



Economy Regeneration & Development Committee

Date:	Thursday, 4 March 2021
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	via Microsoft Teams

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AGENDA

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
2. **APOLOGIES**
3. **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

4. **MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee held on Tuesday 26th January 2021, attached.

5. **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

5.1 **Public Questions**

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Monday 1st March 2021 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

5.2 Statements and Petitions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Monday 1st March 2021 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1 and 11.2.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding one minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. Please give notice of petitions to committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

5.3 Questions by Members

Questions by Members to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - KEY AND OTHER DECISIONS

- 6. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND (Pages 7 - 16)**
- 7. REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Pages 17 - 192)**
- 8. MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB (Pages 193 - 206)**
- 9. WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND - MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB (Pages 207 - 216)**
- 10. WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND - EGERTON VILLAGE (Pages 217 - 224)**
- 11. BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES: COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS PAPER (Pages 225 - 234)**
- 12. WIRRAL WAYS TO WORK (Pages 235 - 240)**
- 13. NEW FERRY – IMPLEMENTING THE REGENERATION PLAN (Pages 241 - 272)**
- 14. THE PEOPLE'S POOL (Pages 273 - 284)**

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 15. 2020/21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE (Pages 285 - 290)**

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 16. ACTIVE TRAVEL CROSS PARTY MEMBER WORKING GROUP (Pages 291 - 304)**
- 17. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 305 - 312)**
- 18. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

- 19. MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 313 - 402)**
- 20. WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND - MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 403 - 424)**
- 21. WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND - EGERTON VILLAGE EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 425 - 432)**
- 22. BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES: COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS PAPER EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 433 - 434)**
- 23. THE PEOPLE'S POOL EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 435 - 632)**

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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26 January 2021

Present:

Councillor A Leech (Chair)

Councillors	J Bird	D Mitchell
	D Burgess-Joyce	J Stapleton
	A Gardner	K Greaney
	S Hayes	C Povall (In place of A Hodson)
	T Jones	

10 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

11 **APOLOGIES**

The Chair noted apologies from Councillor Andrew Hodson, who was deputised by Councillor Cherry Povall.

12 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests.

13 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee held on 27 October 2020 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

14 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

The following question had been received from David Maguire, CEO of WIRED (Wirral Information Resource for Equality & Diversity).

Question

How have Wirral Council, in relation to the Birkenhead Town Centre development and demolition plan, specifically considered the future of the shop mobility service in the discussions and actions to date that Wirral Council have participated in and can you provide the name of the meeting/s, the date of the meeting/s and copies of any documentation or meeting minutes that relate to these discussions and actions?

Answer

This is in effect a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act and I have therefore asked officers to refer the query to the Information Management Team to respond in accordance with the applicable timescales.

15 **REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Chair of the Committee advised Members that it had come to the attention of Council officers that the Government had published new regulations which made changes to consultation arrangements in respect of sustainability appraisals prepared for Local Plans which needed to be reflected in the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

The Director of Regeneration and Place therefore stated that the report was withdrawn and Members were asked to note that a further report will be brought to the next convenient meeting of this Committee with further updates to the draft Statement of Community Involvement to take account of the new regulations.

This was noted.

16 **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

A report by the Director of Regeneration and Place recommended a revised Planning Enforcement Policy which was intended will act as a guide to enable the Council to carry out its planning enforcement activity, in a way that was appropriate to its area.

It built upon the Council's overarching enforcement policy approved in 2020 and set out in further detail how the Council would monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it was appropriate to do so. The policy was set into 5 priorities and set out 6 milestones to be reviewed every three years.

Members questioned the resources involved but were reassured that they were kept under review with targets monitored quarterly.

RESOLVED – That the revised Planning Enforcement Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted.

17 **ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The report of the Director of Resources formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process, as set out in the Constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2021/22.

Policy and Resources Committee had to recommend a 2021/22 balanced Budget proposal to the Council for its meeting in March 2021. The Committee was asked to consider and provide feedback on Budget proposals.

The Director of Law and Governance advised this it was helpful for the public to understand that the process this year differed from other years. He stated that this municipal year was truncated, and things had gone through at speed. The normal budget consideration had not happened because of the timescales required. Members of the Committee had received the options by way of workshops and the Committee's suggestion then went to Policy and Resources Committee.

The public consultation was underway, and the final settlement figure central Government had not been received so the figures were estimates based on experience. The Director for Regeneration and Place stated that the budget looked to capitalise on National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax projections. Initiatives such as integrating Birkenhead Market would assist with this as would the proposals around the disability access budget. All Council offices are compliant, so any future adaptations could be met by the existing budget. The chair commented that anything we want to draw down on in the capital budget can be bought back to Committee.

RESOLVED – That the budget proposals which fall under the remit of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee be presented for consideration to the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2021.

18 **ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme, to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee. The work programme for the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee was attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Members raised a question about the proposed application to Government by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for Freeport status. The Director of Regeneration and Place suggested that a workshop be held to brief members on the Freeport proposal.

RESOLVED: That the work programme for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year be agreed subject to the addition of the Freeport issue.

19 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

20 **BIRKENHEAD TOWN DEAL - FUNDING REQUEST**

In September 2019 the Government announced a new 'Town Deal', an opportunity that invited 101 places to develop proposals as part of a £3.6bn Towns Fund. The Government invited the Council to enter into a 'Town Deal' agreement for Birkenhead, which would see investment of up to £25m, or for proposals with regional significance up to £50m, to boost productivity, skills and living standards.

A Town Deal for Birkenhead would complement other activities being undertaken as part of the wider growth and regeneration programme for Birkenhead. If successful, a Town Deal for Birkenhead would see capital investment in the town. However, the services provided within the new infrastructure delivered could be accessed by people across the borough.

Officers were preparing the bid submission, comprising a Town Investment Plan and supporting documentation, ready for the submission deadline on 31 January 2021.

The report provided Members with an update regarding the development to date of the funding bid and sought approval to allow the final sign-off of the Town Investment Plan and any necessary supporting documentation.

Members discussed topics around the Deal including the green corridor, priorities, metrics and the Town Deal Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the themes of the emerging Town Investment Plan be endorsed**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Chair and Spokespersons of the Economic Regeneration and Development Committee and the Chair of the Town Deal Board, to agree the content and submit the Town Investment Plan.**
- (3) authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Chair and Spokespersons of the Economic Regeneration and Development Committee, and the Chair of the Town Deal Board, to agree the Town Deal Heads of Terms with Government.**

(4) It be agreed that this decision is urgent and therefore not subject to review.

21 **CELTIC MANOR RESORT, HOYLAKE**

At its meeting of 27th June 2019 the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that it be recommended to Cabinet (13:0) (no abstentions) that

- 1) The financial and investment landscape has changed significantly since the Council sought the option to further invest in this project in 2016 to sit alongside its commitments under the development agreement.
- 2) In that time, the Council has expanded its acquisition and investment portfolio considerably, seeking to create income to invest in services, to make wider economic and social returns, to regenerate areas and to continue to attract high quality investment by businesses in the Borough.
- 3) This has led to increased borrowing by the Council to invest elsewhere than that envisaged by Cabinet when it last looked at the development agreement and outline proposals, a revised risk profile for those wider investments and further thought to the priorities that the Council should employ in making investment decisions.
- 4) In the light of that, this Committee considers that the Council's investment profile and limited resources would be better served if this business venture was funded on the open market, rather than through Council borrowing, and it is therefore recommended that Cabinet do not enter into a separate agreement to fund the Celtic Manor project at this time. In doing so, the Committee and Cabinet received due diligence and funding and phasing reporting in respect of the funding application that included commercially sensitive information that was not published for reason that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act and that the public interest test had been applied and considered to favour exclusion.

That recommendation was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 8th July 2019. The Cabinet decision was to not invest in the Hoylake development (known as the Celtic Manor Resort) in response to the funding application submitted under the Development Agreement entered into between the Council and Nicklaus Joint Venture Group. That Development Agreement would subsist until December 2022.

A legal challenge had been received in respect of the contractual provisions of the Development Agreement by way of a Dispute Notice and also in respect of the exempting of information from publication in that regard by way of a decision of the Information Commissioner delivered in December 2020.

The Director of Law and Governance explained the legal background to the situation and the issues being considered, and he answered Members' questions.

RESOLVED: That the actions taken thus far in responding to the legal challenges received be ratified and the continuation of such actions as the Director of Law and Governance considers is necessary and in the public interest to implement the outcomes of the meetings of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 27th June 2019 and the Cabinet of 8th July 2019 be endorsed.



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	TOWN/HIGH STREET FUNDS: FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

On 26 December 2020, the Council received notification of the outcome of two submissions it had made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Future High Street Fund. This announcement set out that Birkenhead had received its full requested allocation of £24.6m. New Ferry was offered an in-principle award of £3.2m from its requested value of £4.6m, subject to the development, submission and subsequent approval of an updated proposal to reflect the lower funding offer.

This report sets out the next steps for both areas. This includes more detailed information regarding the first scheme to be taken forward within Birkenhead, namely a temporary, interim solution for Birkenhead Market, as well as the process to reprofile and resubmit the New Ferry proposal. Committee is asked to delegate a number of decisions to the Director of Regeneration and Place in terms of accepting the grant funding agreements and commencing activity to develop and deliver the Future High Street Fund programmes.

Town centre regeneration is a long-standing priority for the Council and is reflected in the Wirral Council Plan 2025 through the requirement to deliver inclusive economic growth, working for a prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations.

This matter affects the wards of Bromborough and Birkenhead and Tranmere.

This is a key decision owing to the significance in terms of the effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough, as well as being in excess of £500,000 in monetary value.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

1. Note the content of the report and the announcement from Government regarding the Future High Street Fund award in relation to Birkenhead and the in-principle award in relation to New Ferry.
2. Note that a re-profiled application was submitted to Government on 3 February 2021 in respect of the New Ferry Future High Street Fund in-principle award.
3. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to consider and approve final sign-off of the Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements for Birkenhead and New Ferry, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance.
4. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to commence delivery of the Birkenhead and New Ferry Future High Street Fund programmes in line with the grant funding agreement and change control process.
5. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to progress with scoping out a design, costed model and fit out of the current preferred option for the temporary market, namely Unit 2 St Werburghs Square and St Werburghs Square itself, that will be used as a temporary holding position while the current Birkenhead Market site be made available for redevelopment.
6. It be noted that a further report will be brought forward to members for approval of the finalised proposal for the temporary market.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Future High Street Fund will support the Council by enabling access to significant funding to support the regeneration of Birkenhead and New Ferry Town Centres.
- 1.2 Birkenhead Market's infrastructure incurs high maintenance liabilities and the building as it currently stands is expensive to operate, inappropriate for its current use and is not energy efficient. Ongoing repairs and maintenance costs are estimated to grow quite significantly over the next few years in its current state. It is therefore proposed that the current building is demolished and a new home for the market is sought.
- 1.3 The general look and feel of the market have become tired externally and internally and requires a major transformation to make it more appealing to the general public and traders alike. Its Unique Selling Point has been lost over the years and there is a need for change to prevent the pressure of issues caused by further decline.
- 1.4 The establishment of the Wirral Growth Company and its plans for the development of a new town centre provide a significant opportunity to develop and enable an attractive, well-designed market in the heart of Birkenhead utilising the current footprint but on a smaller scale.
- 1.5 The creation of a temporary holding position for the market will enable the current Birkenhead Market site to be made available to be developed by the Wirral Growth Company in accordance with the appropriate Site Development Plan and other requirements of the Partnership Agreement when such proposals are brought forward by Wirral Growth Company in due course.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 An option to delay a report to Committee until the respective Future High Street Fund grant funding agreements are received for Birkenhead and New Ferry was considered but ruled out. Firstly, there are no Committee meetings until after the local elections. In addition to this, it should be noted that the Future High Street Fund process was lengthy and protracted, taking 2 years to date from the launch of the programme. Despite these delays the original spend profile of March 2024 remains, so it is imperative to avoid further delay and commence activity to develop and deliver the projects.
- 2.2 At the time of submission of the Future High Street Fund bid, consideration was being given for the temporary market to be located on Europa Boulevard. Consideration was given to a container type offer, however continued and more developed costings have ruled this location out. There was also some concern from a number of traders that a temporary location at Europa Boulevard was too far away from the retail core.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 MHCLG launched the Future High Street Fund in December 2018 to provide capital infrastructure investment to help renew and reshape town centres and high streets. They outlined a maximum application value of £25m for activity and spend by March 2024, with an anticipated average award expected to be in the region of £5-10m.
- 3.2 In March 2019, MHCLG received 328 Expressions of Interest applications and in July 2019 both Birkenhead and New Ferry were announced as part of the first 51 areas to progress to the final application stage. In August 2019, a further 50 areas were announced. All local authorities progressing to the final stage received a capacity and resource grant to assist with the costs of developing a Treasury Green Book compliant full business case.
- 3.3 In January 2020, draft business cases were submitted for Birkenhead and New Ferry, with the final full business cases due for submission in April 2020. A report to Cabinet in March 2020 provided members with an update regarding the development of each funding bid and authorised the Director of Regeneration and Place to provide final-sign-off. Owing to COVID-19 the deadline for final submissions was subsequently delayed until June 2020. It was anticipated that successful areas would be announced in Summer 2020, however in September 2020, MHCLG unexpectedly announced a standard additional clarification exercise for all applicants to submit within a 3-week window.
- 3.4 On 26 December 2020, the Secretary of State for Communities Housing and Local Government announced up to £830m of Future High Streets Fund would be invested in 72 areas across England as follows:
- 15 areas receiving confirmed funding for their full application value, totalling £255m, subject to grant funding agreement.
 - 57 areas receiving an in-principle funding offer totalling up to £576m, subject to final approval of a revised, reprofiled submission.
 - Including confirmed and in-principle notifications:
 - Awards ranged from £1,058,706 to £25,000,000.
 - The average award being £11,541,667.
- 3.5 **Overview of Birkenhead Future High Street Fund**
- 3.5.1 **Summary of Issues:** The Birkenhead FHSF application outlined that the high street is blighted by vacant shop frontage, with the market also hosting considerable empty units; both seeing a reduction in footfall. There is little or no diversity in terms of office, leisure and residential and outside of trading hours the core is largely deserted. There is little in the way of green space and infrastructure, with low quality and dated public realm and vehicle dominated, over engineered roads which provide a poor-quality pedestrian/cycle environment and have a poor road safety record.
- 3.5.2 To seek to resolve these challenges, the Birkenhead Future High Street Fund application identified five objectives:
- An improved retail core and market.
 - A diversified and mixed-use town centre.
 - A walkable and sustainably connected centre.
 - An attractor of visitors.

- An investable proposition.

3.5.3 **Summary of Proposed Activity:** Alongside Wirral Growth Company investment, the Birkenhead application set out a diversified, mixed-use town centre with an improved retail core/market. This includes the demolition of the old market, a smaller more modern and sustainable new build on part of the original site, as well as an upfront interim temporary market solution.

3.5.4 In addition to this a series of highways and connectivity projects to address the over-engineered highway routes will simplify and enhance pedestrian and cycle access at key gateway entry points to the retail core and improve road safety. These include Conway Street/Europa Boulevard, Charing Cross/Grange Road West and Birkenhead Central Gyratory. The high street itself will also see enhanced public realm improvements on Grange Road including anti-terror measures.

3.5.5 Accelerated residential development on Europa Boulevard will provide new homes and bring added diversification in the town centre, increasing and enhancing the catchment. This will also contribute to the maturing of the local housing market making later phase development more viable and support early brownfield residential delivery which is critical to the Council’s emerging Local Plan.

3.5.6 Birkenhead has been awarded £24,589,011 from the Future High Street Fund (subject to grant funding agreement approval).

Table 1: Breakdown of Birkenhead FHSF Application

Project	FHSF Ask
Conway Street & Europa Boulevard	£2,081,125
Grange Road & Charing Cross	£2,969,245
Central Gyratory	£276,463
Birkenhead Market (Temporary & New Market)	£14,427,298
Europa Residential Phase 1	£4,826,880
Total	£24,589,011

3.5.7 **Next Steps:** The most progressed element of the Birkenhead submission is the temporary market solution, as set out in section 3.6 of this report. The other projects are developed to concept design and this report seeks authority for the Director of Regeneration to commence delivery of the Birkenhead Future High Street Fund programme (subject to grant funding agreement approval). This will include full project design, costings and the management of project budget allocations within the £24.6m Future High Street Fund envelope as projects progress to detailed design; stakeholder engagement and consultation (including statutory as appropriate); statutory approvals and planning as appropriate; procurement/contractor approval and delivery of works. Reports regarding individual projects will be brought back to Committee as required.

3.6 Temporary Market

3.6.1 A catalyst for driving growth throughout the borough includes delivering a strong and thriving Birkenhead Town Centre and the market has been identified through consultation as a key element of this. The Wirral Growth Company has conducted

various outreach public consultation events and at each event residents have confirmed the importance of Birkenhead Market to the town and its residents.

- 3.6.5 In December 2018, full Council approved the acquisition of the long leasehold interest in Birkenhead Market to facilitate its assimilation into the Council's freehold title.
- 3.6.6 Consideration for the provision of a new Market is included within the scope of the Birkenhead Commercial District development. This provides the opportunity to bring forward a redeveloped Market to create a 'go-to' destination.
- 3.6.7 In order for a new market building and other redevelopment to take place on the current site of Birkenhead Market, the building needs to be vacated, demolished and then the new market building built. This will take some time and so a requirement for a temporary alternative site will be needed to ensure continuity of trade and to ensure Birkenhead remains a market town.
- 3.6.8 The temporary solution is intended to be a hybrid model based on an indoor and outdoor market offer. The preferred option will include the retail unit at 2 St Werburghs Square along with developing an outside pop-up market to be situated on St Werburghs Square itself. The aim is to allow for continuity and a smooth transition while the new market development takes place.
- 3.6.9 The preferred option at St Werburghs will require part of the capital grant highlighted within 3.5.6 to be allocated for the delivery of the temporary market. Furthermore, it will also require the agreement of a short-term lease between the Council and the Landlord, Mars Pension Fund (Shopping Centre Owners) before a planning application is submitted to allow the required approvals for alteration. A further report will therefore be brought to members to provide these details and seek agreement at the earliest opportunity.

3.7 **Overview of New Ferry Future High Street Fund**

- 3.7.1 **Summary of Issues:** Since the explosion in 2017, New Ferry as a retail centre has declined further, with Bebington Road seeing vacancy rates more than double to 41.7% (February 2017 - October 2019). The high street has become unattractive with numerous derelict, dilapidated and vacant properties. In addition, the road layout and circulatory route around the centre is poor and unclear for road users and pedestrians to navigate. The retail offer is limited, with an over-provision of low value convenience and basic comparison retailers.
- 3.7.2 In order to resolve these challenges, five key objectives have been identified:
- Improved arrival points: creating more of a high street destination and sense of arrival.
 - Improved movement and footfall through the centre, ensuring greater passing trade for the retail premises.
 - Improved appearance: A significant detractor from the current town centre, by improving this it will make it a better place to visit and shop.

- Contraction of retail provision: The current retail provision is too large as shown by the high vacancy rates. By contracting the high street, this will allow a more focused retail provision.
- Diversification of town centre uses: Delivering residential development on underutilised land and through vacant building redevelopment to grow and diversify the centre's immediate catchment, creating 24-hour activity and surveillance to the centre.

3.7.3 Several key projects have been put forward as part of the revised bid which are summarised below:

Table 2: Summary of New Ferry Future High Street Fund Projects

Project Name	Key Objectives Achieved	Description
Supporting the Redevelopment of Woodhead Streetcar Park and Explosion Sites	Improved arrival points Improved appearance Diversification of town centre uses	Redevelopment of three strategic sites on key arrival points into New Ferry, creating a condensed car park, 79 new residential units and 10,850 sq. ft. new retail provision.
Improvements to Bebington Road	Improved movement and footfall Improved appearance	One-way re-opening of Bebington Road to vehicles including creation of short stay on-street parking bays bringing activity back to an under-utilised and unattractive pedestrianised street.
Opening up of School Lane	Improved arrival points Improved movement and footfall	Removal of bollards currently stopping access onto Bebington Road. This will lead to improved connectivity from key car parks and the village hall on Grove Street to the west with the main retail section, tying in with improvements to Bebington Road.

3.7.4 The original submission was for £4,648,947, however a reduced in-principle offer was made to the Council on the 26 December of £3,213,522 this represents 69% of the original funding ask to Government.

3.7.5 **Next Steps:** The Council has recently submitted further clarification information regarding a scaled back project to MHCLG on the 3 February 2021. A final decision on the funding allocation is expected in March 2021 and a grant funding agreement will follow. In addition, a separate report updating members on implementing the regeneration plan in New Ferry and seeking the authorisation for compulsory purchase powers to acquire all the land and property required for redevelopment, will be taken to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee on 4 March 2021.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As highlighted previously in this report, Birkenhead has been awarded £24,589,011 (subject to grant funding agreement receipt and approval). The Council has not yet received a grant funding agreement in respect of the award for Birkenhead, however during an inception meeting, the Council's appointed Future High Street Fund programme lead informed that this will set out a Section 31 non-ring-fenced grant transfer with yearly up-front payments. The Council has already received a payment of £150,000 in respect of spend for 20/21 financial year and this will be utilised to progress detailed project design.
- 4.2 New Ferry has been offered an in-principle award of £3,213,522 subject to approval of a reprofiled scheme. A grant payment of £5000 has been awarded to the Council to cover the costs of consultants to assist in reviewing a scaled back programme and to complete the necessary information required as part of the New Ferry application. This work has now been completed.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in paragraph 4.1 the Council has not yet received a grant funding agreement detailing the terms and conditions of the award. It is understood that the Council will also receive a separate Memorandum of Understanding containing key deliverables. A further Change Control process will advise what amendments the Council can make within its programme in consultation with its appointed Programme Lead and which may be subject to a revised 'mini' business case. This will be important owing to many projects being a concept design stage.
- 5.2 The Director of Law and Governance will provide advice to the Director of Regeneration and Place regarding the compliance of the Future High Street Fund projects within the UK's new international obligations on Subsidy Control following the end of the Brexit transition period on 1 January 2021. The onward flow of funds will also need to comply with the new regime applicable to state subsidy. In the absence of a grant funding agreement, it is not possible to provide a more detailed position statement in this regard.
- 5.3 The Council's right to hold a market in Birkenhead is contained in the Birkenhead Improvement Act 1833 and the Birkenhead Corporation Act 1881. These rights are often referred to as "Charter Rights" as the original grant of the right to hold a market in Birkenhead was made by Royal Charter in the thirteenth century. By having the right to hold a market in Birkenhead, common law implies that this exclusivity extends to 6 2/3 miles from the site of the Birkenhead Market.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Birkenhead and New Ferry Future High Streets Fund programmes will be managed respectively by existing staff from within the Place and Investment Team and the Special Projects Team, both within the Regeneration and Place Directorate.
- 6.2 In terms of the temporary market, officers within the Regeneration and Place Directorate will coordinate and manage all project related activities, undertake title

investigation, conveyancing, financial modelling, and monitoring, supplemented by an external surveying resource where necessary. Steps will be taken to appoint a development manager and or contractors in due course.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 A programme Risk Register will be developed as well as individual Risk Registers for each project. These will be updated throughout the process lifecycle in order to assist the Council in identifying, controlling and managing risk. This will report within the Council's Corporate Risk Management structure.
- 7.2 As outlined in paragraphs 2.1 and 3.3 the Future High Street Fund application process has been subject to delay and taken 2 years to date. The Council has not yet received a grant funding agreement for Birkenhead and the application process for New Ferry continues owing to the requirement to submit a re-profiled application for approval. That said, the final date for spend has not been extended and remains at March 2024. To mitigate any risk of not delivering and spending within this timescale Committee is asked within this report to authorise the Director of Regeneration to progress a number of decisions including sign-off of the grant funding agreement on receipt, commencement of delivery and management of the change control process as projects move from concept to full design.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Future High Street Fund applications support and add value to consultation conducted already as part of the New Ferry Regeneration Plan and Birkenhead Town Centre consultation conducted by Wirral Growth Company. As projects within them are developed these proposals will also go through engagement and consultation as part of the statutory approval and planning process as appropriate to each project.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The potential impact of the Future High Streets Fund has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan and no material amendments have been made.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

- 9.2 An EIA has been produced in support of the temporary market solution and no material amendments have been made.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. This will include, as appropriate, energy efficient buildings within new developments; infrastructure improvements to reduce car dominance and create a safer environment for road users and pedestrians, and environmental and climate considerations within the Council's Social Value strategy to be used within the procurement of future contractors.

