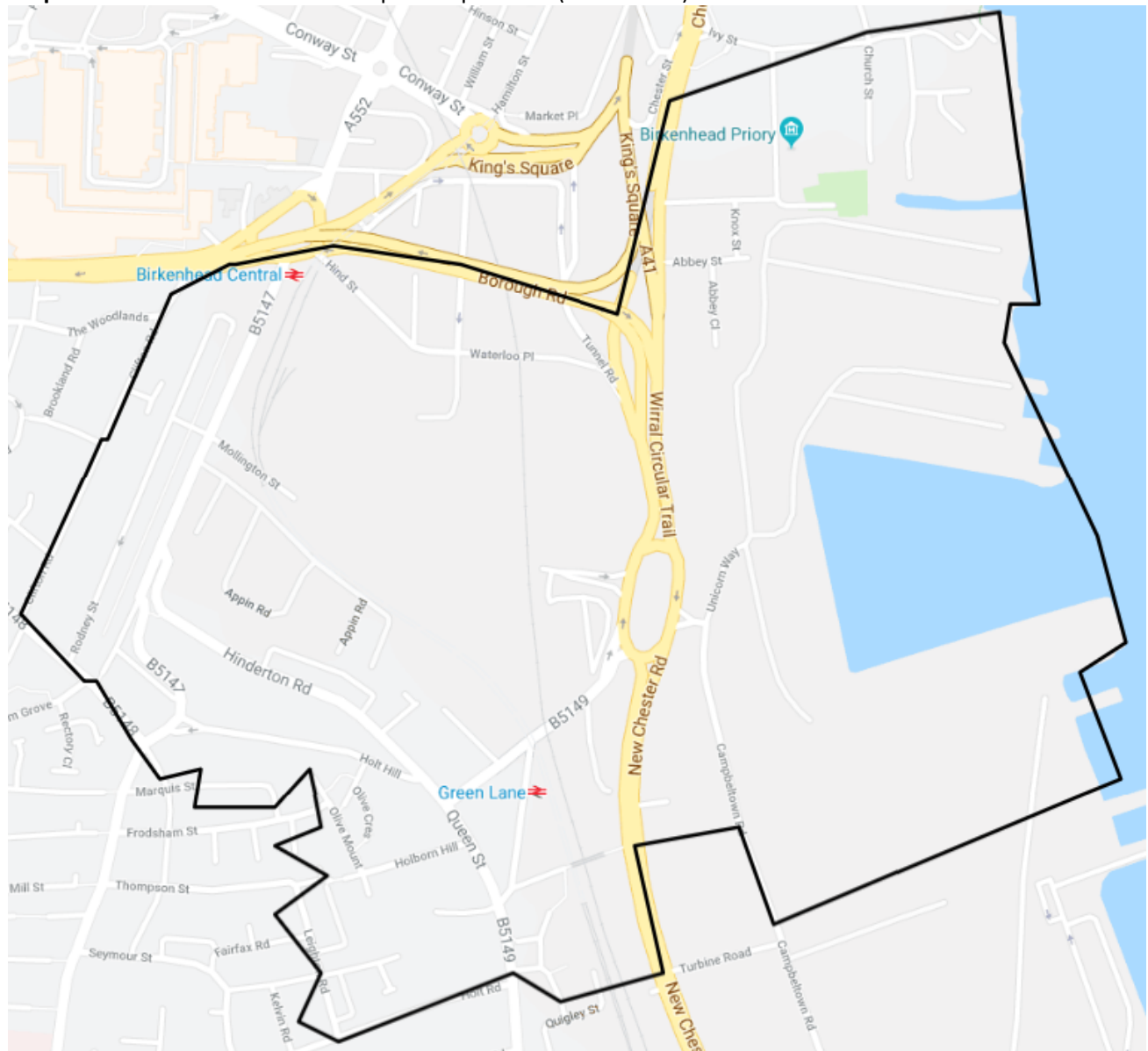
- a) Areas of selective licensing (first wave) now coming up to review (n=4)
- b) New LSOAs which have never before been areas of selective licensing (n=2)

These 6 LSOAs are shown in further detail in the following maps. The last map (Map 7.7 shows all of the proposed and current areas of selective licensing; it therefore shows a total of 10 LSOAs in total).