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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

MHCLG Future High Streets Fund Call for Proposals, December 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>

MHCLG Future High Streets Fund Business Case Guidance, 2019
(Copy available on request)

MHCLG Future High Street Fund Announcement, December 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/830-million-funding-boost-for-high-streets>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Decision Report: Preferred Development Option for New Ferry	20/12/2019
Cabinet Report: New Ferry and Birkenhead Future High Street Fund	23/03/2020
Leader Decision (Birkenhead Market Full Business Case)	March 2020



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The current SCI, which was adopted in March 2014, sets out the Council's minimum consultation and engagement requirements during the preparation of the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans and the determination of planning applications. It is necessary to update the SCI to be legally compliant, take account of recent Government regulations, guidance on temporary changes to consultation arrangements arising from the Covid 19 emergency, guidance on arrangements for Neighbourhood Plans and to reflect new opportunities for best practice engagement offered by web-based applications.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Committee is asked to:

1. Agree that the Statement of Community Involvement attached at Appendix 1 be adopted; and
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Place to make minor, non-material formatting and typographical changes to the Statement of Community Involvement prior to publication.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is the Council's statutory planning document that sets out how the Council will meet the statutory requirements for engagement and consultation in the Planning System.
- 1.2 Since the existing Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in March 2014 there have been a number of changes to legislation and guidance. Most importantly the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 sets out a requirement for Statements of Community Involvement to be reviewed every 5 years starting from the date of adoption. An updated Statement of Community Involvement is needed to ensure that:
 - a) This statutory document is appropriate and relevant;
 - b) meets statutory requirements in terms of the period of review; and
 - c) The Council is not open to potential financial risks, costs and legal challenges with respect to engagement and consultation in the planning system.
- 1.3 The Government has also published guidance on temporary changes to engagement and consultation on planning matters during Covid 19 restrictions which need to be incorporated into an updated SCI.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The 2017 amendments to the planning regulations introduced a statutory requirement for Statements of Community Involvement to be reviewed every five years. Therefore, the review and adoption of this new document is essential and no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 A draft Statement of Community Involvement (2021) has been prepared to take into account the main changes to legislation and guidance since the current SCI was adopted in March 2014 including latest Government guidance on temporary changes to consultation requirements during the Covid 19 emergency and requirements for social distancing.
- 3.2 The document sets out how individuals and organisations with an interest in development in the area can be involved in planning matters in the Borough including:
 - how and when the public will be consulted on new planning policy documents such as the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans;
 - how and when members of the public can comment on planning applications, as well as other forms of application for development submitted to the Council;

3.3 Key changes from the current adopted SCI are:

- Introduction of information for Neighbourhood Planning and Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Removal of requirement for consultation with focus groups during the regulation 18 stage of the local plan preparation to be replaced with workshops;
- Removal of public meetings as a specific form of consultation to be replaced by walk in information events;
- Inclusion of additional web-based methods for consultation; and
- Details of temporary arrangements during the Covid 19 emergency in accordance with Government guidance which includes,
 - Engagement on the preparation of the Local Plan through online meetings and telephone discussions;
 - Not making consultation hard copy Local Plan documents available for physical inspection during the period when Covid-19 restrictions apply. The updated regulations will apply until 31st December 2021. The suspension of the requirement to post site notices for certain applications currently applies until 30 June 2021 The Council may consider the implementation of an appointment system for the public inspection of consultation documents where Covid-19 related restrictions still apply;
 - While Covid-19 restrictions remain in place, all planning application documentation will only be made available on the Councils website and will not be available for physical public inspection; and
 - While Covid-19 related restrictions remain in place, the Council will undertake planning committee meetings through virtual online meetings. The public can watch and participate in accordance with the Council's constitution in virtual online committee meetings.

3.4 Whilst a report for the January 2021 Committee was withdrawn the differences between the draft SCI and the latest version are set out in red font in the attached draft SCI at Appendix 1.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to the preparation of a new SCI. However, there are implications for the consultation arrangements set out within it and the need to balance public expectations regarding the types of consultation techniques with the costs and time involved. The costs of the range of consultation set out in the revised SCI can be met from within the current Local Plan and Development Management budgets but may need to be reviewed as each new document is prepared.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the Local Planning Authority must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement and review it every five years, starting from the date of adoption of a local plan.

5.2 The SCI attached is in conformity with The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 which establishes requirements for consultation on planning applications, and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which set out minimum standards for community engagement in the development of planning policy. In addition, the Localism Act 2011 introduced a legal duty on local planning authorities to engage constructively, and on an ongoing basis on strategic cross borough issues, and to support neighbourhood forums wishing to take forward neighbourhood plans. The minimum standards can be exceeded, if required in particular cases but once formally adopted cannot be reduced or amended without a further formal revision to the SCI.

5.3 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 puts in place additional inspection requirements to ensure that access to documents is maintained for those without access to the internet as follows:

- Removal of the requirement for documents to be made available for inspection at principal offices and replacement with a new requirement for the Council to publish these documents on a public website;
- Introduction of a requirement for the Council to provide a copy of relevant documentation by email, post or USB to members of the public who request one;
- Introduction of a requirement for the Council to provide a telephone number to which members of the public without internet access can make factual enquiries about the documents; and
- Amendment of the requirements on the Council about informing the public how to access documents to reflect these changes.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 Engagement and consultation are an accepted part of the work of the Planning Service. The level of resource required to carry out engagement will vary with the type of engagement and the revised SCI has sought to balance the aspiration of the public for further engagement with cost and time implications which can be managed within current staffing and budget. The move to online consultation will require additional training for staff to maximise the benefits and ease of use by consultees.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Key risks relate to non-compliance with the SCI, resulting in legal challenges and the need to balance public aspirations regarding consultation and involvement in planning decisions, with available budgets. These risks will be mitigated by following the consultation methods set out in the SCI, which are set out as minimum requirements.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There is no statutory requirement to consult on a SCI. However, given the nature of the document the Council undertook a consultation on a draft SCI between 8th October and 5th November 2020. Comments received have informed the drafting of the final SCI document at Appendix 1.

- 8.2 The consultation attracted 180 comments from 39 respondents as set out in the consultation report at Appendix 2.
- 8.3 The comments raised did not introduce any fundamental changes to the content or structure of the SCI. A summary of the key issues raised is set out below:

Key Issue	Response
The need for early feedback on consultation events	The Council will endeavour to publish feedback on consultation events on its web site as soon as is practicable. However, this may not be possible when significant numbers of comments are received and the analysis of these requires further work to be undertaken to inform the Council's response. The Council can therefore only commit to publish comments and its response at the next stage of the Plan making process
Concern over removal of public meetings from consultation events	The SCI sets out the Council's minimum requirements for engagement and consultation. Public meetings are not considered appropriate for engaging with local communities in an inclusive and accessible way. Walk in events where often complex planning issues can be explained on a one to one basis is considered to be more effective.
Request for early consultation/ publication of Local Plan evidence studies	There is no legal requirement to publish evidence studies in advance of key Local Plan making stages
Newspapers should still be used to advertise consultation events	This is no longer a legal requirement in most cases. Newspapers are now less widely distributed and read in hard copy format
Request for enhanced notifications for community groups on planning applications on sites within the Green Belt and on non- material amendments to planning permissions	Ward Councillors are notified by Email Alert of all new (valid) applications received in their Ward. Interested third parties can register with the web page and can search for planning applications by a number of fields (including Ward) and can track the progress of such applications. Non-material amendment applications are not subject to publicity and by definition relate to proposals that do not materially alter an earlier planning approval. A direct link to the planning applications portal has been inserted and paragraph 8.4 has been amended to make it clear that it is possible to make a request to be added to the contacts database.
Changes arising from The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020	Introduction of a requirement for the Council to provide a copy of relevant documentation by email, post or USB to members of the public who request one

	<p>For those without internet access, the Council will also provide a copy of relevant documentation by post on request, subject to a reasonable charge to cover the costs of providing this service.</p> <p>Introduction of a requirement for the Council to provide a telephone number to which members of the public without internet access can make factual enquiries about the documents.</p>
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9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. An EIA has been produced and concludes that due to the nature of the project there are no adverse impacts identified for any protected groups. The revised SCI sets out the minimum methods and timing of engagement with members of the public in the preparation of Local Plans and other planning policy documents, and in the planning application process. The SCI will be made available in different formats on request and requires more targeted consultation for 'hard to reach' groups.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The revised SCI sets out the minimum methods and timing of engagement with members of the public in the preparation of Local Plans and other planning policy documents, and in the planning application process. This will include the opportunity to comment on relevant environment and climate change matters relating to the Local Plan and specific planning applications. The increased use of online consultation could have a positive impact due to the reduction in number of paper copies to be printed and distributed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2021
 Appendix 2 – Consultation Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Current adopted Statement of Community Involvement (March 2014)

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/community-involvement-local-planning/statement>

Government Covid 19 guidance on planning matters (13 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-update>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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Statement of **Community Involvement**

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Committee Draft for Approval



This document can be made available in alternative formats, on request, from Wirral Council, Regeneration and Place, Brighton Street, Wallasey CH27 9FQ, who can be contacted by telephone on 0151 606 2000.

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Annex: COVID-19 STATEMENT

1 Background

1.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document intended to set local standards for public involvement in the Council's preparation of policy documents, like local plans and supplementary planning documents; in decisions on individual planning applications; and in support for neighbourhood planning proposals prepared by the local community.

1.2 The SCI sets out what the Council will do to meet the requirements for community consultation set out in national legislation and Government guidance. It also represents the Council's commitment to facilitate early community involvement when local planning policies are being drawn up and to promote continuous community involvement in local planning decisions.

1.3 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to prepare a SCI to set out how they will involve people in the preparation of statutory local development documents¹ and in development management decisions, and give advice and assistance in the preparation of neighbourhood planning proposals².

1.4 Local planning authorities must review an SCI at least every 5 years to reflect any local or national legislative changes, and to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. This Statement therefore replaces the previous SCI published by the Council in 2014.

1.5 Further information on the Statement of Community Involvement can be obtained from the Regeneration and Place Department by:

- visiting our web site: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/community-involvement-local-planning/statement>
- by emailing us at forwardplanning@wirral.gov.uk; or
- by telephone on 0151 606 2000

1.6 This SCI is accompanied by an Annex which outlines the Council's approach to conducting community involvement while restrictions on people's movement and social interaction are in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Annex shows how effective community involvement will continue to take place during the pandemic. The Council will be guided by public health advice provided by the

¹ For functions undertaken under sections 13, 15, 19, 26 and 28 of Part 2 – Local Development, of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). Local Development Documents (LDD) include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

² Under powers set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and in paragraph 3 of Schedule A2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

Government and other relevant bodies to determine how the Covid-19 related community involvement measures contained within this Annex will be applied.

1.7 You should check for the latest version of the Covid 19 Annex here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/wirral-new-local-plan/community-involvement>

2 Principles of community involvement

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 places a strong emphasis on involving local communities in shaping the places where they live.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) also retains a strong focus on community involvement within the planning process, stating that the production of plans should *'be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees'*.³

Principles of Involvement

2.3 The precise nature of community engagement will vary with the main objectives of each stage of the planning process, from the initial involvement on emerging policies, to consultation on the details of individual planning applications, to the notification of decisions and the final adoption of policy documents.

2.4 It is important that the techniques employed are tailored to engage the most appropriate parts of the community at the stages when their involvement will be of greatest relevance and value. It is also important that there is a clear understanding of the purpose of the exercise and a clear understanding of the limits to what can be achieved within the legal, policy and financial constraints set by national Government.

2.5 The overall objective of the Council will be to work towards achieving consensus, wherever possible, through continuous community involvement.

Defining the Community

2.6 The term 'community' will be taken to embrace any individual, business or group that is likely to be directly affected by planning in Wirral both now and in the future. This includes everyone that lives, works or has an interest in the Borough together with local landowners, businesses and service providers, irrespective of their gender, faith, race, disability, sexuality, age or income.

2.7 National legislation identifies the broad types of group that should be involved in planning decisions⁴. A number of bodies are also subject to a wider legal duty to co-operate⁵. Any person is, however, entitled to make representations about an emerging local development document or about a planning application, before it

³ NPPF, paragraph 16

⁴ Regulation 18 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and listed under the headings of "general consultation bodies" and "specific consultation bodies" in Regulation 2 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

⁵ Regulation 4 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

is determined, provided the comments are made within the published period for comments to be received.

2.8 Section 8 provides an example list of existing local groups and types of consultee that are already regularly consulted on planning matters in Wirral⁶.

Equality and Diversity

2.9 The Council is aware of the need for local consultation exercises to be designed to reach beyond the membership of established local groups and to be fully representative of those who live, work or carry on business within the area.

2.10 The Council is also aware of the need to identify methods to involve more “hard-to-reach” groups, such as the young, disabled, ethnic minorities, residents in deprived areas and Gypsies and Travellers. Traditional letter-based approaches have not always been successful in gaining an effective response from these groups and more targeted and innovative approaches may need to be applied in order to engage them more fully.

2.11 The Council has adopted a series of Corporate Customer Care Standards which can be viewed at: <https://wbcnet.wirral.gov.uk/business-support/customer-service-guidance> Planning services will comply with these guidelines, unless a different standard has been agreed in response to national regulations as part of this SCI.

2.12 The Council will, in particular, seek to minimise the barriers to effective participation by:

- ensuring that sufficient background information is provided to enable a meaningful response;
- ensuring that documents, letters and e-mails use plain English and avoid the use of unnecessary jargon;
- providing a consultation questionnaire to help people frame their responses to more lengthy documents or complicated issues;
- ensuring that venues for public meetings are genuinely accessible to the target communities;
- ensuring that venues for public meetings will provide appropriate facilities, such as induction loops, disabled access and toilets; and
- adopting appropriate digital and web-based systems

2.13 In order to minimise duplication of effort, maximise the value of public consultation and safeguard the use of public resources, the Council will, wherever possible, use existing consultation arrangements to engage and involve the community in the land-use planning system, where these can be used effectively

⁶ Section 8 of this Statement sets out how you or your organisation can be added to the Council’s mailing and contacts lists for local plans and supplementary planning documents

within the timetable for the preparation of local development documents or for informing individual planning decisions. The Council will also, where appropriate, use tailored digital and web-based systems to improve community engagement in the preparation of policy documents and decisions on planning applications.

2.14 This will, for example, include consultation with representatives from the Older People's Parliament, Youth Parliament, those with special needs, and local businesses.

2.15 The Council will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The Council will complete and publish all necessary equality impact assessments, publish equality objectives at least every 4 years, and publish the equality profile of the Council's workforce and customers.

Data Protection

2.16 The Council will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Responses to public consultation may be summarised and may be made publicly available to view on the Council's website. The Council redacts comments from individual members of the public to remove personal data in respect of email addresses, telephone numbers and signatures unless they are required to be provided as part of a statutory process, such as a public inquiry, hearing or examination. Libellous, discriminatory or otherwise offensive comments, will not be made publicly available.

3 The production of local development documents

Legal Requirements

3.1 The documents which are to be prepared as local development documents are:

(a) any document prepared by a local planning authority individually or in co-operation with one or more other local planning authorities, which contains statements regarding one or more of the following—

(i) the development and use of land which the local planning authority wish to encourage during any specified period;

(ii) the allocation of sites for a particular type of development or use;

(iii) any environmental, social, design and economic objectives which are relevant to the attainment of the development and use of land mentioned in paragraph 3.1(a) (i) above; and

(iv) development management and site allocation policies, which are intended to guide the determination of applications for planning permission.

(b) where a document referred to in 3.1(a) above contains policies applying to sites or areas by reference to an Ordnance Survey map, any map which accompanies that document and which shows how the adopted policies map would be amended by the document if it were adopted.

(c) documents which, if prepared, are to be prepared as local development documents are any document which:

(i) relate only to part of the area of the local planning authority, identify that area as an area of significant change or special conservation and contain the local planning authority's policies in relation to the area; and

(ii) any other document which includes a site allocation policy.

3.2 Any document of the description referred to in 3(1)(a)(i), (ii) or (iv) or 3(c) is a local plan.

3.3 The main requirements for community involvement in the preparation of local development documents are currently set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012⁷

⁷ Statutory Instrument (SI) 2012, No 767 (as amended by the 2017 Regulations SI 1244)

3.4 Additional provisions are, however, also set out within the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁸ and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010⁹.

Local Development Scheme

3.5 The Council will publish the timetable for the preparation of a local plan on its website. The timetable will be updated on the Council's website as each stage in plan preparation is reached as required.

3.6 The Council will consult on the scope and content of the local plan by publishing proposals on its website and by notifying relevant bodies of the type set out in section 8 of this SCI¹⁰. The Council will also notify anyone who has previously expressed an interest in emerging planning documents and has requested to be added to the Council's mailing list¹¹.

3.7 The Council will also notify previous respondents to particular documents who have provided their contact details, as each stage in the preparation of the document is reached.

Local Plans

3.8 Public consultation must take place throughout the process of producing a local plan. The opportunities for public involvement are at their greatest during the early stages when the range of options open to the Council are being explored and assessed and before the final version of the local plan is published and submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.

3.9 The emphasis during these early stages will be on making background information as widely available as possible, presenting information on potential options and other relevant matters using one or more of a range of engagement formats, which could include workshops/ online workshops, walk in exhibitions, and web-based interactive engagement 'portals'. A more focused, targeted consultation may also be undertaken with "hard-to-reach" groups including those with special needs, specific interests or within specific geographical areas. Traditional public meetings could also be arranged if the Council considered they were appropriate.

3.10 The Council must take account of any representation made in response to invitations to comment during these early stages¹².

⁸ (SI 2004, No 1633, relating to the strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes

⁹ SI 2010, No 490 (as amended), relating to the appropriate assessment of impacts on designated European Sites

¹⁰ As defined in Regulation 2 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

¹¹ Further information about how to do this is set out in Section 8 of this SCI

¹² Regulation 18(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

3.11 The later stages of the process are more restricted by national legislation. There is a minimum statutory six-week period for representations to be received on the soundness or legal compliance of the proposed submission draft local plan¹³.

3.12 At all stages (including consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents and on the Sustainability Appraisal), the Council will provide a copy of relevant documentation by email to members of the public who request one. For those without internet access, the Council will also provide a copy of relevant documentation by post on request, subject to a reasonable charge to cover the costs of providing this service. The Council will also provide a telephone number where members of the public without internet access can make factual enquiries about the documents.

3.13 Anyone who makes representations seeking a change to the proposed submission draft Local Plan within the appropriate deadline will, at the time of submitting their representation¹⁴, be given the opportunity to request to appear and be heard by the person appointed to carry out the independent examination of the local plan¹⁵. The decision as to who will be invited to appear at the Examination will be made by the Inspector.

The Local Plan Examination Process

3.14 The Council expects that the majority of assessments carried out by the Inspector will be in the form of written representations, although it will be for those seeking changes to the local plan to decide if they wish to appear and be heard at the examination. The Inspector must consider all of the representations that have been submitted, whether in writing or presented at the examination hearing, before completing their report.

3.15 The Council via the Programme Officer for the Examination will publish and notify anyone who has made a representation of the date, time and place of the hearing and of the name of the Planning Inspector(s) that has/have been appointed, at least six weeks before the public hearing takes place¹⁶. The Programme Officer will be the contact point for the Inspector.

3.16 In the event that main modifications are required to the proposed Local Plan, the Council will consult on the content of those modifications for no less than six weeks in accordance with the Regulations.

¹³ Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, item (c) under the heading "statement of the representations procedure" and Regulation 20 "Representations relating to a Local Plan"

¹⁴ The Representation Form will include an opportunity to request to attend the oral part of the examination

¹⁵ Section 20(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

¹⁶ Regulation 24 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

3.17 The Council will publish the Inspector's report as soon as possible after it is received and give notice to those who have requested to be notified¹⁷.

3.18 The Council can only adopt the Local Plan in line with the Inspector's recommendations¹⁸. No further consultation will take place at this stage and the final processes provide only for the notification of adoption to people who have requested to be notified¹⁹.

3.19 A statutory period for judicial review will extend for six weeks from the date on which the local plan was adopted²⁰.

Supplementary Planning Documents

3.20 The process for adopting a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is shorter and simpler and does not involve submission to the Secretary of State or independent public examination. Opportunities for public involvement are greatest in the early stages, before the draft SPD is published for public consultation.

3.21 The methods used to foster effective community involvement will largely be determined by the nature and content of the SPD proposed but will include one or more of a range of engagement formats including focus groups and workshops/online workshops, walk in exhibitions, and web based interactive engagement 'portals'.

3.22 Walk in exhibitions are likely to be the most effective method for testing area-specific proposals, whereas more limited, targeted consultations are likely to be more relevant for documents on more specialist themes and topics.

3.23 There is a minimum statutory four-week period for public consultation on the draft SPD²¹.

3.24 A statutory period for judicial review will extend for three months from the date on which the supplementary planning document was adopted²².

Sustainability Appraisal

3.25 The Council will consult on the scope and content of a sustainability appraisal with statutory consultees and will invite public comments on the appraisal to be submitted at each stage in the plan or document making process.

¹⁷ Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

¹⁸ Section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

¹⁹ Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

²⁰ Section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

²¹ Regulation 12(b)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

²² Regulation 11 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Evidence Base

3.26 The Council will undertake or commission specialist technical surveys, studies or assessments to inform the content of emerging local development documents, to meet national policy requirements or to respond to issues raised in response to public consultation on emerging proposals.

3.27 The results of the surveys, studies or assessments used in the preparation of a local development document will be published for public comment at the next appropriate stage in the plan making process.

Monitoring Reports

3.27 Statutory monitoring reports will be published on the Council's website²³.

3.28 The Council will consult on the proposed content of future monitoring alongside the content of the Local Plan.













Methods of Community Involvement













3.29 The types of method of community involvement that the Council will seek to promote will depend on the type and content of the local development document that is being prepared.

3.30 The Council will identify the most appropriate methods to involve and engage the community at a scale and nature of consultation that is appropriate to that document and audience.^{3.31} The following tables set out the types of methods of community involvement that may be used at each stage in the preparation of a local development document.

²³ Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Table 1 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Local Plan

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Initial Consultation (Regulation 18)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees</p> <p> Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific development proposals only</p> <p> One or more: walk in event/s, workshop/s, online workshop/s, web-based interactive ‘portal’, and targeted consultation for specific groups including those with special needs</p> <p> Consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p> Publication of all documents (including evidence studies) on the Council website</p> <p> All documents to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific development proposals only</p> <p> Deposit of proposed submission draft and other background documents including reports of previous consultation at a principal office</p> <p> Consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p> Publication of all documents (including evidence studies) on the Council website</p>

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19) <i>Continued</i></p>	<p> Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Submission (Regulation 22)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and those who have requested to be notified</p> <p> Deposit of draft Plan and other background documents including reports of previous consultation at a principal office</p> <p> Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Public Examination (Regulation 24)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails by the Programme Officer to those who have made representations on the Regulation 19 document.</p> <p> Publication of all documents on the Council website and via the Programme Officer's Examination website</p> <p> The name of the Inspector and Programme Officer will be made available on the Local Plan Examination web pages. The Programme Officer's contact details will also be provided as the contact for the Inspector.</p>
<p>Inspectors Report (Regulation 25)</p>	<p> Publication on the Council website</p> <p> To be available for inspection at a principal office</p>






























Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Adoption (Regulation 26)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and those who have requested to be notified</p> <p> Deposit of the adopted Plan at a principal office</p> <p> Publication of adopted Local Plan on the Council website</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Monitoring (Regulation 34)</p>	<p> Publication of monitoring reports on the Council website</p> <p> Monitoring reports to be available for inspection at a principal Office</p>

Table 2 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Supplementary Planning document

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Initial Consultation (Regulation 12)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees</p> <p> Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific proposals only</p> <p> One or more: walk in event/s, workshop/s, online workshop/s, web-based interactive ‘portal’, and targeted consultation for specific groups including those with special needs.</p> <p> Consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p> Publication of all documents (including evidence studies) on the Council website</p> <p> All documents to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Draft SPD (Regulation 13)</p>	<p> Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> <p> Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific proposals only</p> <p> Consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p> Publication of all documents (including evidence studies) on the Council website</p> <p> All documents to be available for inspection at a principal office</p>

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Draft SPD (Regulation 13)</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p> </div> </div> </div>
<p>Adoption (Regulation 14)</p>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Deposit of the adopted document at a principal office</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p> </div> </div> </div>
<p>Monitoring (Regulation 34)</p>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Publication of monitoring reports on the Council website</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Monitoring reports to be available for inspection at a principal Office</p> </div> </div> </div>

4 Neighbourhood planning

4.1 The Council will provide advice and guidance to community groups undertaking neighbourhood planning.

4.2 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is not intended to set standards for the consultation undertaken by qualifying bodies, such as a neighbourhood forum, when preparing neighbourhood plans and development orders, but qualifying bodies should ensure that the wider community is kept fully informed of progress and has appropriate opportunities to comment on proposals in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012²⁴.

Designating a Neighbourhood Forum / Neighbourhood Area

4.3 Before submitting an application to the Council, the community should publicise the existence of the forum and its objectives and the boundary of the proposed neighbourhood area as widely as possible and maximise community support for any future activity.

4.4 The community should also consult the Council on the likely planning ambitions of the community and identify any wider considerations that might influence the type and content of any future neighbourhood planning proposals. The Council will discuss the issues likely to arise, advise on the best way to proceed and comment on the content of any draft applications before they are formally submitted.

Pre-Submission Consultation and Publicity

4.5 Before submitting a neighbourhood plan or order to the Council, the qualifying body must undertake consultation for a minimum of six weeks²⁵. The Council will provide advice and guidance on advertising the proposals.

4.6 A consultation statement should be submitted setting out details of all the consultation undertaken²⁶.

Publication of a neighbourhood plan or Order

4.7 Following the submission of a neighbourhood plan or Order, the Council will publicise the submitted documents for at least six weeks to allow any final public comments to be submitted²⁷.

²⁴ SI 2012 No. 637 (as amended)

²⁵ Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, Regulation 14

²⁶ Regulation 15 or Regulation 22 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017

²⁷ Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 as amended by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017

4.8 The Council will notify all the bodies and individuals named in the consultation statement submitted by the Neighbourhood Forum.

4.9 The Council will provide a copy of relevant documentation by email to members of the public who request one. For those without internet access, the Council will also provide a copy of relevant documentation by post on request, subject to a reasonable charge to cover the costs of providing this service. The Council will also provide a telephone number where members of the public without internet access can make factual enquiries about the documents.

4.10 Any representation received at this stage will go forward to be considered by the person that will be appointed, by the Council with the agreement of the qualifying body, to undertake the independent examination of the proposals²⁸. The Council will invite the body who submitted the proposals to consider the any comments received.

Examination of a neighbourhood plan and order

4.11 The examiner will consider whether the proposals meet the basic conditions and any other requirements set out in national legislation and guidance²⁹. The Council will organise and fund the examination. Most examinations are conducted using written representations, however, the examiner may call a hearing session if they feel it is necessary to do so.

4.12 The report of the independent examiner and Council's decision statement will be made available on the Council's website. The Council will also notify the body who submitted the proposals and all the bodies and individuals named in the consultation statement.

4.13 Anyone who wishes to submit a claim to the court for judicial review must file the claim within six weeks from the decision statement being published.

Referendums for neighbourhood plans and orders

4.14 The Council will organise a referendum as soon as possible after issuing its decision statement and report of the independent examination.

²⁸ The Examiner is paid for and appointed by the Council. However, the appointment must be with the agreement of the Qualifying Body (QB). The Planning Act sets out the criteria for an individual to qualify to be able to examine a neighbourhood plan. The criteria are as follows: • Must be independent from both the QB and Council • Must have appropriate qualifications and experience • Cannot have an interest in any of the land to be covered by the plan (i.e. the Neighbourhood Area)

²⁹ Under paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

4.15 A person is entitled to vote if, at the time of the referendum, they meet the eligibility criteria to vote in a local election for the area and if they live in the referendum area.