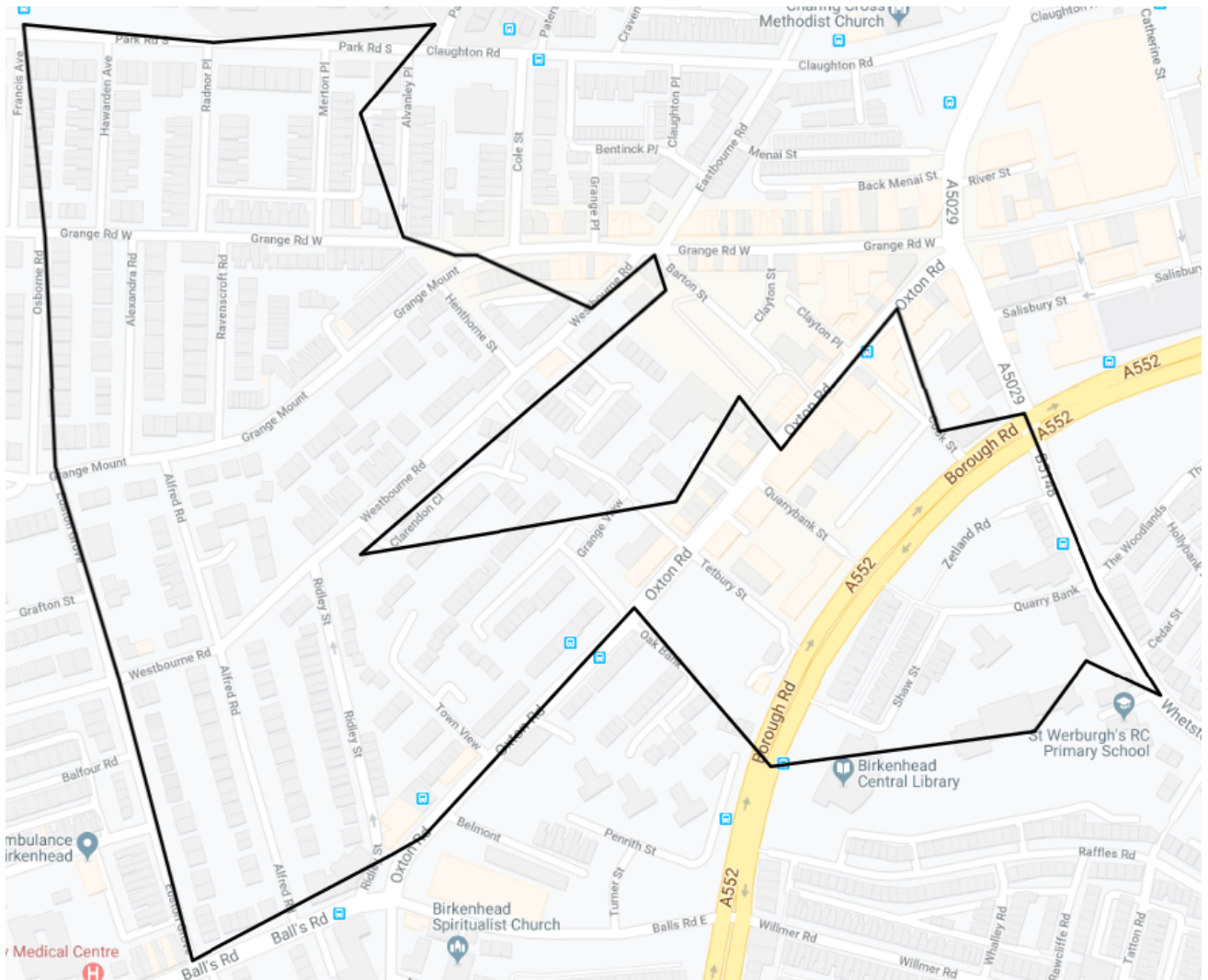
Map 7.1: Egremont South Lower Super Output Area (E01007275)