4.16 If at least 50 per cent of those voting in the referendum are in favour of the proposals, or where a business referendum is held, a majority vote in favour in both referendums, the neighbourhood development plan or order will be made and in the case of a neighbourhood development plan will come into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area³⁰.













4.17 The Council will publicise its decision and will notify the body who submitted the proposals and any person who asked to be notified of the decision.

4.18 A claim for judicial review of the decision must be filed before the end of the period of 6 weeks beginning with the day on which the decision is published.

³⁰ Unless the making of the plan or order would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998)

Table 3 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Designation of Neighbourhood Forum</p> <p>Publicising application (Regulation 9)</p> <p>Publicising designation (Regulation 10)</p>	<p> Publish application on the Council website</p> <p> Publish designation on the Council website</p> <p> Designation to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Designation of Neighbourhood Area</p> <p>Publicising application (Regulation 6)</p> <p>Publicising designation (Regulation 7)</p>	<p> Publish application on the Council website</p> <p> Publish designation on the Council website</p> <p> Designation to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Submission (Regulation 16)</p>	<p> Notification letter / email to statutory consultees and Regulation 14 respondents</p> <p> Publication of all documents (including evidence studies) on the Council website</p> <p> Main documents to be available for inspection at a principal office</p>

Stage	Method of community involvement	
Submission (Regulation 16) <i>Continued</i>		Provision of copies of documents by email or post
		Telephone number for enquiries about the documents
Examiner's Report (Regulation 18)		Notification letter / email to Regulation 16 respondents
		Publish the examiner's report and the Council's 'decision statement' on the Council website
		Examiner's report to be made available for inspection at a principal office.
		Provision of copies of documents by email or post
		Telephone number for enquiries about the documents
Decision on making the Plan (Regulation 19)		Notification letter / email to Regulation 16 respondents
		Publish the Councils 'decision statement' on the Council website
		'Decision statement' to be available for inspection at a principal office
		Provision of copies of documents by email or post
		Telephone number for enquiries about the documents







































Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Making Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 20)</p>	<div>  </div> <p>Publish the made plan on the Council website</p> <div>  </div> <p>Main documents to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <div>  </div> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <div>  </div> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>

Table 4 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order

Stage	Method of community involvement
Designation of Neighbourhood Forum Publicising application (Regulation 9) Publicising designation (Regulation 10)	 Publish application on the Council website
	 Publish designation on the Council website
	 Designation to be available for inspection at a principal office
	 Provision of copies of documents by email or post  Telephone number for enquiries about the documents
Designation of Neighbourhood Area Publicising application (Regulation 6) Publicising designation (Regulation 7)	 Publish application on the Council website
	 Publish designation on the Council website
	 Designation to be available for inspection at a principal office
	 Provision of copies of documents by email or post  Telephone number for enquiries about the documents
Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 21)	 Notification letter / email to statutory consultees
	 Publish documents on the Council website

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 21) <i>Continued</i></p>	<p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Publicising the order (Regulation 23)</p>	<p> Notification letter / email to statutory consultees</p> <p> Publish documents on the Council website</p> <p> Display site notice (If Required)</p> <p> Publish a notice within a local newspaper (If Required)</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Examiner's Report (Regulation 25)</p>	<p> Notification letter / email to statutory consultees</p> <p> Publish the examiner's report and the Councils 'decision statement' on the Council website</p> <p> Examiner's report to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>

Stage	Method of community involvement
<p>Decision on making the order</p> <p>(Regulation 26)</p>	<p> Notification letter / email to statutory consultees, the qualifying body, and registered contacts</p> <p> Publish the Councils 'decision statement' on the Council website</p> <p> The Council's 'decision statement' to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Making Neighbourhood Order</p> <p>(Regulation 27)</p>	<p> Publish the made order on the Council website</p> <p> The made order to be available for inspection at a principal office</p> <p> Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p> Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>

5 Community Infrastructure Levy

5.1 The Council may consider the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Borough in the future. Where a Levy is progressed, the following consultation procedures will be undertaken in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010³¹.

Consultation on the draft Charging Schedule

5.2 Following the production of a draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, the Council will undertake a minimum of 4 weeks consultation on the draft Schedule.

5.3 The draft Charging Schedule will be published on the Council's web site and made available for public inspection at a principal office. The consultation document and all supporting evidence base documents will be made available on the Council website.

Submission of the draft Charging Schedule

5.4 Anyone who made a representation on the Regulation 16 draft Charging Schedule consultation will be informed of the submission of the Schedule. A copy of the Statement of Modifications will be provided to neighbouring local authorities and all neighbourhood forums.

5.5 The submitted draft Charging Schedule will be made available for public inspection at a principal office. The submission document and all supporting evidence base documents will be made available on the Council website.












Examination and publication of the draft Charging Schedule










5.6 Following the examination, the examiner's recommendations and the final approved Charging Schedule will be made available for public inspection at a principal office and published on the Councils website.

5.7 Anyone who made a representation on the Regulation 16 draft Charging Schedule consultation will be informed of the publication of the Schedule.

³¹ The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Table 5 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a draft CIL Charging Schedule

Stage	Method of community involvement	
<p>Publication of a draft Charging Schedule</p> <p>(Regulation 16)</p>	     	<p>Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees</p> <p>Deposit of draft Schedule at a principal office</p> <p>Consultation questionnaire</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Submission of draft Charging Schedule</p> <p>(Regulation 19)</p>	    	<p>Notification letters / emails to previous respondents</p> <p>Deposit of submission draft Schedule at a principal office</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>

Stage	Method of community involvement	
<p>Examination of draft Charging Schedule</p> <p>(Regulation 23)</p>	   	<p>Deposit of the examiner's report at a principal office</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Publication of the Charging Schedule</p> <p>(Regulation 25)</p>	    	<p>Notification letters / emails to previous respondents</p> <p>Deposit of Charging Schedule at a principal office</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>

6 Protocols for public involvement

Contact Lists

6.1 The Council will maintain a database of contacts who have advised the Council that they wish to be involved or consulted on the preparation of local development documents and have provided their contact details.

6.2 The database of contacts will be maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Notification Letters and Emails

6.3 Notification by letter or email will be sent to everyone registered on the contacts database at the start of the initial consultation process for the preparation of each local development document.

6.4 The Council will send neighbour notification letters in areas where neighbouring sites are proposed to be allocated for development, to increase the awareness of emerging site-specific proposals. Neighbour notification letters will be sent on the same basis as for publicising planning applications, as set out in section 7 below.

Publication and Deposit of Documents

6.5 All consultation documents will be made available on the Council website.

6.6 Consultation documents associated with a Local Plan and with a CIL Charging Schedule will be made available for inspection at a principal office and at other such places as the Council considers appropriate.

6.7 The Council will investigate the possibility of providing documents in different formats, in response to specific requests.

Consultation Periods

6.8 The Council will consult on local plan and neighbourhood plan consultation documents for a minimum period of 6 weeks, and for a minimum period of 4 weeks for SPD and draft CIL Charging Schedule consultation documents. Extra working days will be added to take account of Council closures and public holidays.

Evidence base

6.9 Comments on relevant evidence base documents will be invited at each stage of the plan making process.

Representations

6.10 Any person may make representations about the emerging content of a local development document, provided they are submitted in the appropriate manner and within the appropriate deadline.

6.11 Representations must be made in writing. The Council is able to receive representations by letter, email, and online surveys where used.

6.12 Private information, such as contact details, will be redacted from all published representations. However, people who make representations at the Regulation 19 Local Plan stage will need to provide a name and address or they are unlikely to be accepted.

6.13 The Council will specify the time and date by which comments must be received, and the postal and/ or email address to which they must be sent.

6.14 Respondents are responsible for ensuring that their comments are received at the specified address, within the specified time period.

6.15 Representations received after the published deadline will not be considered, unless there has been a failure by the Council to make appropriate provision for the receipt of representations within that time period.

Acknowledgement of Representations

6.16 The Council will acknowledge the receipt of all responses by email or letter where contact details have been provided.

Assessment of Representations

6.17 Representations received by the Council will be assessed against national policy and legislation and their implications for the promotion of sustainable development.

6.18 The final decision on the Council's response to representations will be approved in accordance with the Councils constitution.

Further information

6.20 Further information on community Involvement in the production of local development documents, neighbourhood planning and CIL proposals can be obtained from Regeneration and Place Department by:

- visiting our web site: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/community-involvement-local-planning/statement>
- by emailing us at forwardplanning@wirral.gov.uk; or
- by telephone on 0151 606 2000

7 The development management process

Development Management Service Customer Charter

7.1 The Wirral Council Development Management Service Customer Charter can be viewed at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/customer-charter>





Publicity Required by Law

Publicity by Local Planning Authorities

7.2 The Council is required by law to give publicity to all planning applications. Table 6 below sets out the required publicity for the various categories of applications as outlined in the Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015³².


7.3 All planning applications will be published on the Council's planning web pages as soon as possible following receipt of a valid application.

Table 6 – Statutory Publicity for Planning Applications³³

Type of Development	Publicity Required
Development where an application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement	 Press Notice  Site Notice
Development which would be a departure from the Development Plan	 Press Notice  Site Notice






³² Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

³³ Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Type of Development	Publicity Required
Development which would affect a Public Right of Way	 Press Notice  Site Notice
Major ³⁴ development	 Press Notice  Site Notice
Minor and other development	 Neighbour Notification  Site Notice if necessary
Development affecting the setting of a Listed Building	 Press Notice  Site Notice if necessary

³⁴ Major development is defined as:

- for residential development, 10 or more dwellings or if the number of dwellings is not known, where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more;
- for other uses, where the floorspace is 1,000 square metres or more or the site area is 1.0 hectare or more;
- mineral working or use of land for mineral working deposits; and
- all waste related developments, including waste treatment, storage or transfer as well as tipping.

Type of Development	Publicity Required
Development affecting the character or appearance of a Conservation Area	 Press Notice  Site Notice
Applications for Listed Building Consent and planning permission for relevant demolition in Conservation Areas (formally known as Conservation Area Consent)	 Press Notice  Site Notice
Permitted development requiring prior notification to the planning authority (e.g. telecommunications)	 Site Notice posted by the developer

Neighbour Notification

7.4 The Council currently uses neighbour notification letters as a means of publicising planning applications. It has found that this is currently the most effective method, where small numbers of residents are likely to be affected by a development and enables people who have been unable to see a Press Notice to express their views.

7.5 Adjoining owners and/or occupiers will be notified as soon as possible following the receipt of a valid application.

7.6 Additional publicity, in the form of Site Notices and additional notification letters, may be given to developments likely to create wider concern at the discretion of the Case Officer, in consultation with the Development Management Manager. This may, for example, include applications for proposals with the potential to change the character of the area; cause noise, smell, vibration or other nuisance; activity or noise during unsociable hours; affect trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order; and other proposals giving rise to a similar level of wider than local impact.




7.8 The Council also has a system in place for notifying the relevant neighbouring local planning authority, to include any neighbours and/or residents that might also be affected by a cross-border planning application. This procedure will, however, normally only apply to major applications, for example, for retailing and housing developments.

7.9 The Council’s neighbouring local planning authorities have a similar system in place but the decision as to whether planning applications are referred to the Council and/or to local neighbours and residents in Wirral is the responsibility of the relevant adjoining local planning authority.

Periods of Notice.

7.10 It is a statutory requirement that the following periods of notice are given before a planning application is determined:

Table 7 – Statutory Periods of Notice for Planning Applications^{36 37}

Method of Publicity	Period of Notice
 Press Notice	21 days from the date of publication
 Site Notice	21 days beginning with date that the notice was first displayed
 Neighbour Notification	21 days beginning with the day on which the notification was delivered ³⁵
Development where an application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement	30 days

Revised Applications

7.11 Non material minor amendments to a planning application, required by the Council or by the applicant, will be accepted where the planning application has not

³⁵ This will be extended if a bank holiday fall within the consultation period

³⁶ Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

³⁷ For EIA applications the consultation period is 30 days as specified in Article 15 and 16 and Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

yet been determined. Re-notification and publicity will not be undertaken on minor amendments but the amended plans will be placed on the Council's website.

7.12 Where an application has already been determined or significant amendments are proposed to a non-determined application, the Council will require a new application to be submitted. The new application will be subject to a new period of publicity and/or neighbourhood notification.

Publicity by Applicants

7.13 Under current legislation, applicants are only required to publicise planning applications in the following situations:

- where an environmental statement is submitted after the application; and
- where a developer has to apply in advance for a determination as to whether the Council's prior approval is required for certain details of the development.

7.15 In the second case, the Council will require that a Site Notice be posted. In both cases, developers have to complete a certificate to confirm that appropriate publicity has been undertaken.

7.16 Statutory provisions for developers to consult local communities and take their comments into account before submitting a planning application for certain types of development are included in section 61W of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

7.17 Further guidance on the procedures for publicising planning applications is available in the Council's Guidance for Publicity on Planning Applications³⁸.

Protocols for Public Involvement

7.18 The Council will send neighbour notification letters to inform neighbours that a planning application has been submitted and of the deadline by which comments should be submitted to the Council.

7.19 Weekly lists of planning applications that are departures from the Development Plan or which are required to be subject to a Press Notice in Table 6, will be published in the local press.

7.20 All planning applications will be made available for public inspection at the local planning authority's principal office during normal office hours and on the Council's website at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning->

³⁸ Which can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance>

[permission](#) . The website allows simple searches to be made by keyword, reference number, postcode or single line of address. The website also allows a more advanced search to be made by applicant name, application type, Ward, Conservation Area, development type and date of submission. Searches can also be made by Committee Date and Weekly/Monthly Lists at:

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

Consultation Responses

7.21 Comments on a planning application must be made in writing by letter or email or by using the Make a Comment facility online against the relevant application reference within the timescale indicated. Respondents are encouraged to submit their comments electronically online using the Make a Comment facility or by e-mail, where this facility is available. Statutory consultees will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

7.22 Comments made in response to a planning application will be placed on the application file. The file is available for public inspection and the applicant will be able to see the comments that have been made. Comments will not normally be acknowledged due to the large volume of representations received on planning applications.

7.23 All representations, whether for or against the proposal, will be taken into account when the final decision is taken, in line with national and local policies, provided they relate to material planning considerations. More information about material planning considerations can be found on the Council's planning website: www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning/planning-decision-process/about-decision-process. When making a representation please avoid making any statements that could compromise the security of your premises (such as holiday dates or details of when your property is left empty).

Planning Decisions

7.24 Planning Committee meets every month to determine any planning applications where the Director responsible for the planning service considers it inappropriate to exercise delegated powers having regard the public representations received and consultee responses and other applications specifically reserved to the Planning Committee.

7.25 The following matters are to be determined at the Strategic Applications Sub-Committee:

- (i) Large-scale major developments (defined by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as those of 200 houses or more or 10,000 square metres of non-residential floor space) which, by their nature, (e.g. scale, location etc.) have wider strategic implications and raise issues of more than local importance;**

- (ii) Significant applications by Wirral Borough Council to develop any land owned by the Council, or for development of any land by the Council or by the Council jointly with any other person (Regulation 3 applications);
- (iii) Applications where it was proposed to make a decision that is a significant departure from the policies of the development plan, with the exception of domestic extensions;
- (iv) Decisions that would need to be referred to the Secretary of State with the exception of applications for Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent to Grade I listed buildings, where there are no objections on conservation grounds;
- (v) The Sub-Committee may also sit to have an informal briefing on a pre-application or application proposal with developers in relation to any matter which potentially may come before the Sub-Committee for later decision.

7.26 A protocol governing developer engagement with Members of the Strategic Applications Sub-Committee at pre-application and pre-decision stage was agreed in December 2020, which can be viewed here:

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50072001/Strategic%20Apps%20Sub%20Cttee%20reportmn.pdf>

7.27 Elected Members sitting on the Planning Committee and Strategic Applications Sub-Committee receive a written report prepared by Council Officers on each application to be considered, including a summary of details of the letters and comments that have been received, and a summary of the main points raised. If a letter or comment is received after the written report has been prepared, the main points will be summarised within a late addendum.

7.28 The Council allows the Committee to be addressed by members of the public when a petition with 25 or more signatories has been received before noon on the Monday prior to the Committee meeting³⁹. A representative of the petitioners will then be allowed to address the Committee for five minutes. In the event that more than one petition has been received, the allotted time may be divided between the petitioners or one person may present the views of all petitioners. A representative of objectors may address the Committee only if the application is before the Committee on the basis of there being 15 or more individual objections within the consultation period.

7.29 The applicant or agent will be invited to address the Committee, also for a maximum of five minutes. Ward Councillors also have the right to address the

³⁹ Twenty five signatures are required for a petition to qualify.

Committee in support or against an application but without any time restriction. Members of the Planning Committee will then debate the proposal and a decision will be taken by vote, following the consideration of each application. See: <https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50070338/PROTOCOLS%20RELATING%20TO%20DETERMINATION%20OF%20PLANNING%20APPLICATIONSmnfinal71020.pdf>

and <https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=8707>

Post Application Procedures

7.30 People who have submitted comments on the application will not normally be advised of the final decision in writing. People who have submitted comments are encouraged to keep up to date with the application via the Council's website. You can register with the website which can provide you with updates in relation to an application including when the decision has been made.

7.31 The applicant/agent will receive a decision notice detailing the conditions and reasons for approval or the reasons for refusal. A copy of the decision notice is kept on file and is available to view at the Council's Regeneration and Place office.

7.32 All decision notices will normally be displayed on the Council's website within 24 hours of the decision having been made.

Appeals

7.33 In the case of an appeal, the Council will write to all those who were notified of the original application, all the individuals and organisations that commented on the planning application, Ward Members and the Chair of Planning Committee, to inform them that an appeal has been submitted, so that they can make further representations to the Planning Inspector appointed to handle the appeal.

7.34 The Planning Inspector will copy the final decision to the appellant, the Authority and to any third parties who request in writing a copy of the appeal decision.

Pre-Application Procedures

Pre-Application Community Involvement

7.35 The Council strongly encourages landowners and developers to undertake pre-application community consultation, especially for large, complex or controversial proposals and for proposals that will be contrary to the Development Plan.

7.36 The advantages of early engagement with the local community include:

- allowing proposals to be explained before minds are made up on the basis of what can often be inaccurate second-hand information;
- assistance in gauging community support and obtaining accurate local information;

- clarification of the issues at debate, providing greater certainty and transparency, saving time later in the decision-making process; and
- the delivery of a more acceptable development.

7.37 Developers will be encouraged to contact the Council before commencing a community involvement exercise, to agree the scope of the exercise and the types of method that will be employed.

7.38 The consultation exercise should seek to explain the policy and other background to the proposals and address issues related to the type and scale of development, including its siting, layout, design and access arrangements. If necessary, it should also consider the matter of alternative sites.

7.39 A report of the consultation undertaken, the responses received and how the comments have been addressed, should then be submitted alongside the final planning application.

7.40 The types of proposal that the Council believe would be most likely to benefit from pre-application community involvement are set out in Table 8 overleaf:

Table 8 – Thresholds for Pre-Application Community Involvement

Type of Proposal	Threshold
Industrial and commercial development, including retail New build and change of use in or adjacent to a Primarily Residential Area	1,500 square metres or above
Residential development	100 dwellings or sites of 3.0 hectares or above
Development affecting a Conservation Area or Listed Building	Proposals for 10 or more dwellings or on sites of 0.5 hectares or above Other proposals of 1,000 square metres or above or on sites of 1.0 hectare or above
Major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines or overhead power lines	All proposals
New educational or institutional proposals	All proposals for new sites Extensions of 1,000 square metres or above
Mineral extraction proposals	All proposals
Waste processing	All proposals

Further information

7.40 As the legal processes surrounding planning decisions, permitted development and publicity are subject to regular change, the Council will publish any amendments to these procedures on the Council’s website at www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/planning

7.41 Further information on community involvement associated with the development management process, can be obtained from Regeneration and Place Department by:

- emailing us at planningapplications@wirral.gov.uk or

- telephone on 0151 606 2000.

8 Consultation bodies and consultees

8.1 Examples of the type of bodies and organisations that are currently consulted regarding the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents are illustrated in the lists below:

Specific Consultation Bodies ⁴⁰	
Adjoining Local Planning Authorities* Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Sefton Council Liverpool City Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Flintshire County Council	Other Public Bodies and Agencies Environment Agency* Highways England Homes England* Historic England* Marine Management Organisation* Natural England* Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner Wirral NHS Clinical Commissioning Group* Network Rail
Adjacent Parish Councils Neston Town Council	Service Undertakers Electricity Companies Gas Companies Telecommunications Companies Water Undertakers Sewerage Undertakers

General Consultation Bodies ⁴¹	
Wirral Community Networks Voluntary Community Action Wirral Wirral Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations New Brighton Community Partnership Seacombe Community Partnership Tranmere Alliance	Environmental Groups & Societies Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) ⁴⁰ Cheshire Wildlife Trust Wirral Wildlife Cheshire RIGS Group Dee Estuary Conservation Group Mersey Estuary Conservation Group Merseyside & West Lancashire Bat Group

⁴⁰ Defined in Section 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Bodies to which the additional duty to co-operate also applies under Regulation 4 are indicated with an asterisk*

⁴¹ Defined in Regulation 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the area; bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the area; bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups within the area; bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons within the area; and bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business within the area. Bodies to which the additional duty to co-operate also applies under Regulation 4 are indicated with an asterisk *

	<p>RSPB Wirral & Cheshire Badger Group Wirral Barn Owl Trust Wirral Environmental Network Woodland Trust CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Cheshire</p>
<p>Faith Groups Church Commissioners Diocese of Chester Diocese of Shrewsbury Bridgewater Meeting Room Trust Jehovah's Witnesses Allerton Trust</p>	<p>Local Civic Societies Bromborough Society Heswall Society Hoylake & District Civic Society Irby, Thurstaston & Pensby Amenity Society New Ferry & Rock Ferry Conservation Society Rock Park Estate Management Committee Wirral Society Wirral Green Belt Council Barnston Conservation Society Greasby Green Belt Action Group Upton Village Community Group</p>
<p>National Bodies & Agencies National Trust Natural Resources Wales Sport England Forestry Commission Health and Safety Executive National Farmers Union Home Builders Federation The Theatres Trust</p>	<p>Heritage & History Societies National Museums Liverpool Cheshire Gardens Trust Garden History Society Bidston Preservation Trust Birkenhead History Society Wirral History and Heritage Forum Wirral Archaeology</p>
<p>Regional Bodies & Agencies NW Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority NW Sea Anglers</p>	<p>Disability Groups WIRED Wirral Disability Action Forum Together All Are Able</p>
<p>Sub-Regional Bodies & Agencies Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership* Liverpool City Region Local Nature Partnership* Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service</p>	<p>Elderly Persons Groups Age UK Wirral Older People's Parliament <i>Emergency Services</i> Merseyside Police Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service North West Ambulance Service HM Coastguard</p>

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority	Royal National Lifeboat Institute
National Health Service Wirral Hospitals NHS Trust	Higher Education Wirral Metropolitan College
Utilities & Service Operators National Grid Bell Ingram Pipelines Scottish Power United Utilities Dwr Cymru Welsh Water	Local Business Associations Wirral Investment Network Wirral Chamber of Commerce Birkenhead Market Tenants Association Birkenhead Town Centre Forum Heswall & District Business Association
Transport Bodies & Operators Local Highway Authorities* Office of Rail Regulation* Merseytravel* Sustrans Merseyside Cycling Campaign Cycling Project for the NW Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society Wirral Transport Users Association Civil Aviation Authority* National Air Traffic Control Services Liverpool Airport Hawarden Airport (Airbus) General Aviation Awareness Council Merseyside & West Cheshire Ramblers Arriva North West Limited	Local Businesses Registered Business Consultees Wirral Chamber of Commerce
Registered Social Housing Providers	Local Residents
Consultants, Solicitors and Agents	Local Residents Associations
Land and Property Owners	Friends Groups
Gypsy and Travellers Organisations	Developers and House Builders
Black and Ethnic Minority Groups	Conservation Area Advisory Committees

8.2 Requests to be added to the contacts database for local plans and supplementary planning documents should be directed to the Regeneration and Planning Service: forwardplanning@wirral.gov.uk

8.3 The Council's Forward Planning Privacy Statement can be viewed on the Council's website at www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/forward-planning-privacy-notice

8.4 Requests to be added to the contacts database for planning applications and development management decisions should be directed to the Technical Support Unit: planningapplications@wirral.gov.uk. We will then contact you to discuss the type of applications and the best way that we can assist you in engaging with the planning application process.

8.5 The Council's Development Management Privacy Notice can be viewed at www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/development-management-privacy-notice

⁴⁰ Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) is a consortium of 31 local groups including:

1. Barnston Village Conservation Society
2. Bebington Residents
3. Bidston Village Conservation Area
4. Bromborough Society
5. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Cheshire
6. CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester
7. Claremont Group
8. Conservation Areas Wirral (CAW)
9. Defend Wirral's Green & Open Spaces
10. Eastham Village Preservation Association
11. Frankby Conservation Area Advisory Committee
12. Friends of Birkenhead Park
13. Greasby Community Association
14. Hamilton Square Conservation Area
15. Heswall Society, Irby Cricket Club
16. Irby, Thurstaston & Pensby Amenity Society (ITPAS)
17. King's Gap Conservation Area
18. Meols Drive Conservation Area
19. Mountwood Residents
20. Oxton Society
21. Saughall Massie Conservation Area
22. Stop Hoylake Golf Resort Action Group
23. Storeton Residents Association
24. The Caldby Society
25. The Ramblers Wirral Group
26. The Wirral Society (CPRE Wirral)
27. Thornton Hough Community Trust Ltd
28. Thornton Hough Conservation Area Society
29. Wirral and Chester Wildlife
30. Wirral Barn Owl Trust
31. Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society

9 Glossary

Terminology	Explanation
Adoption	The decision of the Council to make the final version of a local development document legally operative.
Appeal	An independent review of a Council decision to refuse or fail to determine a planning application.
Case Officer	The Council officer responsible for processing the determination of an individual planning application.
Community Compact Code	A local agreement between the Council and the voluntary and community sector to partnership working.
Conservation Area	An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected.
Consultation Questionnaire	A series of questions intended to indicate the areas where comments are particularly being invited.
Corporate Customer Care Standards	A series of guidelines that set out the overall quality of service that can be expected when dealing with the Council.
Council Resolution	A formal recorded decision of the Council.
Decision Notice	The written notice of the Council's formal decision on an individual planning application.
Deposit	The formal placing of documents in locations where they can be inspected by the public free of charge.
Development Plan	A document that sets out the Council's statutory policies for the use and development of land, which individual planning decisions must normally follow.
Development Team Approach	A multi-disciplinary team of Council officers assembled to advise on all aspects of a major development proposal.
Duty to Co-operate	A legal duty to co-ordinate land use planning activities across local authority boundaries.
Environmental Statement	A written statement that must explain the impact of certain categories of development proposal on the environment.

Terminology	Explanation
Equality Statement	A written statement prepared as part of a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.
Focus Group	A small representative group of people invited to discuss and test the merits of ideas or proposals.
Full Council	The public meeting of all the Local Councillors elected as members of the Council.
General Consultation Body	The types of organisation that should normally be consulted when a local development document is being prepared.
Independent Examination	The process undertaken by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to test the soundness and legal compliance of a proposed local plan.
Independent review panel	A panel of local groups and experts invited to check the quality of the local sustainability appraisal process.
Initial Consultation	The early stages of deciding on the scope and content of an emerging document in consultation with local stakeholders.
Judicial Review	The opportunity to challenge the legality of a planning decision in the High Court.
Legal Agreement	A commitment by a developer to undertake the works necessary to make a development acceptable.
Legal compliance	A test that ensures that all the legal requirements for the preparation of a local plan have been followed and met.
Local Councillor	A community representative elected as a member of the Council as a result of Local Government Elections.
Local Development Document	A document prepared by the Council to guide future development within the Borough as part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough.
Local Development Scheme	A document setting out the timetable for the preparation of local plans and other local development documents.
Local Plan	A local development document that will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area.

Terminology	Explanation
Local Planning Authority	A body responsible for undertaking local planning functions under the Town and Country Planning Acts.
Material Consideration	A consideration related to the development and use of land that can be taken into account when taking planning decisions.
Monitoring Report	A report setting out the Council's progress on the preparation and implementation of local development documents.
National Planning Policy Framework	A document that sets out the Government's national planning policies for the operation of the land use planning system.
Neighbour Notification	A letter sent to the immediate neighbours of land subject to a site-specific development proposal.
Neighbourhood Development Plan	A statutory development plan prepared by a local community and endorsed by a local referendum.
Neighbourhood Development Order	A statutory order prepared by a local community to allow types of development endorsed by a local referendum.
Open Day	An open meeting to which the public can "drop in" to hear a presentation or view consultation materials and where Council officers will be available to answer questions on a one-to-one basis.
Permitted Development	Development that can be undertaken without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission.
Planning Application	The documents and plans that form part of an application for planning permission.
Planning Committee	A group of Local Councillors appointed by the Council to make decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts.
Planning Inspector	A person appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out an independent examination of a local plan or to consider an appeal against the Council's refusal of planning permission or non-determination.
Pre-Application Consultation	Consultation undertaken on a development proposal before a planning application has been submitted.
Press Notice	A notice published in the local press to inform the public of certain categories of development proposal.

Terminology	Explanation
Prior Notification	The requirement to formally notify the Council of the intention to carry out certain types of development.
Public Meeting	A meeting held in public to which the public are invited to hear about planning proposals.
Representation	A comment submitted in writing in response to public consultation.
Scheme of Delegation	The published rules for allowing Council officers to issue decisions on behalf of Planning Committee.
Secretary of State	The person appointed by the Prime Minister to have overall responsibility for operation of the national planning system.
Site Notice	A notice that must be placed in public view at or near the site subject to a development proposal.
Soundness	A test that ensures that a local plan will comply with national planning policies.
Specific Consultation Body	A person or organisation that should normally be consulted when a local development document is being prepared.
Stakeholder	A person or organisation with an interest in the future planning and development of the Borough.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	A statutory document which sets out the way the council will involve the local community, stakeholders and statutory bodies in the preparation and revision of planning policy documents, neighbourhood planning proposals and the determination of planning applications.
Statutory Consultee	A person or body that must be consulted by law.
Statutory Notification	A notice to people or organisations that must be issued by the Council by law.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	A written assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment.
Submission	The process of sending a local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

Terminology	Explanation
Sustainability Appraisal	A written appraisal of the likely social, economic and environmental impacts of a policy or proposal.
Targeted Consultation	Consultation directed towards obtaining a response from specific groups of people.
Tree Preservation Order	An Order issued by the Council to protect an identified tree or group of trees.
Workshop	A meeting of people invited by the Council to obtain their ideas on how to address a particular topic or issue.
Written Representations	The process by which an appeal or independent examination is decided through the exchange of written correspondence.

ANNEX: COVID-19 STATEMENT

1 Background and purpose

1. This Annex presents the Council's approach to conducting community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic, taking into account of the Covid-19 related restrictions on movement and social interaction, to ensure that effective community involvement will continue to take place during the pandemic.
2. During these unprecedented times, the Council will be unable to fulfil some of the commitments set out in its adopted Statement of Community Involvement related to how it consults on a variety of application types and policy documents. This Annex adjusts the Council's approach to community involvement to take account of the Covid-19 related restrictions on movement and social interaction, ensuring that effective community involvement will continue to take place in relation to the production of local development documents⁴² and to support development management decision making.
3. The temporary changes outlined have been made to protect the health of Wirral's communities and follows national advice and guidelines. The changes are set out below.

2 Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on community involvement processes in the Wirral

4. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the Government setting restrictions on people's movement and social interaction in order to control the spread of the coronavirus. Whilst these restrictions remain in place, they impact on the scope and nature of community involvement that can take place, and therefore the ability of the Council to ensure that all of the requirements within the Council's current SCI can be achieved.
5. The Government has issued advice on the importance of progressing local plan production and continuing development management services during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to support the country's economic recovery. Through Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and advice provided by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Government has recommended that where necessary, local planning authorities should review their SCI processes to allow plan making and

⁴² Local Development Documents (LDD) include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan, such as the local plan and neighbourhood plans) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

development management processes to continue. This should be undertaken by making temporary amendments to community involvement processes which allow public consultation to continue, for example, by maximising the use of online, telephone, and written engagement methods, engaging people without access to the internet through representative groups, targeting communities in most affected areas, and liaising with selected nominated individuals who can present the views of the community.

6. To enable planning processes to continue in the Wirral during the Covid-19 pandemic, this Annex presents alternative temporary community involvement measures which will be used while Covid-19 restrictions remain in place.
7. Given the complex and wide-ranging implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, Government guidance on approaches to public involvement is regularly being updated. Where necessary, the Council will update this Annex to include any new information provided by the Government on the approach to community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic, taking into account any amendments to the relevant regulations or legislation. This Annex supersedes the existing Covid-19 related Addendum to the Council's 2014 SCI.
8. The Council will be guided by public health advice provided by the Government and other relevant bodies to determine how the Covid-19 related community involvement measures contained within this document will be applied.

3 Community involvement measures when Covid-19 related restrictions are in place

9. When public health advice results in Covid-19 restrictions impacting on people's movement and social interaction, the Council will undertake the following changes to community involvement processes outlined within the Wirral Statement of Community Involvement.

a) Public consultation events

10. The Covid-19 restrictions on people's movement and social interaction have a significant impact on the ability to undertake public consultation events such as meetings and workshops which involve meeting in person. To support the production and progression of local plans and decision making during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has recommended the use of alternative methods of community involvement which can take place while adhering to restrictions on social interaction.
11. While restrictions on social interaction do not allow community events to take place, the Council will instead seek to engage with the local community

through online meetings and telephone discussions. The Council will liaise with representatives of community groups to determine an appropriate approach to engagement which meets the specific requirements of the community, whilst also adhering to Government restrictions and guidance on social interaction and hygiene.

b) Local plan and neighbourhood plan examination hearings

12. The Covid-19 restrictions will have a significant impact on the ability to undertake local plan and neighbourhood plan related public examination hearings in person. The Government is currently engaging with the Planning Inspectorate on the use of virtual hearings and written submissions which will allow examinations to proceed whilst adhering to Covid-19 related restrictions on movement and social interaction.
13. Where necessary, the Council will update this Annex to include any new information provided by Government on the approach to undertaking examination hearings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

c) Provision of deposit copies of consultation, submission and examination documents

14. The Regulations⁴³ require the Regulation 19 submission version of a Local Plan to be made available for physical inspection at the Council's principal office. In accordance with the Regulations, the Council's SCI proposes to make consultation documents available for inspection at a principal office and at other such places as appropriate during normal office hours, in addition to publishing the consultation documents on the Council's website.
15. In relation to the Covid-19 restrictions the Government has published the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which temporarily remove requirements under Regulation 35 and 36 of the 2012 Regulations⁴⁴ to make copies of documents available for public inspection at a principal office and to provide hard copies of documents.
16. In accordance with the updated Regulations, the Council will not be making consultation hard copy documents available for physical inspection during the period when Covid-19 restrictions apply. The updated Regulations will apply until 31st December 2021. After this period, the Council may consider the implementation of an appointment system for the public inspection of consultation documents where Covid-19 related restrictions still apply.

⁴³ Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012

⁴⁴ Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012

17. All other consultation documents associated with the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, neighbourhood planning documents, and other documents associated with examinations and monitoring reports, will therefore only be available for inspection online on the Council's website during Covid-19 relation restrictions.
18. The Council will provide a copy of relevant documentation by email to members of the public who request one. For those without internet access, the Council will also provide a copy of relevant documentation by post on request, subject to a reasonable charge to cover the costs of providing this service. The Council will also provide a telephone number where members of the public without internet access can make factual enquiries about the documents.

d) Physical inspection of planning applications

19. The physical inspection of planning applications during the Covid-19 pandemic has not been possible due to the closure of Council offices. The Government has introduced temporary changes to the publicity requirements for planning applications within the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2020 which gives local planning authorities greater flexibility in how planning applications are publicised where the normal statutory requirements cannot be achieved as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions.
20. While Covid-19 restrictions remain in place, all planning application documentation will only be made available on the Councils website and will not be available for physical public inspection.

e) Planning committee

21. To ensure that planning related decisions can continue to be made during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has made new Regulations⁴⁵ which enable all planning committees to be undertaken through virtual online meetings. While Covid-19 related restrictions remain in place, the Council will undertake planning committee meetings through virtual online meetings.
22. The public can watch and participate in accordance with the Council's constitution in virtual online committee meetings. For further information please contact planningapplications@wirral.gov.uk

f) Publicity for Planning Applications

23. Planning applications are available on the online planning register and advertised in the local press (when publication occurs) in the normal way.

⁴⁵ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

24. The minimum publicity as set out in planning legislation only requires either a site notice or a neighbour notification for most types of applications. In normal circumstances a site notice is required for certain applications i.e. for development affecting a public right of way; listed building or character of a conservation area; development representing a departure from the development plan; or applications for EIA development accompanied by an environmental statement.
25. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Government have issued regulations that allow the Council to suspend the posting of site notices for these types of applications where it is not reasonably practicable to do so for reasons connected to the effects of Covid-19, including restrictions on movement. This suspension currently runs until 30 June 2021. As such, the Council will continue to install site notices for those developments listed above where it is reasonably practicable to do so. Where it is not practicable to do so, for reasons connected to the effects of Covid-19, the Council will ensure these applications continue to be publicised by way of neighbour notification and advertisement in the local press.

4 Summary of the methods of community involvement which will be undertaken by the Council in the production of local plans and supplementary planning documents

26. The following tables outline how the Council will undertake community involvement while the Covid-19 related restrictions on movement and social interaction remain in place.

Table 1 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Local Plan

Stage	Methods of community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions
<p>Initial Consultation (Regulation 18)</p>	<p>Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees</p> <p>Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific development proposals only</p> <p>Online / telephone meetings</p> <p>Online consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19)</p>	<p>Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> <p>Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific development proposals only</p> <p>Online consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Submission (Regulation 22)</p>	<p>Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p>

Stage	Methods of community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions
	Telephone number for enquiries about the documents
Public Examination (Regulation 24)	Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents Publication of all documents on the Council website
Inspectors Report (Regulation 25)	Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents Publication of all documents on the Council website
Adoption (Regulation 26)	Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents Publication of all documents on the Council website
Monitoring (Regulation 34)	Publication of monitoring reports on the Council website

Table 2 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Supplementary Planning document

Stage	Methods of community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions
Initial Consultation (Regulation 12)	Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific proposals only Online / telephone meetings Online consultation questionnaires, use of social media Publication of all documents on the Council website Provision of copies of documents by email or by post Telephone number for enquiries about the documents

Stage	Methods of community involvement during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions
<p>Draft SPD (Regulation 13)</p>	<p>Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> <p>Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific proposals only</p> <p>Online consultation questionnaires, use of social media</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Adoption (Regulation 14)</p>	<p>Notification letters / emails to statutory consultees and previous respondents</p> <p>Publication of all documents on the Council website</p> <p>Provision of copies of documents by email or by post</p> <p>Telephone number for enquiries about the documents</p>
<p>Monitoring (Regulation 34)</p>	<p>Publication of monitoring reports on the Council website</p>

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**Appendix 2: Wirral Statement of Community Involvement update 2021
Consultation on draft SCI- 8th October and 5th November 2020**

Consultation Statement

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
1	SCI10	Objection	We have had to highlight this Submission as an 'Objection' as there are a few points with which we disagree or consider omitted, but we also make comments.	Noted	No
2	SCI10	Objection	Would it be possible to indicate what items are at variance with National Guidance and Law? 2.13 and elsewhere.	No items are at variance with national law	No
3	SCI10	Objection	Whenever Community Involvement occurs, early feedback needs to be given in form of Notes or Minutes uploaded to the Council Website under a clear heading, with what was heard/discussed, what was learned, is to be used or not and why. 2.16	Subject to the nature of the consultation and the number and complexity of comments received the Council will publish a summary of comments received and the key issues raised as soon as practicable after the end of the consultation and no later than to accompany the next stage of policy document preparation were applicable.	No
4	SCI10	Objection	Not to be "summarised" but included verbatim; and not "may be" but "will be publicised".	It is not always practicable to publish comments received on public consultations in full. The Council is piloting new digital consultation portals which will enable responses to	Yes change 'may be' to 'will be publicised'

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
				public consultation to be provided in full as received subject to redacting any personal details.	
			3.11		
5	SCI10	Objection	The required arrangements for requesting to appear or be heard at the Independent Examination - timing, deadline, etc. - should be in the SCI.	The text will be amended to indicate how a request to attend the examination can be made at the time of submitting representations. It will be for the Inspector to decide who will be invited to appear at the examination.	Yes. Change Para 3.11 to read Anyone who makes representations seeking a change to the proposed submission draft Local Plan within the appropriate deadline will, at the time of submitting their representation, be given the opportunity to request to appear and be heard by the person appointed to carry out the independent examination of the local plan. The decision as to who will be invited to appear at the Examination hearing sessions will be

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					made by the Inspector. Also include new footnote in para 3.11 to state 'The Representation Form will include an opportunity to request to attend the oral part of the examination'
			3.13		
6	SCI10	Objection	In addition to the name of the Planning Inspector, their Contact Details should be provided.	All contact with the Inspector during the Local Plan Examination is through the Programme Officer. Contact details for the Inspector will therefore not be provided.	Yes insert at Para 3.13 'The Programme Officer will be the contact point for the Inspector'
			3.17 and 3.22		
7	SCI10	Objection	Why are these periods different (6 weeks and 3 months) and especially the Local Plan one being shorter?	The 6 week period for legal challenge relates to Local Plans and is set out in Primary Legislation. The 3 month period relates to Supplementary Planning Documents and is set out in secondary legislation.	No
8	SCI10	Objection	Are these periods for notice of intention or to lodge the entire Judicial Review Case?	CLAIM FORM The claim form must be submitted within the statutory time limit. Guidance on making a claim is	No

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				to file a Claim Form that meets the requirements set out in Ministry of Justice Court Procedure Rules Part 54. The primary requirement is to start the claim promptly within three months from the date of the decision challenged.	
			3.20		
9	SCI10	Objection	There has been separately the (unacceptable) suggestion that the Council would do away with Public Meetings where possible/legal. This would be anti-democratic as the 'Drop-in' events just present the Council's side of proposals whereas Public Meetings (in addition) provide the opportunity for airing and discussing other views, and questioning officers.	The SCI sets out the minimum requirements for undertaking consultation on planning policy documents and planning applications. Traditional public meetings could be arranged if the Council considered they were appropriate. However, not everyone is comfortable speaking at a public meeting. Walk in events where members of the public can have the opportunity to view information informally and inclusively and ask questions one-to-one directly to planning officers, have also been found to be the most appreciated and productive form of public engagement.	Yes add at the end of para 3.8 in the SCI saying "Traditional public meetings could also be arranged if the Council considered they were appropriate"
			Table 1.		
10	SCI10	Objection	Public Meetings should be included.	See Response to 9 above	

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11	SCI10	Objection	Public Examination - include Contact Detail.	Noted thank you. Reference will be made to the contact details for the Programme Officer who will be the point of contact for the Inspector being made available on the Local Plan Examination web pages.	Yes Add to Public Examination section of Table 1: 'The name of the Inspector and Programme Officer will be made available on the Local Plan Examination web pages. The Programme Officer's contact details will also be provided as the point of contact for the Inspector.'
12	SCI10	Objection	Inspector's Report - also at Principal Office	Noted thank you	Yes Add Inspectors Report Section of Table 1: 'To be available for inspection at a principal office'
			Table 2.		
13	SCI10	Objection	Ditto Table 1.	See Response to 9 above regarding public meetings. Table 2 deals with Supplementary Planning Documents and the comments on Table 1 are not relevant.	No
			3.25		

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14	SCI10	Objection	Publishing Surveys, Studies and Assessments arising from one LP Stage along with the Documentation of the following Stage (as was done with the 2018DOR Consultation Responses, immediately before the Reg18 'Issues & Options' Consultation Documentation was published) may be convenient for the Council but it is unsatisfactory for the Public and other organisations who can be overwhelmed with the sheer weight of documentation, issues and Questions (running into >1,000 pages).	The Council will endeavour to publish studies, assessments etc in advance of the next appropriate stage in the Plan Making process where possible but in most cases the studies are required to support decision making at the next stage in response to previous comments received and cannot be published before that decision is taken by Members. Advance publication may also not always be possible if it means that the plan preparation programme would be unreasonably extended. The Council will normally consider extending consultation periods where there is significant supporting documentation, where the plan preparation process allows.	No
15	SCI10	Objection	As is being done between the ongoing Reg18 and Reg19, such Surveys, Studies and Assessments should be published and consulted upon as soon as each set is ready. The list of such Surveys, Studies and Assessments should be published with anticipated consultation dates as soon as they are started. (A list for the current LP is awaited but promised).	See response to 14.	No

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16	SCI10	Objection	AND, (as agreed between WGSA and the Council) the Council must keep a Local Plan Archive online and clearly labelled and accessible of all superseded and otherwise not-to-be-included-going-forward documents.	A local Plan Policy Archive has been set up on the Council's website.	No
			Table 3.		
17	SCI10	Objection	Include Local Papers notifications to each section.	This is no longer a statutory requirement in all cases. and local newspapers are becoming a less effective form of notification as readerships reduce. For example, the Wirral Globe is increasingly moving online and the Liverpool Echo is too sparsely read in Wirral. The Council will explore the establishment of an online notification system for Planning related matters where people could register their interest to be notified automatically when new items appear. Previous respondents and neighbours to site-specific proposals are already automatically notified as each new stage is reached.	No
			Table 4.		
18	SCI10	Objection	Include Local Papers notifications to sections and at Principal Office.	See response to 17 above re Newspaper notifications	Yes

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					Add where appropriate in Table 4: 'To be available for inspection at a principal office'
19	SCI10	Objection	In last box, should "Making Neighbourhood Plan" be "Making Neighbourhood Order"?	Yes thank you	Yes amend text in final row of Table 4 to read 'Making Neighbourhood Plan Order'
20	SCI10	Objection	5.2 Who is consulted about CIL Charging Schedule?	Proposals will be published for public comment in the normal way. All registered contacts and statutory bodies would be consulted. Extra text could however be included in the SCI for the avoidance of doubt.	Yes amend table 5 to read 'Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory consultees'
21	SCI10	Objection	5.4 and 5.7 "Anyone that" should read "Anyone who" – "that" refers to things.	Noted thank you	Yes change Paras 5.4 and 5.7 'Anyone that' to 'Any one who'
22	SCI10	Objection	Table 5. Include Local Papers notifications to each section.	See response to 17 and 18 above	No

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23	SCI10	Objection	6.13 “or” to read “and/or”.		Yes change para 6.13 to read ‘The Council will specify the time and date by which comments must be received, and the postal and/ or email address to which they must be sent.’
24	SCI10	Objection	7.7 In view of the significance of Green Belt on Wirral to its attraction and both economic and social value, it would be good and seem proportionate for Applications involving Green Belt to be highlighted as such to Ward Councillors and notified to relevant community groups. This used to occur but is now not the practice.	Applications that are departures from the adopted Development Plan are subject to additional notification and decision making procedures. All Ward Councillors are notified by Email Alert of all new (valid) applications received in their Ward. Departures are also publicised by Press Notice. Interested third parties can register with the web page and can search for planning applications by a number of fields (including Ward) and can track the progress of such applications. <u>This allows for a significant element of self-service.</u> Statutory consultees are notified	No
25	SCI10	Objection	Table 7. The information seems to differ from the national Statutory	The information set out in Table 7 is correct	No

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			Periods of Notice, which also vary with the type and scale of the development and whether an Environmental Assessment (and/or others) is required.		
26	SCI10	Objection	7.11 It would be an improvement (even if not statutorily necessary) for those provided with Neighbour Notices and organisations who are registered for Notification to be alerted to there being any amendments to an application added to the Council Planning Webpages – “non material minor amendments” is a subjective term/judgement which should be the subject of timely scrutiny.	Interested third parties can register with the web site and this allows them to track changes to planning applications and keep informed of applications. Non-material amendment applications are not subject to publicity and by definition relate to proposals that do not materially alter an earlier planning approval.	No
27	SCI10	Objection	7.23 Typo: should read “material” and not “material” in third line.	Noted thank you	Yes Correct Typo
28	SCI10	Objection	7.28 The grounds given for any Refusal should be comprehensive and include any valid ones provided by Objectors – the reason for stressing this is to assist the Council’s Case at any Appeal and to avoid comments made from time to time by Appeal Inspectors to the effect that points expressed by Objectors had been noted (and had value) but were not taken into	Decisions must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise. The weight to be afforded to individual objections is for the decision-maker to take into account. Refusals will take account of Development Plan policies and material considerations but the Decision is the LPA's (not objectors)	No

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			account in the decision-making process as they did not form part of the council's case.	so the Decision would not reference specifically those objections listed by objectors (though they will be taken into account in the decision where they are based on material planning considerations)	
29	SCI10	Objection	7.39 Typo: remove repeated "by" after bullet points as "by:" already precedes them.	Noted thank you	Yes correct typos
30	SCI10	Objection	Page 39 - General Consultation Bodies Table:		
31	SCI10	Objection	Environmental Groups & Societies - Typo: "Wirral Greenspace Alliance" should read "Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA)".	Noted	Yes change title of WGSA as requested.
32	SCI10	Objection	National Bodies & Agencies – CPRE should be featured (here or elsewhere).	Noted	Yes CPRE added
33	SCI10	Objection	Heritage & History Societies – Wirral Archaeology should be added		Yes Wirral Archaeology added
34	SCI10	Objection	Should other Groups in WGSA be mentioned by Name?	Yes -Noted	Yes insert end note with list of Alliance members
35	SCI10	Objection	Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) is a consortium of 31 local groups, including:		

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		1. Barnston Village Conservation Society		
		2. Bebington Residents		
		3. Bidston Village Conservation Area		
		4. Bromborough Society		
		5. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Cheshire		
		6. CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester		
		7. Claremont Group		
		8. Conservation Areas Wirral (CAW)		
		9. Defend Wirral's Green & Open Spaces		
		10. Eastham Village Preservation Association		
		11. Frankby Conservation Area Advisory Committee		
		12. Friends of Birkenhead Park		
		13. Greasby Community Association		
		14. Hamilton Square Conservation Area		
		15. Heswall Society, Irby Cricket Club		
		16. Irby, Thurstaston & Pensby Amenity Society (ITPAS)		
		17. King's Gap Conservation Area		

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			18. Meols Drive Conservation Area		
			19. Mountwood Residents		
			20. Oxton Society		
			21. Saughall Massie Conservation Area		
			22. Stop Hoylake Golf Resort Action Group		
			23. Storeton Residents Association		
			24. The Caldy Society		
			25. The Ramblers Wirral Group		
			26. The Wirral Society (CPRE Wirral)		
			27. Thornton Hough Community Trust Ltd		
			28. Thornton Hough Conservation Area Society		
			29. Wirral and Chester Wildlife		
			30. Wirral Barn Owl Trust		
			31. Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society		
			Page 40 - General Consultation Bodies Table:		
36	SCI10	Objection	Local Businesses – none shown	Noted	Yes add 'Registered Local Business consultees and

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
					Wirral Chamber of Commerce'
			Glossary		
37	SCI10	Objection	Cabinet – term not in use any longer.	Noted thank you	Yes delete 'Cabinet'
38	SCI10	Objection	Constituency Committee – do these still exist?	Noted thank you	Yes delete 'Constituency Committee'
39	SCI10	Objection	Planning Inspector – Explanation – add at end, "or non-determination"	Noted	Yes add 'or non-determination'
40	SCI10	Objection	Glossary Terms not listed include: SCI, Equality, Privacy, etc.	Noted	Yes add description of SCI and Equality Statement
41			Page 51 – Table 1 – Typo: "Inspectors Report" should read "Inspector's Report".		
42	SCI18	Comment	This submission relates to the entire document entitled 'Wirral Council Draft Updated Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI). In line with the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019). As a local community organisation, Upton Village Community Group wishes to be involved with the planning process of Wirral Borough Council through their commitment to continuous community involvement.	Noted.	Yes. Upton Village Community Group added to Local Civic Societies.