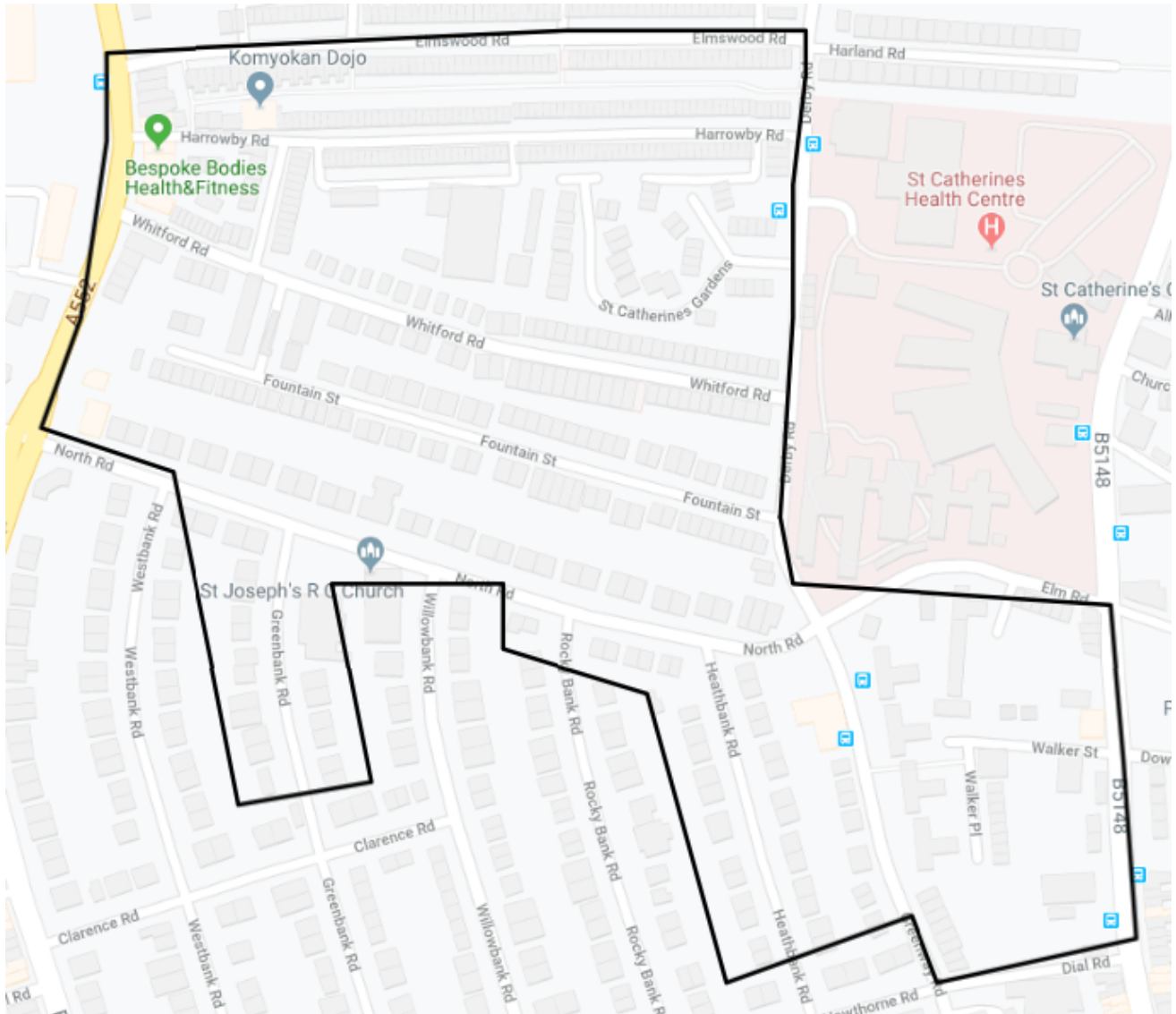
Map 7.2: Tranmere Lairds Lower Super Output Area (E01007291)