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			<p>As a Community group we have formulated an Environmental Strategy for Upton Village and the surrounding area (copy available on request). As with everything else this has been impacted by Covid-19 and whilst it has been adopted by our Committee it has yet to be discussed with the wider area. We note that under the SCI the Council will provide advice and guidance to our group for any neighbourhood plan that we may undertake.</p> <p>I understand that you will be maintaining a database of contacts who wish to be involved or consulted on the preparation of local development documents. Would you please add my contact details to the database in question.</p> <p>Please contact me if you require any further information in order to register my wish to be involved in future planning decisions, neighbourhood planning and the Local Plan process.</p>		
43	SCI17	Comment	<p>4.14 If at least 50% of those voting are in favour ...</p>	The threshold is set by National legislation	No

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			The threshold needs to be higher than this, since the Plans will have considerable significance for the area. Neighbourhood Plans can and have been dominated by a small caucus of individuals		
44	SCI17	Comment	7.19 Weekly lists of planning applications requiring a Press notice. Your statement is that these will be published in the local press. A local press no longer exists and you will have to use other media.	Weekly/Monthly Lists can be searched via the planning applications pages on the web https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=weeklyList	No
45	SCI17	Comment	9 Glossary Terminology The terminology contains "Cabinet", a system which is now thankfully defunct.	Noted	Yes – see 37 above
46	SCI17	Comment	ANNEX COVID-19 STATEMENT Section 3 Public information and involvement is paramount. Until secure and widespread systems have been created to replace public hearings and meetings, no significant planning decisions with high impact on communities should be made by the Council.	The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 enables decisions to be made by virtual meetings of the Council and its Committees and sets out how virtual meetings are to be conducted. All decisions of the Council will be	No

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				made in accordance with this legislation during the pandemic.	
47	SCI16	Comment	Please do not wait to publish major evidence studies alongside the Local Plan itself. e.g. please can the Green Infrastructure Study and Environmental Capacity Study be published when the final version has been received and approved by WBC. These are major documents taking time to study. Volunteers such as ourselves have limited time, having to comment alongside our usual jobs/ caring responsibilities/ voluntary work for the community groups we represent. It is really important that large amounts of background information do not come out at the same time as the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation	This is not always possible, as approval by the Council will not normally take place until the study has been reported to Members, which is normally at the next major stage in the process.	See response to 14 above
48	SCI16	Comment	7.7 Please make sure the statement in this paragraph works in practice. We are usually informed of applications adjacent to or affecting a SSSI, Local Wildlife site (SBI), Local Nature Reserve and some where protected species are an issue. However, occasionally applications slip through that and we only find out through other means.	Statutory consultees are consulted. Non-statutory consultees are identified by individual case officers having regards to the development proposed. Interested third parties have ways available to them via the planning search on the web to identify, keep track of and respond to applications they are interested in	No

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			This shortens the time available for the relevant volunteer to respond, leading to last-minute panics. The Wirral & Cheshire Badger Group seems to have fallen off the contacts list and to have failed to get back on. This may require a little work with the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership to identify which LWS have important badger interest, where advice from the Badger Group would be important to officers and members	should they wish. This allows for a significant element of self-service.	
49	SCI16	Comment	Annex: Covid-19 statement. We recognise the current difficulties, but wider consultation methods need to be re-instated as soon as possible. Around 10% of Wirral people are not on internet or rely on mobile phones, which have screens too small to show planning maps and designs. The libraries are not open for people to look at the Internet there. So many people are currently effectively being excluded from planning matters. If the current restrictions are still in force when the Local Plan Regulation 19 comes out in February 2021, then there must be other methods developed to use.	Noted. The Council will return to normal consultation methods as soon practicable and when advised by Government and our public health team. If Covid restrictions are still in place when the Council publishes the Local Plan for consultation at Regulation 19 efforts will be made to ensure that there are opportunities for people to get access to the web through Council owned facilities such as Libraries and Leisure Centres.	No

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			This could include finding ways to re-open library computer suites. The Wirral Globe has shrunk in delivery since the pandemic started (I have not had one delivered since March) and some areas have never had it delivered e.g. Mill Park estate, Eastham. So in much of Eastham it is only available to people who are able and want to buy it		
50	SCI15	Comment	All sections and paragraph numbers. This comments process requires a great deal of quite difficult reading comparing the Statement of Community Involvement First Revision from 2014 with the new draft Statement of Community Involvement. Documents of 35 and 53 pages respectively. Could you not have provided a summary of the differences rather like one gets when a bank changes terms and conditions. We could then have read more on specific paragraphs that were of interest.	Noted. The matters to be included in the Statement of Community Involvement have changed since 2014. We have needed to include additional information on Covid arrangements as an Annex as well as providing new information on Neighbourhood Planning. This has led to an unavoidable increase in the length of the document. We have tried to make the document format as clear as possible, so that the new SCI can be read properly as a whole.	No
51	SCI12	Comment	4.12 Referendum on neighbourhood plan. I like this idea.	Comment Noted	No

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52	SC9	Comment	The document is very well put together and is clear and precise. I did not realize that there was so many different stages to planning applications. I now understand that the residents have a greater say in what goes on than I previously thought.	Comments noted	No
53	SC6	Comment	Sections 3, 6 and 7 - the council has set no timescales for its own consultation arrangements. The document is simply a summary of statutory timescales for development proposals and other statutory consultation processes. The SCI should set out clearly how its running of consultation events and processes comply with the Gunning Principles, i.e.: that consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; that the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response; that adequate time is given for consideration and response; and	The SCI sets out the minimum consultation that the Council that will undertake at different stages of policy making including on the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning documents and in the determination of planning applications. The Regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan is the early stage of plan making, when the proposals are still at a formative stage and the Council undertook extensive public consultation on emerging development options and on the issues and options document including public meetings, walk in events, and face-to-face and online workshops. The proposals were widely commented on. The comments received have been taken into account in preparing the next stage of the Local Plan and the	No

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			that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision. Most of the events organised by the council for the Local Plan have been advertised with a ridiculously short timescale and a very limited number of delegates. Much more detail and effort is required if the council is to demonstrate that consultation not only meets statutory requirements but is otherwise fair and worthwhile.	<p>Council's responses will be set out in a statutory report of consultation to be published at the Regulation 19 stage, when further comments will be invited before the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>The Council actively and strongly encourages landowners and developers to undertake pre-application community consultation, especially for large, complex or controversial proposals and for proposals that will be contrary to the Development Plan.</p>	
54	SCI5	Support		Support Noted	
55	SCI3	Support		Support Noted	
56	SCI2	Comment	For this Statement to have any meaning and for it to be believed and accepted by the community, our comments must be accepted. A tick box consultation is insufficient and will generate a significant loss of trust and a diminished desire to be involved in the future.	Comments noted. Comments can however only be taken into account where they clearly relate to planning matters and within the constraints of national legislation, policy and guidance.	No
57	SCI20	Comment	3.24 and 3.25. All evidence surveys to be published in local libraries. Published in local newspapers. Sign posted in areas where surveys and studies are undertaken. Complete	Examples of the types of bodies that will be consulted is already set out in the main body of the SCI. All relevant documents will be able to be inspected online and at a principal	No see responses to 17 and 49

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			clarity must be guaranteed. Also include outside agencies in the surveys such as emergency services, environmental groups, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England etc,	office, subject to any necessary Covid restrictions.	
58	SCI20	Comment	3.28 3.29 and 3.30. Any communications with public must not have multiple choice answers which are "leading answers" such as the recent brochures for the Local Plan.	The Council does not agree that the questionnaires used at the recent Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation were 'leading', as they were designed to help people respond as fully as possible. The questionnaire always provided for 'other' to be chosen and for additional comments to be submitted and attached.	No
59	SCI20	Comment	7.2 and 7.3. It is not enough to issue a simple site notice by a developer for a planning application, especially if this involves building on GREENBELT. Community consultation is paramount. In ALL cases there should be FULL community involvement. This could include notices posted through the doors of every resident in the ward. Planning notices should also be published in libraries and community centres. Notices should also be extended to local interested groups	The Council's neighbour notifications for planning applications will be undertaken to meet statutory requirements. The cost of additional publicity involving delivery of notices to all households within a surrounding Electoral Ward would be prohibitive and would not focus on the people most likely to be immediately affected. The Council will explore the publication of planning notices online with an opportunity to receive	Yes Para 8.4 amended to state: <i>Requests to be added to the contacts database for planning applications and development management decisions should be directed to the Technical Support Unit:</i> <i>planningapplications@wirral.gov.uk. We will then contact you to discuss the type of</i>

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			such as the Greasby Greenbelt Action Group.	automatic notification, where requested.	<i>applications and the best way that we can assist you in engaging with the planning application process.</i>
60	SCI20	Comment	As previously stated, planning decisions should NEVER be made by planning officers alone. There should be community involvement even at the committee stage.	<p>The procedures for decision making are set out in the Council's Constitution. It is nationally accepted good practice for all but the most complex or controversial applications to be delegated to specialist professional Officers, to allow decisions to be taken in an efficient and timely manner taking account of the representations received from the community.</p> <p>Members of the public may request to speak at planning committee meetings, subject to the criteria set out in the SCI</p>	No
61	SCI20	Comment	7.37 and table 8. Issues surrounding this section are that ALL proposed developments should be subject to community involvement. This is important for transparency. Infrastructure issues should be highlighted, discussed and agreed by consultation with the public. Council documents are too complex and too difficult to read. These	All planning applications are subject to a statutory consultation period before they can be determined. Non-statutory pre application consultation by developers is not a legal requirement but is strongly encouraged in the SCI. Council documents are written as clearly as possible but often have to be written	No

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			documents have to be simplified and determined to the general public as acceptable to understand, even if this means public consultation.	in a certain way to meet statutory requirements.	
62	SCI13 SCI35 SC30 SC31 SCI32	Objection	<p>1 The local planning authority must review an SCI at least every 5 years to reflect any local or national legislative changes, and to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. This Statement therefore replaces the previous SCI published by the Council in 2014</p> <p>This update is a year late. The production of the new 15 year local plan is a major local legislative change. The SCI update should have been actioned prior to the local plan consultation in 2020.</p> <p>The opportunity for the community to make changes to the involvement statement prior to the new local plan consultation has been missed due to WBC,s failure to carry this review in 2019 .</p>	The Council has recognised the need to update the SCI, which has been brought forward as soon as practicable. The most recent consultation under Regulation 18 met and exceeded the previous 2014 SCI, which still met all the relevant statutory requirements for Local Plans, following previous consultation with the local community.	No
63	SCI13 SCI35 SC30	Objection	<p>2 The overall objective of the Council will be to work towards achieving consensus, wherever</p>	The Council does not accept that the delay in updating the SCI represented a lack of interest in community involvement. The key changes set out	No

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
	SC31 SCI32		<p>possible, through continuous community involvement.</p> <p>The failure to review the SCI in 2019 shows WBC's lack of interest in community involvement. The Council do not work towards a consensus of opinion as many planning issues and the local plan consultations can confirm.</p> <p>In the 2018 local plan consultation 3000 people responded almost unanimously stating no greenbelt was to be released, yet in the 2020 local plan documentation over 6000 homes were identified on greenbelt.</p> <p>It does not matter what statement of community involvement is in place if WBC do not use it and act on the input from the community</p> <p>Unfortunately the statements value is not recognised by WBC. The views of the citizens are ignored.</p>	<p>in the new SCI relate to adoption of a more modern and effective use of web-based methods, to further supplement traditional accepted approaches, in line with those successfully adopted during the most recent Regulation 18 consultation in early 2020. Previous comments have been taken into account but can only be considered within the terms of national legislation, policy and guidance.</p>	
64	SCI13 SCI35 SC30 SC31 SCI32	Objection	<p>3. Local plan</p> <p>The Council must take account of any representation made in response to invitations to comment during these early stages.</p>	<p>The timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is limited by the strict programme expected by the Government. The regulations do not require a full draft plan to be prepared</p>	No

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			<p>The community have only one opportunity to comment on the local plan. This is at the regulation 18 stage</p> <p>The plan was not sufficiently developed by WBC for the community to comment accurately at the time of the consultation. This needs to be changed in the SCI so that the community can comment on the draft plan not a raft of options and possible configurations for a plan.</p> <p>The community will not see the draft plan until councillors have voted on it to be issued for submission to the government.</p> <p>The community therefore has no involvement in the final draft plan under this system.</p> <p>A more detailed draft plan should be the basis of the regulation 18 consultation for true community involvement.</p> <p>The later stages of the local plan process are more restricted by national legislation. There is a minimum statutory six-week period for representations to be received on the soundness or legal</p>	<p>at Regulation 18, when the final plan is still being developed.</p> <p>The Council is satisfied that the comprehensive Issues and Options document, which also followed earlier stages of detailed consultation, set out the most realistic options that were then available, as required by national legislation, as well as the Council's preferred approach for meeting housing and employment needs in the Borough during the plan period. The large number of comments received will be taken into account in the preparation of the Regulation 19 Plan.</p> <p>The public will still have the opportunity at Regulation 19 to submit further representations based on the soundness and legal compliance of the proposals, including those relating to particular sites and locations and the final wording of policies. They will still be able to request as part of their formal representations at Regulation 19 to appear at the Examination and to have their representations considered</p>	

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			<p>compliance of the proposed submission draft local plan Regulation 19 the publication of WBC draft plan offers no community involvement. This is a 6 week public notice not a consultation. The community are not in a position to challenge the legal compliance or soundness of the plan.</p> <p>Indeed we expect WBC to provide a legally compliant and sound plan but we also expect that plan to reflect the views of the community from the regulation 18 consultation</p> <p>Under this system we cannot challenge WBC if our views on locations for new building have not been incorporated in the plan at this stage.</p> <p>The draft plan should be consulted on by the community before Councillors vote and before it is submitted to the government for approval.</p> <p>Anyone who makes representations seeking a change to the proposed submission draft local plan within the appropriate deadline must, if they so request, be given the opportunity to appear and be heard</p>	<p>by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.</p>	

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			<p>by the person appointed to carry out the independent examination of the local plan.</p> <p>The Covid SCI addendum will deny the community this procedure because WBC has brought forward the publication of the local plan to February.</p> <p>WBC should wait until Covid is resolved and complete all the necessary outstanding reports from the evidence base and allow the procedure to be completed in the proper manner with full community involvement.</p>		
65	SCI13 SCI35 SC30 SC31 SCI32	Objection	<p>4 Sustainability Appraisals</p> <p>3.23 The Council will consult on the scope and content of a sustainability appraisal with statutory consultees and will invite public comments on the appraisal to be submitted at each stage in the plan or document making process.</p> <p>The sustainability appraisals for specific greenbelt sites have not been published. They may not have even been carried out. The sustainability reports in the consultation document all stated</p>	<p>The options set out in the Regulation 18 issues and options report were subject to an initial sustainability appraisal and were accompanied by a comprehensive series of evidence base studies and assessments, some of which are still ongoing. It would not have been appropriate to undertake further site-specific assessments when they were not finalised confirmed proposals. Regulation 18 consultation allowed people to make any relevant site-specific comments. The ability to</p>	No

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
			<p>specific sites reports were required prior to any greenbelt site being included in the final plan.</p> <p>The community were therefore not able to comment during the consultation.</p> <p>WBC is therefore failing to meet its Statement of Community involvement.</p>	comment on any final proposals and assessments will be provided at the Regulation 19 consultation.	
66	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	<p>5 Evidence Base</p> <p>3.24The Council will undertake or commission specialist technical surveys, studies or assessments to inform the content of emerging local development documents, to meet national policy requirements or to respond to issues raised in response to public consultation on emerging proposals.</p> <p>3.25 The results of the surveys, studies or assessments used in the preparation of a local development document will be published for public comment at the next appropriate stage in the plan making process.</p> <p>The evidence base reports issued with the consultation document were incomplete out of date, unco-</p>	<p>The preparation of a Local Plan is a continuous, iterative and rolling process which develops in detail over time. It is often not practicable for all the necessary detailed information to be available at an early stage. The Council has provided all the information that was available at the time of publication for public comment and had indicated where additional studies were still to be carried out. The Council will publish site specific technical studies related to potential Green Belt sites if required. The Council's preferred option, which was clearly set out in the issues and options document is to seek to meet its housing and employment needs within existing urban areas.</p>	No

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			<p>ordinated, inaccurate and in some cases just completely incorrect. (I must add that I read every report. It took six very boring weeks. This statement is based on fact).</p> <p>It was clear that even though it was poor that the evidence base had not been consulted in selecting proposed greenbelt sites.</p> <p>The most critical reports, sustainability, habitats , agricultural, biodiversity, flooding and infrastructure development reports all stated that further investigations were required and site specific reports were required for any greenbelt site before its inclusion in the plan.</p> <p>We have not seen these completed documents and the community is not going to be invited to comment prior to the final draft plan.</p> <p>WBC is therefore failing to meet the requirements of the Statement of Community involvement.</p>		
67	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31	Objection	<p>6 Table 1 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Local Plan</p> <p>Notification letters / emails to registered contacts and statutory</p>	The Council considers that its commitment in the SCI to notify all neighbours of sites proposed for allocation for development in the Local Plan is sufficient to ensure that	No

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	SCI32		<p>consultees Neighbour notification letters / emails for site specific development proposals only</p> <p>The 15 year local plan will affect all Wirral residents a. Limiting communications for the plan to registered contacts and neighbours to potential developments is totally inadequate considering the importance of a new local plan</p> <p>All Wirral residents should have been notified by post / email and newspaper notice. At the very least every householder responsible for paying community charges tax bill should have been notified by WBC. However as WBC failed to hold this consultation on community involvement in 2019 prior to the local plan consultation at regulation 18 it is now too late to implement this change. WBC has failed to meet the statutory timetable and consequently failed its community.</p> <p>Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19)</p> <p>WBC do however have the opportunity to newspaper publish and contact every community charge paying householder when</p>	<p>the households and owners most affected by such proposals are made aware and have the opportunity to comment.</p>	

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			the final draft submission is issued in February 2021		
68	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	<p>7 Referendums for neighbourhood plans and orders</p> <p>If at least 50 per cent of those voting in the referendum are in favour of the proposals, or where a business referendum is held, a majority vote in favour in both referendums, the neighbourhood development plan or order will be made and in the case of a neighbourhood development plan will come into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area.</p> <p>Referendums are used to decide planning proposals where local neighbourhood plans are formed. I suggest this is used for all planning proposals.</p> <p>For specific sites all local residents notified by WBC should carry a vote. The majority vote of the community should decide.</p> <p>Why should a small number of temporary people on a WBC planning committee decide on ordinary hard working people's permanent fate?</p>	The Council's constitution and decision-making processes are based on representative democracy. The use of referendums are only provided for in relation to the preparation of neighbourhood planning proposals. Legislation does not currently allow for referendums for Local Plan or planning application matters.	No

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69	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	<p>8 The major impact of the new planning laws on this document. The timing by WBC of this SCI consultation has rendered it too late to effect the local plan but it is also too early for the proposed new planning laws.</p> <p>Major parts of the statement of community involvement will become redundant or inadequate and need revising completely in 2021 when new laws are introduced. See examples below.</p> <p>Permitted development requiring prior notification to the planning authority (e.g. telecommunications) Site Notice posted by the developer</p> <p>The size and scale of permitted developments is changing, e.g. 2 storey extensions on top of existing buildings .Neighbours and local community must be notified by WBC to have some input on the appearance, placement and orientation of the development.</p> <p>Major development” is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For residential development, 10 or more dwellings or if the number of dwellings is not known, where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more; 	<p>The national planning system is always subject to continuous change.</p> <p>The revised SCI will still be applicable to the next stages of the preparation of the current Local Plan, which is expected to be complete by the time any new legislation is brought into force.</p> <p>The Council agrees that the SCI will need to be updated if the Government legislate to introduce the proposals set out in the recent White Paper Planning for the Future.</p>	No

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			<p>Under the new laws major Development will be defined as 150 or more dwellings or a site area of up to 3 hectares.</p> <p>The sites with up to 3 hectares will have automatic outline planning permission for up to 149 homes.</p> <p>WBC needs to develop a new robust detailed plan to involve the community in schemes that will have large impacts in local areas.</p>		
70	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	<p>Pre-Application Procedures Pre-Application Community Involvement</p> <p>7.32 The Council strongly encourages landowners and developers to undertake pre-application community consultation, especially for large, complex or controversial proposals and for proposals that will be contrary to the Development Plan. 7.33 The advantages of early engagement with the local community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allowing proposals to be explained before minds are made up on the basis of what can often be inaccurate second-hand information; • assistance in gauging community 	The Council agrees that the SCI will need to be updated if the Government legislate to introduce the proposals set out in the recent White Paper Planning for the Future but the current SCI will remain relevant while the existing system remains in place.	No

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document						
			<p>support and obtaining accurate local information; • clarification of the issues at debate, providing greater certainty and transparency, saving time later in the decision-making process; and STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 35 •</p> <p>The new law raises the thresholds of when developers and landowners have to consider pre-application for planning procedures. Also any land designated as a growth area will have automatic outline planning permission for houses, schools and hospitals.</p> <p>Community involvement for larger schemes is being removed from the community unless the statement is revised to state it that current thresholds will remain under new laws.</p> <p>Table 8 – Thresholds for Pre-Application Community Involvement</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Proposal</th> <th>Threshold</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Industrial and commercial development, including retail New build and change of use in or adjacent to a Primarily Residential Area</td> <td>1,500 square metres or above</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residential development</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type of Proposal	Threshold	Industrial and commercial development, including retail New build and change of use in or adjacent to a Primarily Residential Area	1,500 square metres or above	Residential development	100		
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	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
			<p> dwellings or sites of 3.0 hectares or above Development affecting a Conservation Area or Listed Building Proposals for 10 or more dwellings or on sites of 0.5 hectares or above Other proposals of 1,000 square metres or above or on sites of 1.0 hectare or above Major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines or overhead power lines All proposals New educational or institutional proposals All proposals for new sites Extensions of 1,000 square metres or above Mineral extraction proposals All proposals Waste processing All proposals All these thresholds are being raised under the new planning laws granting automatic outline planning permissions for houses schools and hospitals. The document will be out of date in a few months' time. The new planning laws are supposed to introduce greater community input into the type of building we see built but WBC's proposed updated community involvement document ignores the new laws completely. </p>		

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
			WBC needs to update the statement of community involvement to deal with the new laws when they are published not before.		
71	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	<p>9. Planning decisions</p> <p>The Council allows the Committee to be addressed by members of the public when a petition with the required number of signatories has been received before noon on the Monday prior to the Committee meeting. A representative of the petitioners will then be allowed to address the Committee for five minutes. In the event that more than one petition has been received, the allotted time may be divided between the petitioners or one person may present the views of all petitioners. A representative of objectors may address the Committee only if the application is before the Committee on the basis of there being 15 or more objections received from different households within the consultation period.</p> <p>WBC website e-petition rules state that it does not accept or consider any petitions that are being dealt</p>	The SCI reflects the current arrangements for decisions to be taken by the Planning Committee under the Council's constitution, which provides for petitions on planning proposals to be taken into account.	No

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			<p>with under the normal planning procedures or consultations. In addition there are two types of petition under a hundred or over 3000 people. These restrictions need removing and making clear that petitions are welcome on planning matters. As a note the planning committee that rejected the opposition to the proposed Lidl in Prenton cited the lack of a petition by the community for approving the proposal. The fact that 213 people from the local community objected through the planning channel counted for nothing.</p>		
72	SCI13 SCI35 SCI30 SCI31 SCI32	Objection	10 Consultation bodies and consultees 8.1 Examples of the type of bodies and organisations that are currently consulted regarding the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents are illustrated in the lists below: Specific Consultation Bodies ³⁵ Adjoining Local Planning Authorities* Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Sefton Council Liverpool	<p>This is a representation on the content of the emerging Local Plan and is not directly relevant to the SCI consultation.</p> <p>No specific green belt site is mentioned nor specific technical study so no further comment is appropriate.</p>	No

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
			<p>City Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Flintshire County Council Other Public Bodies and Agencies Environment Agency* Highways England Homes England* Historic England* Marine Management Organisation* Natural England* Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner Wirral NHS Clinical Commissioning Group* Network Rail Adjacent Parish Councils Service Undertakers Electricity Companies Gas Companies Telecommunications Companies Water Undertakers Sewerage Undertakers</p> <p>The evidence base reports provided by the consultees listed above were by their own admission incomplete. They provided what they had available.</p> <p>It is clear that WBC did not use the reports to develop the local plan. An inspection of the reports against any specific green belt site in option 2a will prove it should not have been selected if the advice in the consultee's reports had been followed.</p>		

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73	SCI7	Comment	<p>Page 7 Equality and Diversity. 2.11. Corporate Customer Care Standards does not load - can't access document</p> <p>2.12. This document fails the plain English test and uses unnecessary jargon. At 53 pages it is a lengthy and complicated document. Where is the consultation questionnaire?</p>	<p>We are unsure why the corporate customer care standards link did not open. We have checked the link and it appears to work.</p> <p>There was no questionnaire related to this consultation but a response form which could be completed through the Council's Planning Consultation Portal was provided.</p>	No
74	SCI7	Comment	<p>Page 14 Local Plan Reg 18,19, 22, 24, 26, 34.</p> <p>A local plan has an effect on the whole Borough. Every household/business requires to be notified of the stage reached and how they can access the documents published by the Council. Whether they wish to become involved can only be ascertained after they have received this initial information. The present community involvement is too narrow which leads to a lack of community response. The Reg 18 document lacked plain English, was far too lengthy and full of jargon that only an expert would fully understand its implications.</p>	<p>The Council accepts that the Regulation 18 Issues and Options Document was a lengthy technical document which also needed to meet the necessary statutory requirements. However, the document was clearly structured by topic to enable easier navigation. A summary document was also produced and made available.</p> <p>The Council arranged walk in events across the Borough with easy to understand information panels and maps, where the proposals could be discussed with and explained by Council Officers.</p>	No