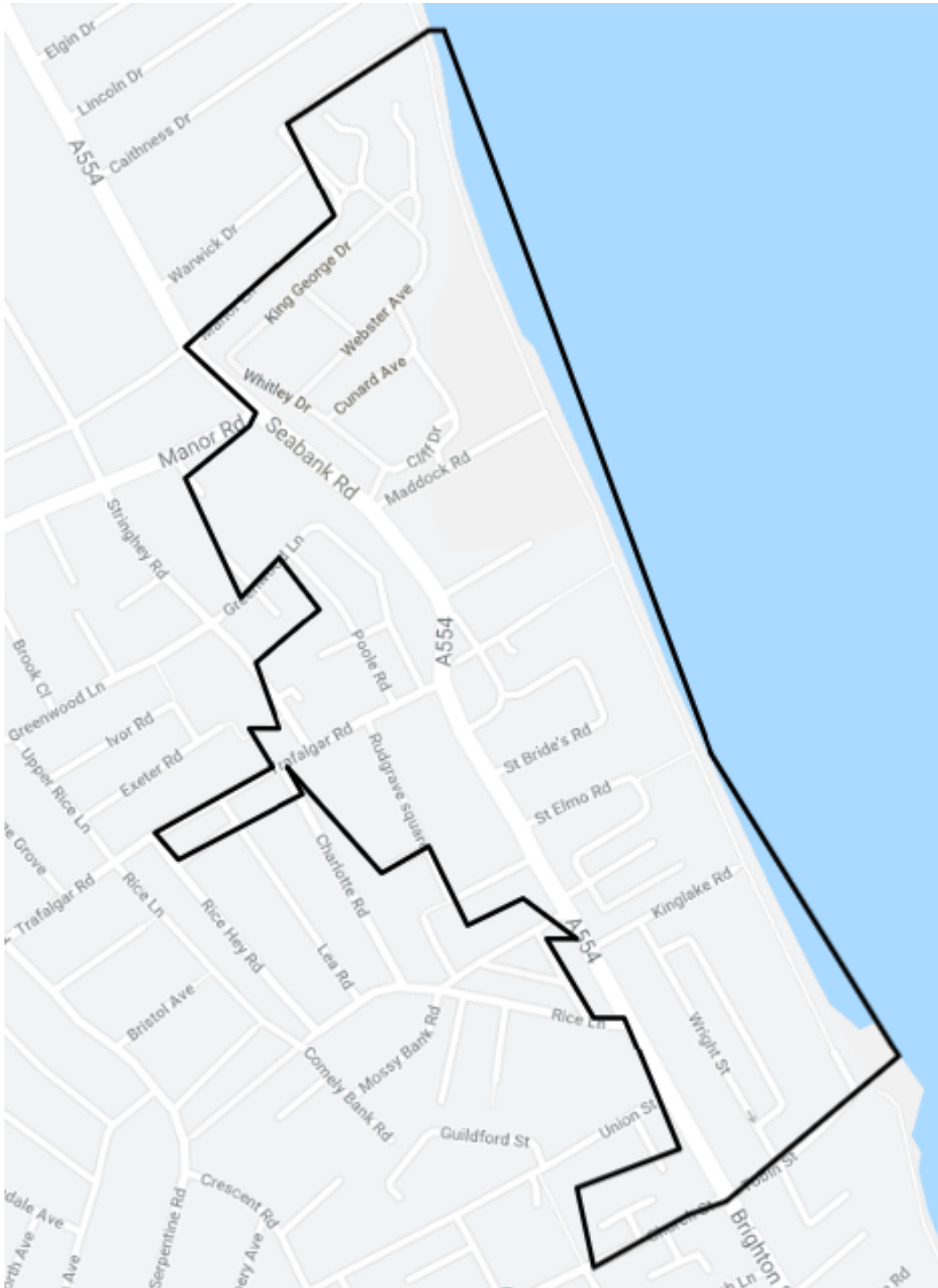
Map 7.3: Birkenhead South Lower Super Output Area (E01007129)