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				The Council accepts that planning documents do need to be as simple as possible but notifying every business and household would not be a practicable or efficient use of resources.	
75	SCI7	Comment	<p>Page 17 Neighbourhood planning. The Government is keen to involve neighbourhoods in local planning decisions. Has the Council investigated (through dialogue with Local Societies etc.) why Wirral is bereft of such local involvement. The Council does not seem to promote such forums.</p> <p>4.12 - 4.15 A minimum of responses from those targeted by a referendum would prevent a 'cabal' from hijacking the process.</p> <p>As in my previous comment all affected by a Neighbourhood Plan should be notified where and how the published documents can be accessed.</p>	<p>The Council supports the establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum which was properly constituted and representative but is aware of the commitment of community time and resources that organising and maintaining local involvement in a Forum involves.</p> <p>Legislation does not currently set a minimum number of voters responding to a referendum.</p> <p>Legislation already requires any proposals to be advertised widely within the designated area.</p>	No
76	SCI7	Comment	<p>Sec 5 Community Infrastructure Levy.</p> <p>The Council must seek broad Borough support for a CIL. No doubt it will raise finance for infrastructure</p>	The Council currently does not charge a CIL because it does not yet have an up-to-date adopted Local Plan.	No

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			improvements etc. At a time of pressure on Council finances a CIL should not favour a developer because of the finances it might generate. A public debate is required on how and where the CIL is used.	The Levy can only apply in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website. The Council would need to show and explain how any proposed levy rate (or rates) will contribute towards the implementation of a relevant Local Plan to support development across their area.	
77	SCI7	Comment	Page 28. This period of Covid and lockdown has exposed the weakness in the publicity of planning applications. Council offices and libraries closed, difficult and uncertain circulation problems of the local press. the first time that many affected parties get to hear about applications is when the agenda is published for the Planning Committee meeting. By which time it is too late to be involved. A dedicated Council web page, regularly updated, listing the applications would be a solution. The allowed time for comment should be prominent, once the time period has expired the page can be updated. This would be most beneficial where	Neighbour notification letters have still been issued since Covid restrictions have been in place. The Council will explore the publication of planning notices on its web pages and to allow people to register to be notified about applications within a particular geographical area.	No

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			the development has a wider effect than just on the neighbour population. The site notice should also be continued. Local community groups and societies, registered with the Council, should automatically be notified, the members of these groups or societies should then be in a position to inform their members. The web page should be incorporated into the Protocols for Public Involvement. With the advent of developers sitting on green belt land and demolishing large houses to build flats has ensured that it isn't just neighbours who have an interest in the applications, people now want to know what is happening to their Borough.		
78	SCI7	Comment	Planning Decisions. At present Ward Councillors have the opportunity to express an opinion of a development at the application stage. Many Councillors do not take the opportunity. As the ward Councillor represents the businesses and residents of the ward it should be mandated that they make a comment in order for the local population to know whether	It is a matter for Ward Councillors to determine how best to represent their local communities.	No

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			or not the Councillor is representing their view. I consider such a proposal to be of the utmost importance, especially when 95% of the applications have been delegated to an officers resolution.		
79	SCI19	Comment	Sustainability Appraisals. Para 3.23 - There appears to be no mention of who to consult with. Suggest you clarify by referring to Section 8 - Group Consultations	Consultation on the sustainability appraisal is undertaken with the public and relevant statutory stakeholders at each main stage in the preparation of local plan.	No
80	SCI19	Comment	Monitoring Reports. Para 3.27 - Although WBC will consult on monitoring content, there appears to be no time period or date to achieve this objective. Please include a time frame so the public is engaged (refer Draft policy para 2.4, 2.5 , 2.6 & 2.10)	Consultation on monitoring requirements will be undertaken alongside the content of the Local Plan.	Yes. Amend para3.27 to read 'The Council will consult on the proposed content of future monitoring alongside the content of the Local Plan.'
81	SCI19	Comment	Submission of Planning Applications. Para 4.3 - No time appears to be given by WBC to advise public on ways to proceed. (refer Draft policy para 2.4, 2.5 , 2.6 & 2.10). Please give a period of time.	Council officers and Elected Members often spend considerable time assisting community groups to set themselves up as forums in line with the Regulations. This includes advising on pre-designation consultation, boundary definition, any constitutional requirements, and in compiling their applications before	No

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				they are formally submitted. There is no deadline for submitting a neighbourhood forum or neighbourhood area application, so community groups can each move through the process at their own pace	
82	SCI19	Comment	Independent Examination. Para 4.8 - WBC says it will appoint an "independent examiner", but it does not say how, or from where. How "independent" will that person be if chosen from WBC staff? Some calcification is needed so the Public have trust in the Consultation Process.	Noted	Yes, add as a footnote to para 4.8 'The Examiner is paid for and appointed by the Council However, the appointment must be with the agreement of the Qualifying Body. They essentially have the power to veto any appointment proposed by the Council if they are not happy. The Planning Act sets out the criteria for an individual to qualify to be able to examine a neighbourhood plan.

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					The criteria are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be independent from both the QB and Council • Must have appropriate qualifications and experience • Cannot have an interest in any of the land to be covered by the plan (i.e. the Neighbourhood Area)
83	SCI19	Comment	Consultation on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule. Para 5.3 - Why can't the Draft Charging Schedule be also published in the WBC Website? Please include this with published documents available via the WBC Website (refer Draft policy para 2.4, 2.5 , 2.6 & 2.10)	Noted and agreed	Yes Para 5.3 amended to read 'The draft Charging Schedule will be published on the Council's web site and made available for public inspection at a principal office. The consultation document and all supporting evidence base documents will be made available on the Council website'.

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84	SCI19	Comment	<p>Planning Applications. Para 7.7 - WBC will notify Local Community Groups " by arrangement". Arrangement with whom? Please clarify. (refer Draft policy para 2.4, 2.5 , 2.6 & 2.10) Para 7. 25 - What is the minimum number of "required signatures" needed to be accepted by WBC? Consultation Bodies List - Table 8</p>	<p>Noted. Para 7.7 does not reflect current practice and will be deleted.</p> <p>Para 7.25. Twenty-Five signatures are required to qualify.</p>	<p>Yes delete Para 7.7</p> <p>Add footnote to para 7.25 to read: 'Twenty-five signatures are required for a petition to qualify.'</p>
85	SCI23	Comment	<p>I note in Sec 8 of your recently produced Statement of Community Involvement under the heading of Environmental Groups and Societies you have failed to Include Barnston Conservation Society. I would ask why? Part of your proposed local plan is the removal of a large area of green belt in Barnston. You have over the past months received a significant amount of documents from us challenging your proposals but you clearly do not wish us to be a part of your Community Involvement. I wonder why?</p> <p>I would like a reply, preferably one with an explanation as to why this society was not included.</p>	<p>It is incorrect that the Council does not wish the Society to be part of the community involvement process, which is why the Society has been consulted on the SCI. The Society had continued to be included under the heading of 'Conservation Area Advisory Committees' in Section 8, as it had been within the previous adopted SCI.</p>	<p>Yes: add Barnston Conservation Society to Local Civic Societies in Section 8, for the avoidance of doubt.</p>

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86	SCI24	Comment	<p>3.24 Evidence base.</p> <p>It has been proved that WBC has been incapable of providing an updated evidence base on which to consult at both the Development Options Review consultation and the Issues and Options consultation. The amount of documentation provided at each consultation was simply overwhelming for most people, this deters community involvement and is self-defeating.</p>	The Council prepared and published an extensive evidence base to inform the Issues and Options Regulation 18 consultation earlier this year. The consultation period was extended to 8 weeks from the normal minimum 6-week period. This was then further extended to 10 weeks to allow for the impacts of the emerging Covid 19 emergency toward the end of March 2020.	No
87	SCI24	Comment	Archive material should be available on the WBC website at all times with updated documents completed in time for Local Plan decision making instead of the blind panic to update a poor evidence base which we have seen on this occasion.	See response to 16 above	No
88	SCI24	Comment	<p>3.25</p> <p>This following on from the previous paragraph. WBC may well find it convenient to publish updated documents between Local Plan stages but this directly results in overwhelming paperwork for the public to wade through leading to</p>	See response to 14 above.	No

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			decreased community engagement and less informed decision making.		
89	SCI24	Comment	All Surveys, Studies and Assessments should be published and consulted on in anticipation of the Local Plan process not during it.	See response to 14 above. The timescale allowed by Government does not allow for this.	No
90	SCI24	Comment	3.30 Tables should include Local Newspaper Publications and Notifications	See response to 17 above	No
91	SCI24	Comment	7.7 Community groups should have automatic notification of individual applications. Historically this was always practised but has lapsed in recent years. This is particularly important when Green Belt applications are involved where Local Councillor notification should also be automatic.	This is not practicable. See also response to 24 and 48 above.	No
92	SCI24	Comment	7.11 Non material minor amendments is a subjective judgement made by the	See response to 26 above.	No

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			planning officer. These amendments should be consulted upon particularly where heritage and conservation issues are of concern. Notified bodies should be made aware of amendments and given time to comment		
93	SCI25	Comment	P31 7:13. I feel strongly that all applicants MUST publicise immediately when Green Belt /public spaces/ green spaces or farmland is threatened.	See response to 24 above.	No
94	SCI25	Comment	P34 7:32 I feel strongly that developers/ landowners MUST undertake pre planning application submission community consultations/debates/public meetings where ANY Green Belt is threatened, as above. To be merely "encouraged" to do so is unacceptable.	See response to 59 above.	No
95	SCI25	Comment	I feel strongly that the council should inform local groups/ local residents of the availability and identity of the planning Inspector in order to arrange face to face or virtual meetings with a view to debating concerns re. the Local Plan.	See response to 5, 6, and 11 above	See 5, 6, and 11

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96	SCI25	Comment	I agree with identifying innovative approaches and methods concerning involving people in the consultation process. However, people resident in care homes were not mentioned.	Noted. It is not possible to contact all elderly people directly. However, we did include a presentation to the Wirral Older Peoples Parliament during the Regulation 18 consultation earlier this year, in line with our regular practice during earlier stages of consultation.	No
97	SCI25	Comment	Also, it must be taken into account that there are a large number of residents who are not on line. Libraries are closed for the foreseeable future, thus making it even more difficult to access appropriate information. etc. I agree that council documents should be simplified, and that "jargon," especially relating to financial matters, especially so.	The Council will make every effort to ensure that consultations are advertised as widely as reasonably practicable subject to any public health restrictions arising from the Covid 19 emergency. The Council notes that some evidence studies are unavoidably technical. The Council will require all technical evidence studies to include a non-technical summary where appropriate.	No
98	SCI25	Comment	As an example of this, I mention the proposed introduction of the Infrastructure Levy. If this route is pursued, I am concerned that this would put our Council unnecessarily in the hands of developers and landowners.	This is not a matter directly related to the SCI. The Community Infrastructure Levy if introduced would be operated in line with a nationally proscribed process and would only secure funds from qualifying development for agreed	No

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				infrastructure improvements across the Borough	
99	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	Any evidence based surveys, assessment, studies etc, should be fully consulted with the residents of Wirral, published in local papers and copies placed within our libraries. There should be complete clarity and transparency at all times	See response to 14, 15 and 66 above.	No
100	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	Evidence base studies should also include impact statements from all of our emergency services, fire, police and Ambulance, especially when there are proposals to build in excess of 10 properties at anyone sight.	Emergency services are consulted as part of the preparation of the Local Plan and planning applications set out in Section 8 of the SCI	No
101	SCI 26 SCI27		Evidence Base should also be sought from professional bodies such as CPRE, National Trust, Wild Life Trusts and Environmental Groups. METHODS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT(Pge14,3.28 to 3.30)	These groups are already consulted during the preparation of the Local Plan and on relevant evidence studies, as set out in Section 8 of the SCI	No
102	SCI 26 SCI27		Any community involvement should be widely published amongst the community, this is where transparency is critical, Reg.18 and	The Council undertook a wide publicity campaign for the Regulation 18 consultation including newspaper, web site, emails, posters, social	No

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			Reg 19, have somewhat failed in this area. The drop- in centres did not in some cases have the correct information. Leaflets, brochures etc, where missing from these centres, Questions that where put in booklets where directed towards the public giving certain answers, The questions given to the Public where extremely difficult to understand to the majority of our residents, therefore encouraging citizens to dismiss them. Not all residents have been made aware of the production of a Local Plan, this needs to be addressed also.	<p>media, bus adverts. The feed back received on the walk in events and workshops was overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Regulation 19 stage has not been undertaken yet.</p> <p>See also response to 58 re questions.</p> <p>It was explained on the online portal that not all questions needed to be answered. A summary document and a simplified questionnaire were available at the walk in events or online. Some 28,000 separate comments were received from approximately 1800 respondents during the regulation 18 consultation.</p>	
103	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	REFERENDUMS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS AND ORDERS(Pge19, 4.12 to 4.16) WBC, should expand referendums, far too often on important issues, especially planning issues, referendums are not conducted. It is of no use just publishing them on the council website.	See response to 68	No
104	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	It is also noted by our group that council officers should NOT be	See response to 60 above	

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			allowed to make a planning decision without going through a planning committee, regardless how small that application is. Community involvement on planning issues is paramount.		
105	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	Greater attention should also be given to publishing planning notices and decisions.	Weekly/Monthly Lists can be searched via the planning applications pages on the web https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=weeklyList	No
106	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	COMMUNITY INFRASTRURE LEVY..(Pge 23) It is certainly crucial that there should be a consultation on a Community Infrastructure Levy. Although this seems to be a way of generating capital, it can also be a dangerous precedence to allow developers to have a much greater influence on our council than they may have at present. If our council is to charge developers of the amount of floor space or area a development may have, I feel that the developer in such cases would have the right to exercise a much larger involvement	Any proposed CIL charging schedule would be subject to consultation as set out in the draft SCI. It would not allow developers any greater influence over the Local Plan.	No

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			in the production of a local plan, this is an area that I feel needs further investigation particularly in community involvement. Any decisions taken, any consultations undertaken, MUST be published in our local press and libraries.		
	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT..(Pge 25 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.8 to 6.20) As stated previously, the GREASBY GREENBELT ACTION GROUP, wish to be updated at all times regarding the local plan, we wish to be added and maintained on the database of contacts.	Noted. The SCI already provides for community groups and other respondents who provide their contact details to be notified as each stage is reached.	Yes: Add Greasby Green Belt Action Group to Local Civic Societies – Section 8.
107	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	Paragraph 6.6 I wish to recommend in the strongest of terms that the Reg. 19 submissions be made available to everyone who lives on Wirral, by post, local papers and libraries, I would also suggest at leisure centres. Public consultations should be sought at meetings with the public in various parts of the borough.	The Council will advertise the Regulation 19 consultation as widely as is reasonably practicable having regard to the SCI requirements and any restrictions arising from the Covid 19 emergency.	No

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108	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	<p>THE DEVELOPMENTMANAGEMENT PROCESS..(Pge 28)</p> <p>Statutory Publicity for Planning Applications</p> <p>It is not enough to issue a simple site notice by a developer for a planning application, especially if this involves building on GREENBELT. Community consultation is paramount.</p> <p>In ALL cases there should be FULL community involvement. This could include notices posted through the doors of every resident in the ward. Planning notices should also be published in libraries and community centres. Notices should also be extended to local interested groups such as the Greasby Greenbelt Action Group.</p>	See response to 59 above.	No
109	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	<p>THRESHOLDS OF PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT..(Pge 36)</p> <p>Issues surrounding this section are that ALL proposed developments should be subject to community involvement. This is important for transparency. Infrastructure issues</p>	See response to 61 above. It is not practicable or reasonable to request applicants for smaller developments to undertake extensive pre application consultation. The Council considers that the threshold set out is reasonable and appropriate.	No

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			should be highlighted, discussed and agreed by consultation with the public.		
110	SCI 26 SCI27	Comment	We note that council documents are too complex and too difficult to read. These documents have to be simplified and determined to the general public as acceptable to understand, even if this means public consultation.	See response to 97 above	No
111	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>1 This update is a year late. The production of the new 15 year local plan is a major local legislative change. The SCI update should have been actioned prior to the local plan consultation in 2020.</p> <p>The opportunity for the community to make changes to the involvement statement prior to the new local plan consultation has been missed due to WBC,s failure to carry this review in 2019 .</p>	See response to 62 and 63 above.	
112	SCI28 & 29	Comment	2 The failure to review the SCI in 2019 shows WBC's lack of interest in community involvement. The Council do not work towards a consensus of opinion as many	See response to 62, 63 and 64 above.	No

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			<p>planning issues and the local plan consultations can confirm.</p> <p>In the 2018 local plan consultation 3000 people responded almost unanimously stating no greenbelt was to be released, yet in the 2020 local plan documentation over 6000 homes were identified on greenbelt.</p> <p>It does not matter what statement of community involvement is in place if WBC do not use it and act on the input from the community</p> <p>Unfortunately the statements value is not recognised by WBC. The views of the citizens are ignored.</p> <p>The community therefore has no involvement in the final draft plan under this system.</p> <p>A more detailed draft plan should be the basis of the regulation 18 consultation for true community involvement.</p>		

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113	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>3 SCI and the local plan regulation 18</p> <p>The community have only one opportunity to comment on the local plan. This is at the regulation 18 stage</p> <p>The plan was not sufficiently developed by WBC for the community to comment accurately at the time of the consultation.</p> <p>This needs to be changed in the SCI so that the community can comment on the draft plan not a raft of options and possible configurations for a plan.</p> <p>The community will not see the draft plan until councillors have voted on it to be issued for submission to the government.</p>	See response to 64 above.	No
114	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>4 SCI and the local plan regulation 19</p> <p>Regulation 19 the publication of WBC draft plan offers no community</p>	See response to 64 above.	No

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			<p>involvement. This is a 6 week public notice not a consultation. The community are not in a position to challenge the legal compliance or soundness of the plan.</p> <p>Indeed we expect WBC to provide a legally compliant and sound plan but we also expect that plan to reflect the views of the community from the regulation 18 consultation</p> <p>Under this system we cannot challenge WBC if our views on locations for new building have not been incorporated in the plan at this stage.</p> <p>The draft plan should be consulted on by the community before councillors vote and before it is submitted to the government for approval.</p>		
115	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>5 SCI Covid addendum and local plan</p> <p>The Covid SCI addendum will deny the community the opportunity to</p>	See response to 49 above.	No

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			<p>appear and be heard by the person appointed to carry out the independent examination of the local plan because WBC has brought forward the publication of the local plan to February.</p> <p>WBC should wait until Covid is resolved and complete all the necessary outstanding reports from the evidence base and allow the procedure to be completed in the proper manner with full community involvement .</p>		
116	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>6 Sustainability Appraisals</p> <p>The sustainability appraisals for specific greenbelt sites have not been published. They may not have even been carried out. The sustainability reports in the consultation document all stated specific sites reports were required prior to any greenbelt site being included in the final plan.</p>	See response to 65 above	No

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			<p>The community were therefore not able to comment during the consultation.</p> <p>WBC is therefore failing to meet its current Statement of Community involvement.</p>		
117	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>7 Evidence Base</p> <p>The evidence base reports issued with the consultation document were incomplete out of date, unco-ordinated, inaccurate and in some cases just completely incorrect. <u>This statement is based on fact.</u></p> <p>It was clear that even though it was poor that the evidence base had not been consulted in selecting proposed greenbelt sites.</p> <p>The most critical reports, sustainability, habitats, agricultural, biodiversity, flooding and infrastructure development reports all stated that further investigations were required and site specific reports were required for any</p>	See response to 66 above.	No

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			<p>greenbelt site before its inclusion in the plan.</p> <p>We have not seen these completed documents and the community is not going to be invited to comment prior to the final draft plan.</p> <p>WBC is therefore failing to meet the requirements of the Statement of Community involvement.</p>		
118	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>8 Table 1 – Methods of community involvement in the production of a Local Plan</p> <p>The 15 year local plan will affect all Wirral residents at some time. Limiting communications for the plan to registered contacts and neighbours to potential developments is totally inadequate considering the importance of a new local plan</p> <p>All Wirral residents should have been notified by post / email and newspaper notice. At the very least every householder responsible for</p>	See response to 62, 63 and 67 above	No

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			<p>paying community charges tax bill should have been notified by WBC.</p> <p>However as WBC failed to hold this consultation on community involvement in 2019 prior to the local plan consultation at regulation 18 it is now too late to implement this change. WBC has failed to meet the statutory timetable and consequently failed its community.</p> <p>WBC do however have the opportunity to newspaper publish and contact every community charge paying householder when the final draft submission is issued in February 2021</p>		
119	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>9 Referendums for neighbourhood plans and orders</p> <p>Referendums are used to decide planning proposals where local neighbourhood plans are formed.</p> <p>We suggest this is used for all planning proposals.</p>	See response to 68	No

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			<p>For specific sites all local residents notified by WBC should carry a vote. The majority vote of the community should decide.</p> <p>Why should a small number of temporary people on a WBC planning committee decide on ordinary hard working people's permanent fate?</p> <p>This would be genuine community involvement.</p> <p>In addition Wirral's community should have a referendum on the draft local plan prior to submission?</p>		
120	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>10 The impact of the new planning laws on the SCI document.</p> <p>The timing by WBC of this SCI consultation has rendered it too late to effect the local plan but it is also too early for the proposed new planning laws.</p> <p>Major parts of the statement of community involvement will become</p>	See response to 69 above	No

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			<p>redundant or inadequate and need revising completely in 2021 when new laws are introduced.</p> <p>See examples below.</p>		
121	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>Permitted development</p> <p>The size and scale of permitted developments is changing, e.g. 2 storey extensions on top of existing buildings. Neighbours and local community must be notified by WBC to have some input on the appearance, placement and orientation of the development.</p>	<p>Consultation will be undertaken where required/appropriate though the Council can only take into account those matters that are restricted for consideration in the relevant Permitted Development legislation. It cannot have regard to other matters.</p>	No
122	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>Definition of Major Development</p> <p>Under the new laws major Development will be defined as 150 or more dwellings or a site area of up to 3 hectares.</p> <p>The sites with up to 3 hectares will have automatic outline planning permission for up to 149 homes.</p>	<p>See response to 69 above.</p>	No

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			WBC needs to develop a new robust detailed plan to involve the community in schemes that will have large impacts in local areas.		
123	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>Pre-application procedures</p> <p>The new law raises the thresholds of when developers and landowners have to consider pre-application for planning procedures. Also any land designated as a growth area will have automatic outline planning permission for houses, schools and hospitals.</p> <p>Community involvement for larger schemes is being removed from the community unless the statement is revised to state it that current thresholds will remain under new laws.</p> <p>All thresholds are being raised under the new planning laws granting automatic outline planning permissions for houses schools and</p>	See response to 70 above.	No

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			<p>hospitals. The document will be out of date in a few months' time.</p> <p>The new planning laws are supposed to introduce greater community input into the type of building we see built but WBC's proposed updated community involvement document ignores the new laws completely.</p> <p>WBC needs to update the statement of community involvement to deal with the new laws.</p>		
124	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>11. Planning decisions</p> <p>All planning decisions should be decided on local referendum as already practiced where local neighbourhood plans exist.</p>	See response to 68 above	
125	SCI28 & 29	Comment	WBC website e-petition rules state that it does not accept or consider any petitions that are being dealt with under the normal planning procedures or consultations.	<p>See response 71 above.</p> <p>Petitions for planning applications has been explained elsewhere in this response. For planning applications petitions are accepted and those with</p>	No

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			<p>In addition there are two types of petition under a hundred or over 3000 people.</p> <p>These restrictions need removing and making clear that petitions are welcome on planning matters.</p> <p>As a note the planning committee that rejected the opposition to the proposed Lidl in Prenton cited the lack of a petition by the community for approving the proposal. The fact that 213 people from the local community objected through the planning channel counted for nothing.</p>	25 or more signatures mean the application is referred to Committee for determination	
126	SCI28 & 29	Comment	<p>12. Consultation bodies and consultees</p> <p>The evidence base reports provided by the consultees listed were by their own admission incomplete. They provided what they had available.</p> <p>It is clear that WBC did not use the reports to develop the local plan. An</p>	See response to 72 above	No

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			inspection of the reports against any specific green belt site in option 2a will prove it should not have been selected if the advice in the consultee's reports had been followed.		
127	SCI44	Comment	As a member of Greasby Action Group, I totally with the statement to have far more visibility from WBC Council on all planning applications to ensure that there is nothing untoward, or secretive being put forward.	Noted	No
128	SCI43	Comment	<p>Respondent is broadly supportive of the contents of the updated SCI which acknowledges that the precise nature of community engagement will vary with the main objectives of each stage of the planning process.</p> <p>Chapter 3 relates to the production of development plan documents. Table 1 of Page 14 specifically sets out the methods of community involvement that may be used at each stage in the preparation of a</p>	The Council has already engaged with landowners and developers of sites at an early stage in the Local Plan preparation. As the Local Plan preparation progresses the Council will prioritise engagement on sites which are likely to contribute to the preferred spatial option.	No

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			<p>Local Plan. Whilst the respondent does not disagree with the contents of Chapter 3 in principle, it considers that a further section should be included (at the end of Page 16) which covers engagement with the Local Planning Authority during the Local Plan process. Suggested text is provided below:</p> <p><i>“Engagement with the Local Planning Authority in the preparation of Local Plans</i></p> <p><i>At all stages in the production of a Local Plan, Officers should undertake engagement with developers and landowners who have sites being considered for allocations early on in the process to enable any key issues to be raised and addressed prior to any formal allocations being made. This proactive and collaborative approach will ensure that the site’s being brought forward</i></p>		

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			<p><i>through the Local Plan are available, suitable and deliverable and that there are no technical constraints that would preclude them coming forward during the plan period. It also provides greater certainty and transparency to both parties, saves time later in the decision-making process; and encourages the delivery of a more acceptable and high-quality development."</i></p>		
129		Comment	<p>Chapter 7 relates to the development management process and notes at paragraph 7.32 that the Council strongly encourages landowners and developers to undertake pre-application community consultation, especially for large, complex or controversial proposals and for proposals that will be contrary to the Development Plan.</p> <p>The respondent is supportive of</p>	<p>The Council will engage with all developers who wish to enter into formal pre application discussions in accordance with the Council's approved protocol.</p>	No

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			<p>this approach and is committed to undertaking meaningful community engagement on all sites it promotes and/or has an interest in bringing forwards, to ensure that local residents' and key stakeholders' views are heard and taken of board, where possible.</p> <p>The respondent also welcomes the inclusion of Paragraph 7.34 which encourages developers to contact the Council before commencing a community involvement exercise, to agree the scope of the exercise and the types of method that will be employed. This approach acknowledges that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to community consultation and therefore it would not be appropriate to impose any rigid or restrictive requirements through the SCI.</p> <p>However, as per its comments on Chapter 3, the respondent</p>		

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			<p>considers that additional text relating to pre-application engagement with WMBC Officers should also be included in Chapter 7, rather than focusing solely on engagement with the community. Suggested text is provided below:</p> <p><i>“Pre-application Engagement with the Local Planning Authority</i></p> <p><i>Developers are encouraged to engage with the council in pre-application discussions prior to the submission of a major planning application to discuss a development proposal and any issues that may arise from it. This has the benefits of allowing relevant issues to be raised and resolved early, providing more time to consider and develop better quality solutions, and removing delay to the formal planning process. Entering into pre-application discussions with potential developers enables</i></p>		

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			<p><i>effective communication between the developer, the council and interested parties.”</i></p> <p>Summary</p> <p>Overall, the respondent is broadly supportive of the contents of the updated SCI, however has suggested some additional text for inclusion which details the importance of pre-application engagement between developers and the Council at both the plan-making and decision-making stages.</p> <p>The respondent would not support the introduction of any amendments to the SCI that introduce any highly prescriptive or onerous consultation requirements.</p> <p>If and when the respondents sites come forward for residential development, the respondent is committed to taking an appropriate</p>		

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			and proportionate approach to consultation at the earliest opportunity, including engaging with both the Council, the local community and any relevant stakeholders to ensure that their views are considered and any key issues resolved.		
130	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	As an over-arching comment, I find the document to be a useful reference point in that it sets out the Council's obligations under national legislation. In particular, in light of the recent consultations re the Draft Local Plan and on-going liaison between your department and the Wirral Greenspace Alliance, Table 1 (pp. 14, 15 & 16) is a timely reminder of the Council's obligations in this respect.	Noted	No
131	SCI33 SCI34		Section 3 Local Plans and the Local Plans Examination Process. 3.9 Assurance is needed and evidence shown that this	3.9 The Council will publish a formal consultation statement under Regulation 22 when submitting the Local Plan for Examination setting out a summary of the comments received, of the key issues that have	No

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			<p>requirement of the Council has been fully met.</p> <p>3.10 It is vital that maximum publicity is given where any time constraints are concerned</p> <p>3.11 This is crucial. The choice of those people appearing before the independent examiner needs careful management.</p> <p>3.12 Ditto.</p> <p>3.17 As in 3.10 above.</p>	<p>been raised and how these issues have been addressed.</p> <p>3.10 The Council will advertise the Regulation 19 consultation widely, in line with commitments set out within the SCI.</p> <p>3.11 and 3.12 -See response to 64 above</p> <p>3.17 Notice of Adoption will advertised in line with the commitments set out in Table 1</p>	
132	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	<p>Evidence base.</p> <p>3.24 In common with many others, I believe that some of the most fundamentally important parts of the evidence base are flawed and, most importantly, out-dated. The last part this subsection refers to “ the need to respond to issues raised in response to public consultation on emerging proposals”.</p> <p>WBC has been unable – unwilling? – to provide an</p>	<p>3.24 See response to 16 and 66 above.</p> <p>3.25 See response to 14 and 66 above.</p> <p>3.30 See response to 17 above</p>	No

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			<p>updated evidence base on which to consult at both the Development Options Review consultation and the Issues and Options consultation. The amount of documentation provided at each consultation was simply overwhelming for most people, and needed to be much more focused. Archive material should be available on the WBC website <u>at all times</u>, with updated documents completed in time for Local Plan decision-making instead of seeking to change – at the eleventh hour – the flawed and discredited original evidence base which the Council used at the outset.</p> <p>3.25 The same basic point as in 3.24. WBC may well find it convenient to publish updated documents between Local Plan stages but this directly results in overwhelming paperwork for the public to access and assimilate.</p>		

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			<p>This inevitably will have an adverse effect on community engagement and, as a consequence, less informed decision making.</p> <p>All Surveys, Studies and Assessments should be published and consulted on in anticipation of the Local Plan process not during it.</p> <p>3.30 Tables should include Local Newspaper Publications and Notifications</p>		
133	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	<p>Section 4</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning</p> <p>In 4.1, it states that the Council will provide advice and guidance. It would clearly be helpful if the Council will give some indication of the criteria which they will use to approve the setting up of community groups. Particularly relevant is an indication of the minimum size of any such group. This information needs to be</p>	The criteria and minimum size are set out in the relevant legislation and are not appropriate to reproduce within the SCI. The criteria and examples of how they have been applied can be found on the Neighbourhood Planning pages of the Council's website.	No

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			available <u>before</u> any initial work is done by those wishing to participate. The current Section 4 is far too vague.		
134	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	<p>Section 5</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy</p> <p>There are no free lunches! The concept of widening community involvement is laudable and there clearly will be a cost which the Council will wish to cover – or recover.</p> <p>There is a danger that a Levy will be viewed by many as a device to put more money into the Council's coffers and that the above concept is little more than a "box-ticking" exercise by the Council.</p>	See responses to 76, 98 and 106 above.	
135	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	<p>Section 7</p> <p>The development management process</p>	<p>See Response to 59 above.</p> <p>7.7 See response to 24 above</p> <p>7.11 See response to 26 above.</p>	

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			<p>Whilst the Council, in exercising its function as a Planning Authority, is required by law to give publicity to all planning applications, there remains widespread concern that Press Notices fail to reach large sections of the community. It is one thing for the Council to be able to claim that it has met its statutory duties but quite another for it to ignore that people's access to newspapers and reading habits have changed. Ensuring the "Heineken Effect" of publicity should be regarded as an extra obligation. For instance, previous use of bin collection lorries for advertising the Council's policies/plans and general information proved an excellent way of reaching out to the public.</p> <p>7.7 Community groups should have automatic notification of individual applications. Historically this was always practiced but has lapsed in</p>		

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			<p>recent years. This is particularly important when Green Belt applications are involved where Local Councillor notification should also be automatic.</p> <p>7.11 The reference to “Non material minor amendments” allows a subjective judgement to be made by the planning officer. Any such amendments should be consulted upon particularly where heritage and conservation issues are of concern. Notified bodies should be made aware of amendments and given time to comment.</p>		
136	SCI33 SCI34	Comment	<p>Section 8</p> <p>Consultation bodies and consultees</p> <p>8.1 In that part of the table headed “General Consultation Bodies”, I am concerned by the omission of the Barnston Conservation Society. This society has been actively and</p>	See Response to 85 above	

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			<p>closely involved in all consultations thus far and its leading members, strongly supported by the wider membership, have produced a great deal of accurate, well-researched documentation which has previously been submitted to the Council in the earlier consultations.</p> <p>This omission should be remedied forthwith.</p>		
137	SCI33	Comment	<p>In conclusion, for Community Involvement to work – to be more than just words – the Council must demonstrate its active commitment to establishing and operating a system which the public trusts. Sadly, the absence of such trust is all too evident.</p>	Noted	
138	SCI34	Comment	<p>Overall, the document is a useful reference point as it sets out the Council's obligations under national legislation. In particular, with regard to the recent consultations re the</p>	Noted	No

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			Draft Local Plan and on-going liaison between your department and the Wirral Greenspace Alliance, Table 1 (pp. 14, 15 & 16) is a timely reminder of the Council's obligations in this respect.		
139	SCI39	Comment	<p>Thank you for the consultation on the updated Statement of Community Involvement. The Canal & River Trust have the following comments to make.</p> <p>The Canal & River Trust would welcome being listed as a 'National Bodies & Agencies' in the table at section 8.1, in relation to being consulted on planning policy matters.</p> <p>The Canal & River Trust are a statutory consultee on development management matters.</p>	Noted	Yes Add the Canal & River Trust to National Bodies and Agencies in Table at Section 8.1
140	SCI28	Comment	It seems that the opportunity for the community to make changes to the involvement statement prior to the new local plan has been missed, as WBC failed to review the SCI in 2019 The SCI update should have	Please see response to 62 above.	

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			been actioned prior to the local plan consultation in 2020.		
141	SCI28	Comment	In the 2018 local plan consultation 3000 people responded almost unanimously stating no Greenbelt was to be released, yet in the 2020 local plan documentation over 6000 homes were identified on Greenbelt. If the Council wants a community's views, those views should not be ignored.	The Council has taken account the comments submitted during the 2018 consultation. The Issues and Options Regulation 18 consultation set out the Council's preferred Options to meet the Borough's housing and employment needs entirely within the urban area. However, due to uncertainties over the delivery of some sites the Issues and Options document set out two options for potential green belt release.	No
142	SCI28	Comment	<p>SCI and the local plan regulation 18 The community will not see the draft plan until councillors have voted on it to be issued for submission to the Government. – this gives the community no involvement in the final draft plan.</p> <p>SCI and the local plan regulation 19 No community involvement here - it is a 6 week public notice not a consultation.. The community are in no position to challenge the legal compliance or soundness of the</p>	See response to 63, 64 and 49 above.	No

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			<p>plan. We expect the plan to reflect the views of the community from the regulation 18 consultation. The draft plan should be consulted on by the community before councillors vote and before it is submitted to the Government for approval.</p> <p>SCI Covid addendum and local plan The Covid addendum denies the community the opportunity to be heard by the person appointed to carry out the independent examination of the local plan, because WBC has brought forward the plan's publication to February 2021. WBC should wait until Covid is resolved and complete the necessary outstanding reports from the evidence base and allow the procedure to be completed with full community involvement.</p>		
143	SCI28	Comment	<p>Sustainability Appraisals The sustainability appraisals for specific greenbelt sites have not been published. The sustainability reports in the consultation document all stated specific site reports were</p>	See response to 65 above	No

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			required prior to any greenbelt site being included in the final plan.		
144	SCI28	Comment	<p>Evidence Base</p> <p>The evidence base reports issued with the consultation document were incomplete. The most critical reports, sustainability, habitats, agricultural, biodiversity, flooding and infrastructure development reports all stated that further investigations were required and site specific reports were required for any greenbelt site before its inclusion in the plan.</p> <p>We have not seen these completed documents and the community is not going to be invited to comment prior to the final draft plan.</p>	Please see response to 14 and 66 above.	
145	SCI28	Comment	<p>Referendums for neighbourhood plans and orders</p> <p>We suggest that, the views of all residents who will be affected by the plans concerning their area, should be sought.</p>	Please see response to 68 above	No
146	SCI28	Comment	The impact of the new planning laws on the SCI document.	Please see response to 69 above	

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			<p>The timing by WBC of this SCI consultation has rendered it too late to affect the local plan but it is also too early for the proposed new planning laws.</p> <p>Major parts of the statement of community involvement will become redundant and need revising in 2021 when new laws are introduced.</p> <p>Pre-application procedures Update the statement of community involvement to deal with the new laws.</p> <p>Planning decisions All planning decisions should be decided on local referendum.</p>		
147	SCI28	Comment	<p>Consultation bodies and consultees</p> <p>The evidence based reports provided by the consultees listed were, by their own admission incomplete. Clearly WBC didn't use the reports to develop the local plan. Regarding our local site Option 2A the consultee's report was against that greenbelt site's development</p>	See response to 66 above	

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			but the Council included it in their plan.		
148	SCI31	Comment	<p>2.13 In order to minimise duplication of effort, maximise the value of public consultation and safeguard the use of public resources, the Council will, wherever possible, use existing consultation arrangements to engage and involve the community in the land-use planning system, where these can be used effectively within the timetable for the preparation of local development documents or for informing individual planning decisions. However, the Council will where appropriate use tailored digital and web-based systems to improve community engagement in the preparation of policy document and decisions on planning applications. Response: Whenever Community Involvement occurs, early feedback needs to be given in form of Notes or Minutes uploaded to the Council Website under a clear heading, with what was heard/discussed, what was learned, is to be used or not and why.</p>	See response to 3 above	No

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149	SCI31	Comment	2.16 Responses to public consultation will be summarised and may be made publicly available to view on the Council's website. Response: The Council <i>needs to</i> make publicly available the summary of responses. (This has not been done with the Local Plan).	The Council has always published a summary of responses as each stage in the process is reached. The Council is still preparing the summary of responses to the latest consultation and the Council's responses to each of the comments received, which cannot be completed until the final Plan has been prepared. The Council received some 28,000 separate comments from 1,800 individuals and organisations on the Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation. This has led to an unavoidable delay in publishing the comments received. See also response to 3 above.	No
150	SCI31	Comment	3.8 The emphasis during these early stages [of prep Local Plan] will be on making simple background information as widely available as possible. Response: This has not been seen with current Local Plan documentation or consultations.	This is not a comment on the content of the SCI.	No
151	SCI31	Comment	3.9 The Council must take account of any representation made in response to invitations to comment during these early stages ¹² .	This is a standard and statutory part of the reporting process and the Council's responses to each comment received will normally be set out in the Consultation Statement	No

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			Response: In addition, the Council needs to let consultees know what changes have been made in light of responses received.	which will be produced at each stage of the Local Plan preparation.	
152	SCI31	Comment	3.20 Walk in exhibitions are likely to be the most effective method for testing area specific proposals, whereas more limited, targeted consultations are likely to be more relevant for documents on more specialist themes and topics. Response: Limiting the use of public meetings is not acceptable. Drop in meetings may be useful but should not replace proper public meetings.	See response to 9 above.	
153	SCI31	Comment	Sustainability Appraisal 3.23 The Council will consult on the scope and content of a sustainability appraisal with statutory consultees and will invite public comments on the appraisal to be submitted at each stage in the plan or document making process. Response: Also need to know what changes Council made in light of responses.	This is already a normal part of the reporting process.	No

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154	SCI31	Comment	<p>Evidence Base</p> <p>3.24 The Council will undertake or commission specialist technical surveys, studies or assessments to inform the content of emerging local development documents, to meet national policy requirements or to respond to issues raised in response to public consultation on emerging proposals.</p> <p>Response: Residents need to be able to view and if possible comment on brief</p>	<p>This is not practicable and would lead to unnecessary delay. It could also compromise the professional independence of any work to be undertaken. In most cases the brief is already drawn up to respond to comments received through previous public consultation and the contents may be commercially confidential. The key elements of the brief are set out in the evidence study itself.</p>	No
155	SCI31	Comment	<p>3.25 The results of the surveys, studies or assessments used in the preparation of a local development document will be published for public comment at the next appropriate stage in the plan making process.</p> <p>Response: Also need to know what changes Council made in light of responses.</p>	<p>The Consultation Statement produced at the next stage of the local plan will indicate where changes have been made to evidence studies arising from comments received. Comments received at Regulation 19 stage on evidence studies will be passed directly to the Inspector appointed to undertake the Examination.</p>	No
156	SCI31	Comment	<p>Table 1 – Local Plan</p> <p>REG 18 All documents to be available for inspection at Principal Office</p>	<p>This is stated in the Table 1</p>	No

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			Response: Documents also need to be made available online		
157	SCI31	Comment	Reg 25 Publication on the Council website Response: Documents also need to be available for inspection at Principal Office	See response to 12 above	
158	SCI31	Comment	Reg 34 Publication of monitoring reports on the Council website Response: Documents also need to be available for inspection at Principal Office		Yes. Tables amended to include requirement for monitoring report to be made available for inspection at a principal office
159	SCI31	Comment	Table 2 - SPD Reg 14, 34 Response: Documents also need to be available for inspection at Principal Office and not just online.		Yes add 'All documents to be available for inspection at a principal office' in Table 2, Reg 14
160	SCI31	Comment	4 Neighbourhood planning 4.1 The Council will provide advice and guidance to community groups undertaking neighbourhood planning. Response: The Council needs to be better and adequately resourced to achieve this.	Noted but Council officers are normally closely and regularly involved with both emerging and designated community groups, as their proposals emerge.	No

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161	SCI31	Comment	<p>Table 3 Neighbourhood Forums Methods Community Involvement Designation of Neighbourhood Forum</p> <p>Response: It is not sufficient to just use electronic means to publish documents online– need to advertise to residents by other means as well</p>	<p>See response to 17 above. The qualifying body is expected to publicise its intended formation widely within the local community before submitting their application and to include details about the consultation undertaken within their application. They normally publicise their own application to demonstrate community support as part of the application and designation process, which is likely to be more effective than anything the Council might do.</p>	No
162	SCI31	Comment	<p>Designation of Neighbourhood Area</p> <p>Response: It is not sufficient to just use electronic means to publish documents online– need to advertise to residents by other means as well.</p>	<p>See response to 17 above. The qualifying body is expected to publicise its proposed boundaries of operation widely within the local community before submitting their application and to include details about the consultation undertaken within their application. They normally publicise their own application to demonstrate community support as part of the application and designation process, which is likely to be more effective than anything the Council might do.</p>	No
163	SCI31	Comment	Making Neighbourhood Plan		Yes add 'Main documents to be

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			Response: It is not sufficient to just publish online, documents need to be available for inspection at Principal Office.		available for inspection at a principal office' to Table 3, final row.
164	SCI31	Comment	Table 4: Methods of Community Involvement in production of Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order		
165	SCI31	Comment	Designation of Neighbourhood Forum Response: It is not sufficient to just publish online, documents need to be available for inspection at Principal Office	The qualifying body is expected to publicise its intended formation widely within the local community before submitting their application and to include details about the consultation undertaken within their application. They normally publicise their own application to demonstrate community support as part of the application and designation process, which is likely to be more effective than anything the Council might do.	No
166	SCI31	Comment	Examiner's Report Response: It is not sufficient to just publish online, documents need to be available for inspection at Principal Office		Yes add 'Examiner's report to be available for inspection at a principal office' to Table 4, row 6.
167	SCI31	Comment	Making Neighbourhood Order Response: It is not sufficient to just publish online, documents need to		Yes add 'The made order to be available for inspection at a

	Comment ID	Nature of Representation	Wirral Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation	Council response	Change required to document
			be available for inspection at Principal Office.		principal office' to Table 4, final row.
168	SCI31	Comment	<p>7 The development management process</p> <p>7.4 The Council currently uses neighbour notification letters as a means of publicising planning applications. It has found that this is currently the most effective method, where small numbers of residents are likely to be affected by a development and enables people who have been unable to see a Press Notice to express their views.</p> <p>Response: The Council need to be more efficient in during this as the current approach is very inconsistent with some neighbours receiving notification whilst others not.</p>	<p>The Council notifies those with an immediate (shared) boundary with the application site. This does not include those on the opposite side of a road. However, having regards to the nature of the development being proposed the LPA may widen its neighbour notifications to include properties who do not share a common boundary. Clearly there has to be a cut off point and this will be at the discretion of the case officer and/or in consultation with Team Leaders and/or the DM Manager.</p> <p>For local plan site notifications - we do include the other side of the road - we include all immediately surrounding properties</p>	
169	SCI31	Comment	<p>Table 6: Permitted development requiring prior notification to the planning authority - Site Notice posted by the developer.</p> <p>Response: Does this Council check that this has been done?</p>	Yes. And where appropriate the LPA may also post its own Site Notice	No

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170	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.6 Additional publicity, in the form of Site Notices and additional notification letters, may be given to developments likely to create wider concern at the discretion of the Case Officer, in consultation with the Development Management Manager.</p> <p>Response: Site notices in Table 6 seem to be required for all applications, so why are site notices here at the discretion of the case officer? In our experience the use of site notices is very patchy and their frequency of use is decreasing. Is Table 6 to be interpreted as only one of the options that needs to be implemented, in which case this should be made clearer?</p>	<p>Site Notices are posted having regards to our Statutory requirements. Neighbour Notifications are generally more effective. However, the Regs require a Site Notice as well then we will post one. Also, for development that is likely to have wider impacts we will post a Site Notice.</p>	No
171	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.7 Local community groups can be notified of individual applications, by arrangement.</p> <p>Response: This can be very important. What criteria are used to decide? Community Groups should automatically be notified of proposals to build on Green Belt in their area. We understand that</p>	<p>Please see response to 84 and 91 above.</p>	

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			WMBC has refused to notify the Wirral Society of all Green Belt applications. We would like to see a facility for a local group to respond online in the name of the organisation, rather than the private address of the representative, so members can determine when comments have been made by their organisation.		
172	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.11 Non material minor amendments to a planning application, required by the Council or by the applicant, will be accepted where the planning application has not yet been determined. Re-notification and publicity will not be undertaken on minor amendments but the amended plans will be placed on the Council's website.</p> <p>Response: Re-notification & publicity should be given at least to neighbours and organisations who are registered for notification to be alerted to there being any amendments to an application. Also it is not just sufficient for these notifications to be added to the Council Planning Webpages, they</p>	There is no statutory obligation to re-consult on amended plans. The Case Officer in consultation with his/her Team Leader and/or the DM Manager will take a view as to whether additional consultation is required having regard to the amendments proposed. Generally, this will only occur if the amendments are considered to present new issues that may not have arisen with the original plans.	

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			<p>must also available for inspection at the Planning Office.</p> <p>Our experience is that significant amendments can be made to plans without adequate time made for re-consultation before a decision is made, and in at least one case a revised plan has never been put on the portal, which limited the Society's ability to contribute to the subsequent appeal.</p>		
173	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.15 In the second case, the Council will require that a Site Notice be posted. In both cases, developers have to complete a certificate to confirm that appropriate publicity has been undertaken.</p> <p>Response: Does this Council check that this has been done?</p>	Yes	No
174	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.20 All planning applications will be made available for public inspection at the local planning authority's principal office during normal office hours....</p> <p>Response: This is very important. At present, however access to such documentation is very limited – selected days in the week at limited</p>	The Council provide access wherever possible subject to resources. All plans and supporting documentation are uploaded online and people are encourage to use the online search facility. Appointments can be made for the public to view documents at the Council Office. Offering selected days allows the Service to ensure this	

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			hours. The Council must be adequately resourced to ensure access 5 days a week during normal working hours as a minimum.	can be adequately managed and resourced.	
175	SCI31	Comment	<p>.....and on the Council's website at www.wirral.gov.uk/planning. The website allows simple searches to be made by keyword, reference number, postcode or single line of address. The website also allows a more advanced search to be made by applicant name, application type, Ward, Conservation Area, development type and date of submission. Searches can also be made by Committee Date and Weekly/Monthly Lists.</p> <p>Response: Discharge of conditions information is not provided online so there is no way that conformance can be monitored. This is particularly important for landscape plans which no longer appear to be mandatory as part of the original application but are required to be produced as a condition of approval. Good community engagement would allow the public to see the plans which had been submitted</p>	There is no statutory requirement to publish/consult on plans submitted for discharge of conditions. However, the Council do consult with statutory consultees where appropriate and the final Decision Notice is posted online.	No

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			and to ensure they were actually implemented.		
176	SCI31	Comment	7.27 People who have submitted comments on the application will not normally be advised of the final decision in writing. People who have submitted comments are encouraged to keep up to date with the application via the Council's website. You can register with the	If a name/contact details and an email address is provided we can arrange for notifications to be sent via email rather than post.	No

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			<p>website which can provide you with updates in relation to an application including when the decision has been made.</p> <p>Appeals Response: The Heswall Society receives a number of notifications by mail. We would prefer such communications to be by email to avoid the cost of postage and to make dissemination of the information easier and faster.</p>		
177	SCI31	Comment	<p>7.30 In the case of an appeal, the Council will write to all those who were notified of the original application, all the individuals and organisations that commented on the planning application, Ward Members and the Chair of Planning Committee, to inform them that an appeal has been submitted, so that they can make further representations to the Planning Inspector appointed to handle the appeal.</p> <p>Response: The appeal documentation should be online to encourage community engagement</p>	The Council will consider making this a permanent solution	No

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			in the process. This has been introduced as a COVID measure and should be made permanent. As in our response to 7.27 we would such communication to be via email.		
178	SCI31	Comment	Page 39 - General Consultation Bodies Table: Response: The Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA), a consortium of 31 local groups, should be included in the list.	See response to 31 above.	Yes see 31
179	SCI22	Comment	I strongly object to the removal of any green belt allocations in the local plan. Further housing is not required on our green belt. There is adequate brownfield land.	This comment is not relevant to the SCI but is a comment on the content of the emerging Local Plan	No
180	SCI21	Comment	Sir I note that your Statement of Community Involvement documentation states the importance of involving all residents irrespective of race, gender, disability, age, etc. I also note that the main indicated ways in which information on site planning applications are communicated are	This has been an unavoidable side-effect of publishing a weekly notice in a local newspaper. The Council can only currently address the issue of font size in any formal notifications, such as in letters and on-line. The Council's planning portal is used by many other Council's for consultation purposes and was adopted for the Regulation 18 consultation on this	No

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			<p>on-site notices and notices in the local press.</p> <p>May I point out that the notices in the local press are always presented in a very small font size. At 74 I have very great difficulty reading them with or without reading glasses. I am certain I am not alone in this. My stroke disabled wife who has age related macular degeneration, cannot read them at all but can read normal size fonts. The E&HR Act requires that public service providers make reasonable adjustments for disability in the provision of services. May I suggest that printing planning notices in a normal or larger font size in press notices is a reasonable adjustment, possible at minimal cost. I also bring this to the attention of local activist groups involved in local planning issues.</p> <p>By the way, not every Wirral citizen has access to a computer and your Consultation Portal, for many older, less savvy people, even with a</p>	<p>basis. The Council will review the comments received on the practicalities of using the portal ahead of the Regulation 19 consultation.</p>	

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			computer, is not a portal but an obstacle.		

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ECONOMY REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date 4th March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Maritime Knowledge Hub is a catalytic project that will support wider development within Wirral Waters. It will create a world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth and sector development. It will bring together the region's key maritime assets in business, research, education and training to address challenges around innovation and skills within a refurbished and new build high profile centre.

The Wirral Plan 2025 Vision sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The Maritime Knowledge Hub (MKH) project directly supports the following key themes within that plan.

- Prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live.