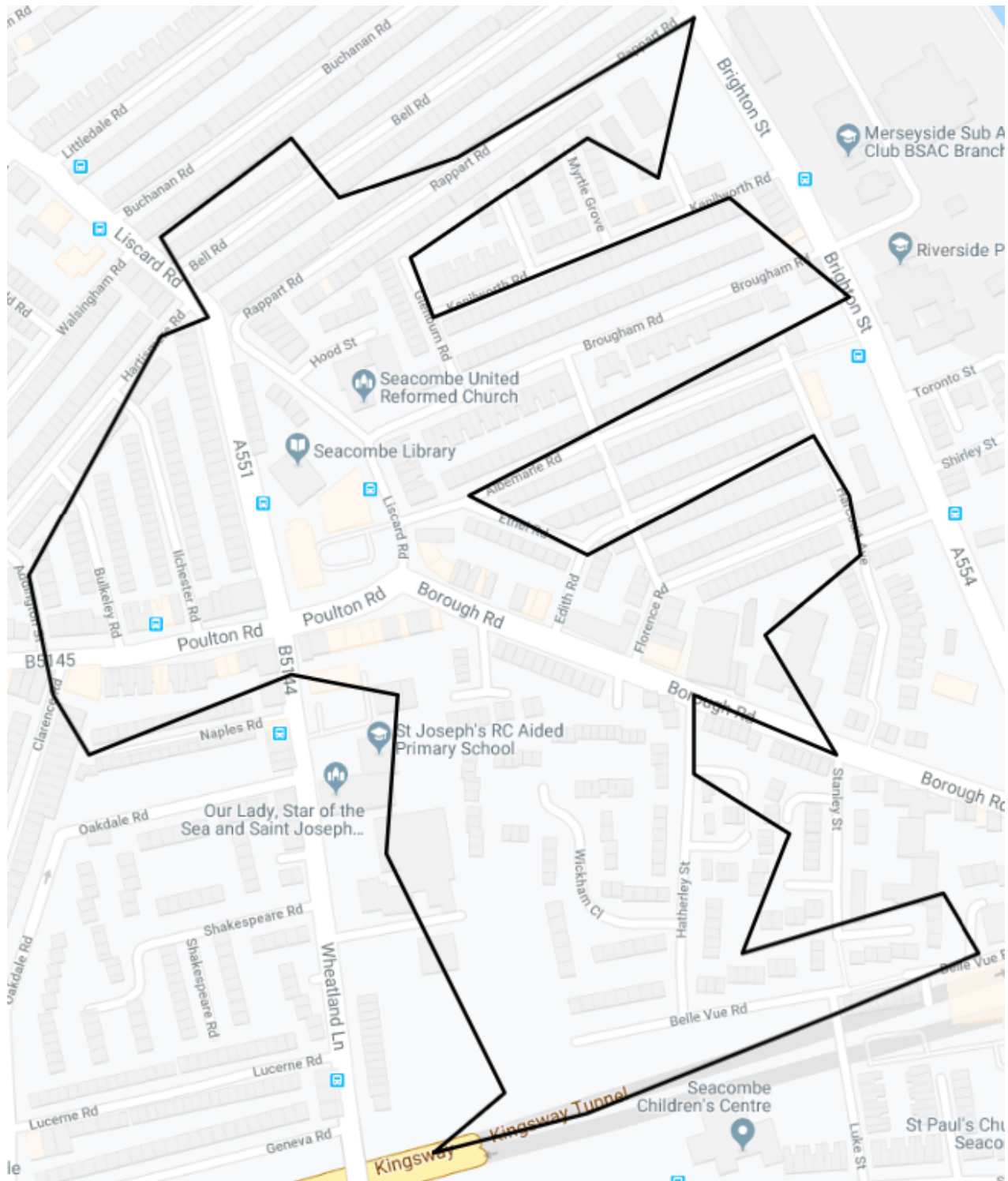
Map 7.4: Egerton North Lower Super Output Area (E0107179)



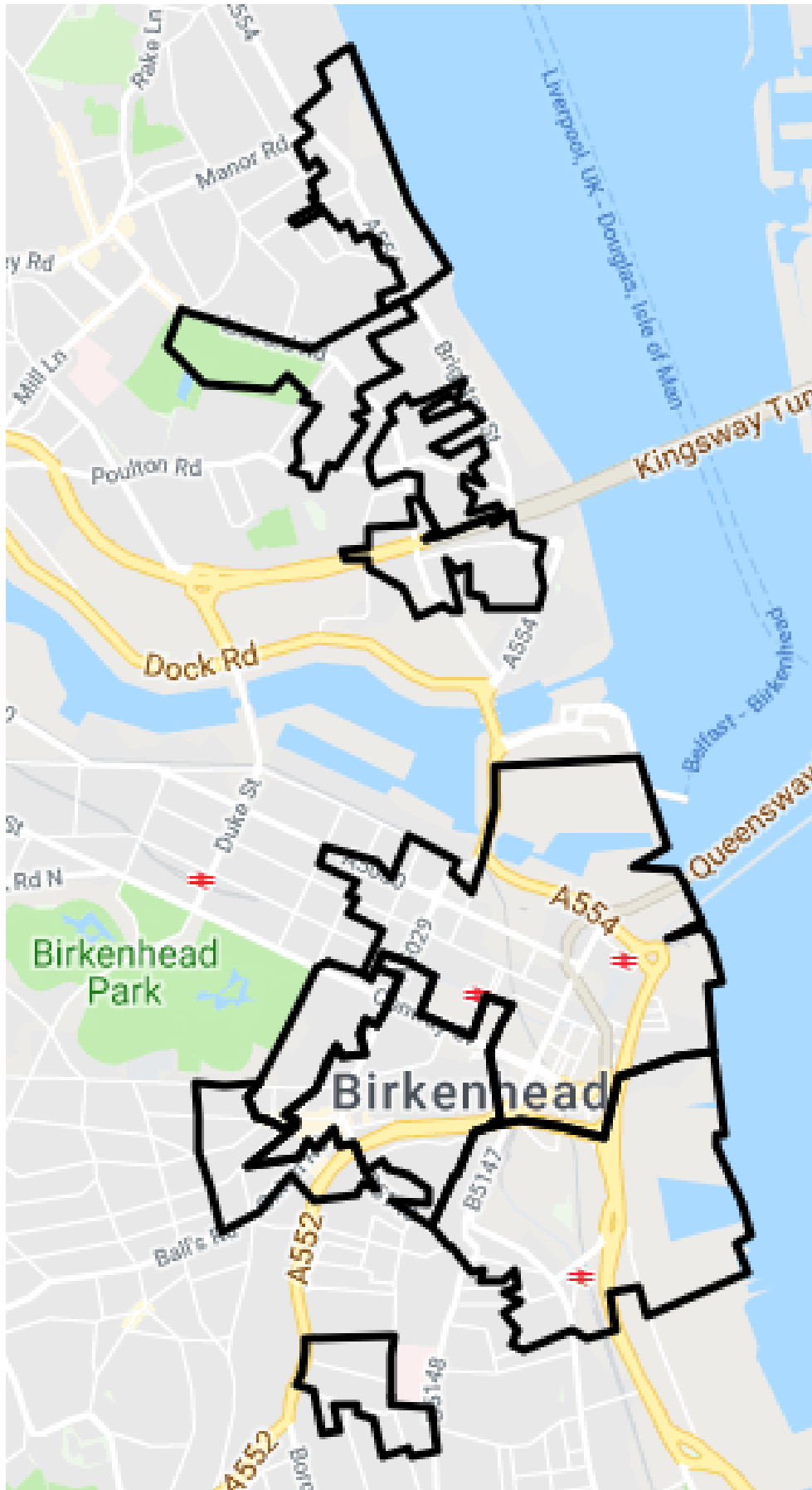
Map 7.5: Egremont Promenade South Lower Super Output Area (E01007215)



Map 7.6: Seacombe Library Lower Super Output Area (E01007278)



Map 7.7: Total current and potential Selective Licensing Areas in Wirral (10 LSOAs)



Section 8: References

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Section 9: Glossary

Lower Super Output Area or LSOA:

Small geographical areas with an average population of 1,500. There are 206 LSOAs in Wirral.

Decent Homes Standard: The Decent Homes Standard is a national standard against which all homes can be measured. There are four criteria that a home is required to meet before being classified as ‘decent’. These are: it meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (currently the Housing Health & Safety Rating System); it is in a reasonable state of repair; it has reasonable modern facilities and service, and; it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. In Wirral, 23% of private sector dwellings fail the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 32% in the private rented sector. Where a household is on welfare benefits and living in the private rented sector, this rises to 36%.

Category 1 Hazard: The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) outlines potential risks to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in homes. There are 29 hazards assessed within the HHSRS, arranged in 4 main groups reflecting the basic health requirements of living in a safe home. Once these hazards have been scored in a home, they are grouped into categories, with “Category 1” hazards being the most serious, for example, the hazard could lead to death, permanent paralysis, permanent loss of consciousness, loss of a limb or serious fractures. The Housing Act 2004 puts local authorities under a general duty to take appropriate action in relation to Category 1 hazards. In Wirral, 10% of private sector dwellings have Category 1 hazards, compared to 20% in the private rented sector.

Housing Disrepair: To meet the Decent Homes Standard, dwellings are required to be in a reasonable state of repair. Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either: One or more of the key building components are old and because of their condition, need replacing or major repair, or; Two or more of the other building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair. Across Wirral, 13% of private sector dwellings fail the repair requirements of the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 17% in the private rented sector.