This is a key decision and matter affects the Seacombe Ward within the Borough.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Appendices 1 and 3 to this report contain exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It is in the public interest to exclude the press and public during consideration of these items under Paragraph 3 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)' and Paragraph 5 ('legal professional privilege')

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

- 1 Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Resources, to finalise the Heads of Terms

substantially in accordance with the draft Heads of Terms attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

- 2 Approve the Full Business Case for Maritime Knowledge Hub.
- 3 Authorise the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place and the Director of Resources, to finalise agreements for the Council to enter into a conditional Forward Funding Agreement, Agreement for Lease and Lease, based on the finalised heads of terms, with Peel Land and Property (Intermediate) Ltd.
- 4 Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Resources to accept the terms of the Grant Funding Agreement, subject to successful award, from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government in respect of the pre-test and trial Maritime Accelerator Project and to commence necessary procurement exercises to enable the delivery of the Accelerator.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Participating in the development of the Maritime Knowledge Hub (MKH), through a Forward Funding Agreement and taking of a 250-year lease will create a world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth and sector development. It will bring together the region's key maritime assets in business, research, education and training to address challenges around innovation and skills within a refurbished and new build high profile centre. The recommendations will allow the project to proceed as an investment vehicle for the Council which has the potential to deliver a financial return to offset the capital investment.
- 1.2 The project will establish Phase 2 of the MKH, Phase 1 having already been established at a smaller site adjacent to the A41 and Cammell Laird as a base for Mersey Maritime – the industry leading cluster organisation. Phase 2 will support the place shaping undertaken for both Wirral Waters and Birkenhead Town Centre by establishing a second university presence within the Borough. A university presence brings a range of regenerative benefits including higher level skills, knowledge-based start-up businesses and students and staff who require a range of amenities and will therefore provide increased footfall into a revitalised Birkenhead.
- 1.3 The MKH will deliver sector specific targeted Grade 'A' office accommodation, skills, research and innovation support in Wirral Waters, an area providing significant potential for growth and regeneration. It will provide a circa 58,000 sq.ft facility including a new build element and the renovation of the Grade 2 listed Hydraulic Tower. The project has the potential to create up to 621 gross direct jobs. It will also result in the reclamation of circa 2.3 acres of brownfield land.
- 1.4 Delivery of a complementary pre-test and trial Maritime Accelerator Project presents an ideal opportunity to pilot activity in advance of the scheduled launch of MKH II, building cluster capacity, facilitating wider engagement of the sector and initiating test and trial innovation accelerator activities in readiness for full roll-out of the concept of the new Hub within the Liverpool City Region Innovation Ecosystem.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Do Nothing:
The Council takes no action and does not participate in the project. This would result in the scheme not progressing due to the viability gap. Not developing the site and refurbishing the listed building would be detrimental to the wider Wirral Waters scheme.
- 2.2 Direct Delivery by the Council:
This has not been an option as the land upon which this development will take place is in the ownership of Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Limited and they are unwilling to dispose of the freehold interest. This option would require significant Council resource to project manage the build and also add significant risk to the Council in terms of cost overruns which would be the Council's responsibility.

- 2.3 Alternative leasehold structure:
Other leasehold arrangements have been considered and in particular consideration was given to a 30 year strip out lease. Advice secured from Lambert Smith Hampton, the Council's retained property advisor, indicates that where the occupational income is relatively complex (e.g. more than 5 tenants) and there is a significant chance that throughout the investment period, the income may not match that of the liabilities within the headlease, Public Works Loan Board finance should be considered strongly. Taking the above issues into account officers have identified that this would therefore not be a viable option to pursue.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Wirral Waters is one of the largest regeneration projects in the UK (some 500 acres) with the potential to create over 20,000 permanent jobs and to transform the derelict docklands through a mix of sustainable mixed-use development schemes.
- 3.2 The Maritime Knowledge Hub will create a world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth and sector development. It will bring together the region's key maritime assets in business, research, education and training to address future challenges around innovation and skills within a refurbished and new high-profile centre. The space will be designed to create an environment for maritime businesses and for University provision to locate and for a range of skills to come together from these organisations to help drive new products intended to significantly advance the growth of the sector.
- 3.3 The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Councils vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This project supports the key themes of the vision through the creation of a mix of uses within the hub including the provision of support and growth space for fledgling maritime businesses through an accelerator model, the creation of next generation talent through degree apprenticeships and satisfying the demand for mandatory offshore safety and survival skills. It will also further develop university presence within Wirral's economy supporting the skills campus place-making theme and the wider ambitions for Birkenhead and the surrounding areas.
- 3.4 MKH is a nationally significant project that also acts as a major catalyst for activity within Wirral Waters. It has recognition from central Government and support from the Combined Authority who have included it as a project within the Liverpool City Region Economic Recovery Plan – Building Back Better.
- 3.5 The proposed scheme will deliver a new iconic maritime sector facility of circa 58,000 sq.ft within the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone. It will be built around the iconic 19th century Grade 2 listed hydraulic tower, a copy of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. The site being developed sits within the Four Bridges 'neighbourhood area' of Wirral Waters. This is a mixed- use area that combines commercial, training, educational, cultural and ancillary retail uses within a high-quality landscape and is the first area being delivered within Wirral Waters. A plan of the site is shown in Appendix 2.

The 2025 Wirral Plan

- 3.6 The Wirral Plan 2025 Vision sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The Maritime Knowledge Hub (MKH) project directly supports the following key themes within that plan.
- Prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
 - Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live.
- 3.7 The Wirral Waters area is recognised in the borough's Strategic Regeneration Framework, approved by Council in October 2017, as one of the key spatial priority areas for regeneration and investment. Wirral Waters is also identified in the emerging Birkenhead Regeneration Framework and Local Plan as an area providing significant potential for growth which will support and guide the delivery of physical, economic and environmental change and deliver wider regeneration.

Delivering the Project – the Full Business Case

- 3.8 The site is in the ownership of the Peel group and it is proposed that the delivery of the MKH will be carried out by Peel Land and Property Investments (Intermediate) Ltd (Peel) acting as developer. This will be based on a Forward Funding model, with the Council's role being that of Forward Funder (effectively a capital purchase). The Council will commit to taking a 250-year lease of the completed asset to an agreed design, subject to Peel satisfying a number of conditions precedents which are outlined in the exempt Full Business case (enclosed as Appendix 1 to this report).
- 3.9 Completion of conditional contracts will enable Peel to progress to detailed design of the scheme and to then submit detailed planning and Listed Building consent applications. Peel will also at this stage commence full marketing of the project to secure tenants for the completed property. The Council and Peel will only commit to the build at the stage when the conditions precedents are fully met. This will include that Peel have secured pre letting of 80% of the property based on the total estimated rental value which has been agreed by the parties. The marketing will be directed at the maritime sector businesses and associated industries. Peel will secure the pre lets on terms which are in line with the Letting Strategy which has been drafted by the Council's external property advisor. This Letting Strategy will form part of the legal contract documents and will ensure that the tenants are approved by the Council and of sufficient covenant strength to provide a secure level of income.
- 3.10 The Letting Strategy includes the following requirements to secure the Council's risk position: -
- Achieving or exceeding the agreed level of Estimated Rental Value;
 - Not exceeding a specific tenant incentive (rent free period);

- No service charge caps, unless agreed by the Funder (acting reasonably)
 - Specific rent review mechanisms such as 5 yearly Consumer Price Index/ Retail Price Index linked reviews
 - Initial lease terms - minimum term
 - Covenant strength / financial position
- 3.11 The remaining 20% of the property will be marketed by Peel but will not be subject to the conditions precedents.
- 3.12 The 250-year lease between Peel and the Council will be at nominal premium and a peppercorn rent but will contain obligations on the Council which are set out in the Heads of Terms attached to this report. The Council's commitment as owner of the long lease will be to manage and maintain the property.
- 3.13 The Council will be taking on a 250-year lease of the MKH and therefore the specification and design must be entirely acceptable to the Council. The Council will be fully involved in the work to finalise the specification to RIBA Stage 3 and will have absolute discretion as to whether it can be finally signed off. This will be a condition within the Funding Agreement. The scheme has an outline design that has been prepared by two award-winning, internationally acclaimed architectural firms, Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects in Denmark, and Ellis Williams Architects in Liverpool. The architects are committed to breathing new life back into the Grade II listed Hydraulic Tower building, which was bombed during World War II. Visually, this project is expected to be one of the most spectacular parts of the entire Wirral Waters regeneration project.
- 3.14 The current programme sets out that Peel will aim to submit a planning application for the scheme in June 2021. Should the planning application be approved the construction tender would be issued with construction estimated to commence in December 2021.
- 3.15 The appointment of a construction contractor will be via a fully compliant procurement process to ensure value for money. The Council will ensure that the design and specification of the project will be of a high quality and will deliver a scheme that will attract tenants. The Council and Peel are also committed to the need to address Social Value. There will be a requirement that all bidders must deliver against Wirral Council's Social Value policy and contribute towards the social and economic development and regeneration of the area. This will reflect the social value delivered through the construction of the Wirral Metropolitan College Campus in Wirral Waters and include the use of local labour, the provision of apprenticeships, the use of the Wirral Construction Forum for supply chain opportunities and work placements.
- 3.16 A key objective of the Council in investing in this scheme is to address the business needs of the maritime and marine sector and to create a world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth and sector development located within Wirral. It will be designed to bring together the region's key maritime assets in business, research and development, education and training to address challenges facing the industry around innovation and skills, decarbonisation and digitalisation. The space will create an environment for maritime businesses and for higher education to locate and for a range of skills to come together from these

organisations to help drive new products and services intended to significantly advance the growth of the sector.

- 3.17 The MKH development will also complement a range of other projects which are in progress including the housing delivery at Northbank, Tower Road offices and the proposed Marine, Energy and Automotive Park at West Float which is coming forward as a new, multi-unit, 1 million sq ft waterside manufacturing and logistics centre.
- 3.18 Investing in this scheme will also assist in broadening the business rate base to generate on-going revenue to support service provision. However, the Council will also be investing in the delivery of wider regeneration and economic development. MKH will secure a University presence, facilitate enterprise growth and deliver new Grade A office accommodation in an area of identified need bringing new employment opportunities to Wirral Waters.
- 3.19 The draft Heads of Terms for the Funding Agreement, Agreement for Lease and Lease are set out in the enclosed exempt Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.20 During the development period of MKH, a time-limited maritime accelerator test and trial project will operate out of existing partner premises in the borough. Subject to confirmation of funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and MHCLG, this will commence in this calendar year and run to June 2023 with the aim of building cluster capacity, facilitating wider engagement of the sector and initiating test and trial innovation accelerator activities that can be evaluated in advance of roll-out of the concept in the new Maritime Knowledge Hub. This project will be delivered at no cost to Wirral Council, with 100% costs supported through external funding.
- 3.21 The Council will be seeking to secure a supplier through a competitive tendering exercise to deliver one aspect of this test and trial project, namely a competitive, cyclical, intensive accelerator programme for small cohorts of SMEs/Individuals with a 'live' innovation project idea. This will include, but not limited to, activities such as: weekly masterclasses, custom workshop sessions, domain-knowledge sharing sessions, pitching classes, validation of market demand, facilitation of idea and prototype sprints, demo days. Procurement of a supplier to deliver this intensive accelerator programme will commence in Spring 2021, subject to confirmation of funding.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The project has been developed to stimulate and provide support to the Maritime Sector, whilst bringing back into use a derelict grade two listed building in Wirral Waters. However, from a property perspective, the project requires public intervention in order to overcome viability issues. This is when the value of the building on completion is less than the construction costs of the development. On this basis, for a developer to commit to constructing the property, there is a requirement for public sector intervention to address the viability gap.

- 4.2 The LCRCA recognises the need to stimulate private sector growth by making the best use of public sector funds to encourage private sector business investment and to maximise private sector leverage and a bid has been made for Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) monies in support of the project. In addition, a bid has been made for grant support from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund (WWIF). Details of the funding mix are set out in the exempt Business case and the WWIF appraisal and recommendations are subject to a separate report to this Committee.
- 4.3 The finances of this project have been structured on the Council using its ability to finance the capital costs through borrowing. The rents secured through onward letting of the property would be used to fund the borrowing costs. Part of the Heads of Terms with Peel for MKH is that the development costs and purchase price would be fixed regardless of any cost pressures on the construction. There is also a requirement for the property to have pre-let space of 80% of the rental value. Both of these factors reduce the financial risk, giving increased certainty on the revenue benefits for the Council from the project. The project is financially viable although not without risk and a number of financial scenarios have been modelled and the Council has taken specialist property advice and undertaken a number of market surveys to consider the demand for the property space.
- 4.4 The total cost of the project is detailed in Section 6 of the exempt Business Case attached to this report. The cost of borrowing assumes an interest rate of 2%. This is subject to market conditions at the time so may fluctuate until the full purchase price is paid. The principal repayment is charged to revenue over 50 years (the maximum allowable under regulations), in line with the Councils current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy. This starts at a low amount in the early years and increases by inflation each year, so that the full purchase price is recovered. As rental income will also increase by inflation in future years, this also helps offset the purchase costs being charged.
- 4.5 The rationale for promoting the forward funding and long lease structure is based on the following considerations:
- delivery risk** – risk in the delivery phase is shared by Peel (as developer) with responsibility for the contractor appointment. While demand risk lies with the Council in the long term, the proposal will only proceed upon satisfying key conditions, including an agreed level of pre-lets being achieved by Peel. On this basis, demand risk is deemed to be manageable.
- affordability** – the cost of borrowing for the Council remains affordable and is likely to be lower than the investment yield applied to the Council interest under the headlease proposition.
- cost certainty** – funding the purchase through borrowing enables the Council to fix a payment profile in advance, providing the Council with cost certainty from the outset.
- 4.6 The purchase is for a 250-year leasehold interest. The onward letting of the property will generate a rental return to the Council. The ownership of the lease gives the Council flexibility to dispose of the property if the commercial opportunity becomes available at some future point.

- 4.7 Further specific financial details of the scheme are set out in the Full Business Case attached as an exempt annex.
- 4.8 The total cost of the pre-test and trial Maritime Accelerator Project is £2m as detailed below. External funding sources will provide full cost recovery with no financial impact to the Council. Applications for ERDF and Match Funds are currently at final approval stage with grant funding agreements anticipated end of March 2021. The Council will not proceed without grant funding agreements for the full total project cost in place.

	ERDF (£)	Match Funding (£)	Total (£)
Capital	£0	£0	
Revenue	£1,000,462	£1,000,462	£2,000,924

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Heads of Terms for the Funding Agreement, Agreement for Lease and Lease have been provisionally agreed between the parties and if approved will progress to detailed drafting of contracts. There are some outstanding matters which will need to be resolved by negotiation when the legal documentation is drafted.
- 5.2 Wirral Council Grant Funding Agreements will need to be on finally agreed terms that are consistent with the Council's obligations for SIF/Wirral Waters Investment Fund Grant Funding Agreements.
- 5.3 The Heads of Terms as provisionally agreed with Peel are compatible with the new Subsidy Control legal requirements and are also compliant with the procurement requirements imposed on local authorities by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 as amended.
- 5.4 Detailed legal advice has been provided on a procurement strategy and a preferred approach has been identified. This solution relies on the exclusive rights exemption at Regulation 32(2)(b)(iii) PCR 2015 and mitigating reliance on this exemption through:
- (i) securing evidence supporting it in fact;
 - (ii) requiring Peel to conduct a works contract procurement in accordance with the PCR 2015; and
 - (iii) other practical mitigation measures which may apply to protect the Council should a challenge occur (for example, an indemnity from Peel if it breaches its obligations to procure in accordance with the PCR 2015).
- Further detail is set out in the exempt Full Business Case.
- 5.5 The Council has engaged suitably qualified external specialists in order to advise on the full range of legal, financial and technical matters associated with this project.

5.6 With regards the pre-test and trial Maritime Accelerator Project, as outlined in paragraph 4.8, confirmation of funding is imminent, and the Council has not yet received a grant offer detailing the terms and conditions of the award. Officers will seek advice from the Director of Law and Governance regarding acceptance of terms.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The Forward Funding Agreement will involve a financial liability to the Council. In addition, on completion of the development and grant of the 250-year lease the Council will be responsible for the onward management of the building.

6.2 The intention is for the Council to seek to appoint an Operator to manage the building and the facility. The role of the Operator in managing the facility will be to develop and create an environment for the occupiers of the hub that nurtures innovation, collaboration, skill development and promotes future business growth of the maritime industry. The operating costs are allowed for in the financial modelling.

6.3 Peel Holdings will be responsible for the procurement and delivery of the MKH project with oversight from Wirral Council in accordance with the Agreement for Lease. This will require input from officers within the Regeneration and Place Directorate and Legal and Finance teams together with some specialist input from property lawyers and commercial development surveyors.

6.4 The pre-test and trial Maritime Accelerator Project will provide 100% funds to support the recruitment and appointment of two Council Project Officers within the Regeneration & Place Directorate for coordination of project partner delivery.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 All risks associated with this project will be identified and managed as part of the Regeneration and Place Directorate's programme management and a comprehensive risk register is contained within the Full Business Case. A Risk Workshop has been held to ensure that risks from across the Council have been identified and mitigation actions outlined. Below is a summary of some of the key risks identified and how they will be managed.

Key Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Occupier interest – extent to which the property is in demand and will be occupied by end users	Rent free periods have been allowed as incentive which is appropriately benchmarked with other schemes and the local market. A marketing budget has been allowed for as part of the development costs. Market analysis supports the demand for the product. In the long term the Council will explore the opportunity to appoint an external operator who would provide the

	necessary commercial skills and acumen for managing the facility including its marketing and promotion
Detailed planning permission is not secured in relation to the project	Recognition that scheme is covered by and is compliant with outline planning permission, and the Council are supportive of the proposed development. Fee is included within the appraisal to secure Reserved Matters permission, and this is not considered to be a major risk. Peel will progress pre application advice.
Dock wall – clarification and certainty of the responsibility for the future maintenance of the dock wall. This will be outside of the demised property boundary but the Council would rely on its future maintenance. Risk of the Council incurring abortive professional fees if an agreed position cannot be reached.	Peel is undertaking a full list of Site Investigations including a condition report in respect of the dock wall. The Council is seeking to mitigate the risk through the legal agreements and is taking advice from external legal experts.
SIF funding is not secured from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Council officers and Peel hold regular meetings with the SIF Investment team to ensure that the project is supported and that a strong case is put forward for investment. The is a priority strategic investment project identified in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Recovery Plan
Construction Budget and Programme inadequate to deliver the proposed high-quality building	Risk reduced due to ‘fixed budget’ in place for the construction of the buildings. Peel has also worked with consultants to establish what provisional sums are needed to cover any unforeseen costs during the contract works. Peel also has a change control procedure in place to manage variations to the tender.
Worse than anticipated condition of existing Hydraulic Tower building results in delay or increased costs	A suite of surveys will be commissioned by Peel prior to the works commencing. The Council will have sight of these.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There has been ongoing consultation with businesses on the need for the facility and Peel supported by Mersey Maritime have undertaken soft marketing to establish

potential tenant interest and engagement. The Council has commissioned detailed demand studies. Further public consultation will take place as part of the planning application that will be submitted by Peel to the Council.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The potential impact of the MKH development has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan and no amendments have been made.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Heads of Terms contain an obligation to form part of the Specification for the new build elements of the development to be to BREEAM Excellent. This will be as a minimum target and the aim is to maximise the sustainability offer, green credentials and performance of the project overall.

10.2 The Maritime Knowledge Hub will focus on addressing the technology challenges facing the maritime sector. Two major challenges currently facing the sector are decarbonisation and digitalisation; Maritime Knowledge hub will therefore focus the first stage operational plan on research and innovation in these technologies, supporting the borough in advancing climate emergency priorities within the wider business sector.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 2 – Site plan showing land to the proposed site of MKH edged red, being land to the east of East Float dock and west of Tower Road. The land edged blue will be retained in the ownership of Peel and it intended to be used as a walkway.

Exempt appendices – by virtue of Paragraph 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Appendix 1 – Full Business Case & Associated Appendices
Appendix 3 – Draft Heads of Terms

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Gyron Demand Study 2016
GVA market report August 2018
SQW Demand Study February 2020

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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N/A	
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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND - MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report seeks approval to provide a grant to the Council to enable the delivery of new high quality Maritime Knowledge Hub floorspace in Wirral.

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The application for financial assistance contained in this report directly supports the following key themes within that plan.

- Prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live

Appendix 2 of this report is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

This matter affects Seacombe, Bidston St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere Wards

The decision is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendation:

1. Approve funding from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to the Council to support the development of new high quality mixed use floorspace at the Maritime Knowledge Hub.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To enable the Council working in partnership with Peel Land and Property Investments (Intermediate) Limited (Peel) to create a new, high quality Maritime Knowledge Hub, to support the priorities of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund.
- 1.2 The development will provide a new specialist sector facility to accelerate growth in the maritime sector including University led skills, research and innovation, intensive support for new enterprises, specialist offshore training and Grade “A” office accommodation for related industries. This will support business growth, regeneration and job creation and will include the renovation of a historic landmark building and the reclamation of approximately 2.3 acres of brownfield land.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of other options have been considered and were discounted as follows: -
 - a) Provide a loan rather than a grant: An independent appraisal of the application has concluded that the project is not currently viable and therefore requires grant funding rather than loan funding.
 - b) Adopt a “do nothing” approach: The development could be jeopardised, as the project is reliant on securing funding from other public sources to meet the identified viability gap. The Wirral Waters Investment Fund (“WWIF”) grant will enable the delivery of a high quality development which will support the Wirral Growth Plan. Without grant funding the project may not proceed at all.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Cabinet approved the development of an investment framework for the re-investment of business rate uplift within the Wirral Waters part of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone at its 12 March 2015 meeting (Minute 156 refers). On 5 November 2015 Cabinet formally approved the creation and operation of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund and the incorporation of the investment potential for Phase 1 (£16m by 2020) into the Council’s Capital Programme (Minute 62 refers). The Cabinet report also identified potential for the Fund to enable longer-term investment of up to £47m by 2037.
- 3.2 The Investment Fund has been created on the basis of reinvesting uplifted business rates and/or prudential borrowing against future business rates into the Enterprise Zone up to 2037, to support new projects through grants and loans and generate further business rates income. The Wirral Waters Business Plan (August 2018) together with an updated summary note outlines the pipeline of projects that will be brought forward through the Investment Fund process.
- 3.3 The Business Plan sets out that intervention in the early years of the programme if invested in the right projects and in cluster locations will have a transformational

impact in terms of attracting significant investment and enhancing the image of the area in and around Birkenhead.

- 3.4 The area in and around the Birkenhead Dock system suffers from a number of inter-related market failures following decades of industrial decline and lack of investment. New development in the area is often not viable without some form of public sector support. The low values and associated impact on viability are caused by the historically poor external perceptions of the area, the lack of occupier confidence across all sectors and associated uncertainties about investment returns.
- 3.5 The Wirral Waters Investment Fund therefore provides a mechanism to support the following:
- Development viability support - funding support for commercial, industrial and residential development schemes, to close the gap between costs and values, allowing commercial development schemes to proceed.
 - Land remediation and servicing – on-site and off-site works to address poor ground conditions through land remediation and the installation of key services.
 - Environmental improvements – on-site and off-site works aimed at enhancing the quality of the environment across the Wirral Waters area including the improvement of road corridors and gateway locations.
 - Infrastructure investment – on-site and off-site works targeted specific infrastructure weaknesses to enhance access and traffic flows.
 - High quality communities – a programme of on-site and off-site investment aimed at enhancing amenity to create a sustainable environment for businesses and residents moving into the area.

Wirral Waters Investment Fund Process

- 3.6 The Council's Finance department oversees the management of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund. In addition, external advisors have been commissioned to provide expert advice and support for the assessment and appraisal of business cases submitted to the WWIF, ensuring robust due diligence is undertaken. This includes providing subsidy control advice (see Section 5 Legal Implications below); undertaking a site-by-site independent business case review; analysing the property market to support the public investment decision; and reviewing the financial returns to the Council.
- 3.7 Key Project Details are set out in Exempt Appendix 2 attached.
- 3.8 The Council has applied for viability support funding through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the delivery of the Maritime Knowledge Hub, which comprises 58,756 sq ft of commercial floorspace to accelerate growth in the maritime sector. The Maritime Knowledge Hub sits within the Four Bridges area of Wirral Waters. This is a mixed-use area that combines commercial training, education, cultural and ancillary retail uses within a high-quality landscape and is being delivered alongside the residential developments at NorthBank within Wirral Waters. The Maritime Knowledge Hub will create a world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth and sector development. It will bring together the region's

key maritime assets in business, research, education and training to address challenges around innovation and skills and build a high-profile centre.

- 3.9 A site plan showing the extent of the boundary is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.10 The detailed design of the building has not yet been finalised however the Council is keen to promote development using sustainable methods. This will be achieved through its design, selection of materiality, using renewable energy and careful procurement during the construction and operating stages.

Key Outputs

- 3.11 The project will deliver approximately 58,756 sq ft of new commercial floorspace and will generate additional business rates within the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone from practical completion until 2037. The project has the potential to create up to 1,062 gross direct and indirect jobs, with 621 FTE jobs following practical completion and 22 FTE jobs during the construction phases.
- 3.12 The project is projected to leverage other public sector investment during the construction phase and generate further investment by end users in the form of fit-out and ongoing operation.
- 3.13 The development proposals at Wirral Waters benefit from an outline planning consent. The Maritime Knowledge Hub project is included within and compliant with the outline permission. A reserved matters Planning permission would be required before development could commence as well as Listed Building consent given that the hydraulic tower is grade 2 listed.
- 3.14 The delivery of the Maritime Knowledge Hub project is addressed by a separate report included on the agenda for this Committee.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial information is set out in detail in Appendix 2 to this report. Appendix 2 is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The offer of financial assistance is subject to the new Subsidy Control regime which as of 1 January 2021 replaced the previous EU State Aid rules. Subsidies awarded must satisfy 6 core principles, referred to as the "General Principles" which are to be found in Article 3 of the recently concluded UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement ("TCA"). These core principles bear considerable resemblance to the sort of considerations already tested in EU State aid block exemptions. The new UK Subsidy Control regime is certainly no more restrictive than the current EU law framework.
- 5.2 The funding is proposed from Wirral Waters Investment Fund. This was established for the purpose of promoting investment and economic growth within the Wirral Waters priority regeneration area seeking to maximise the value of the designation of

the area as part of the wider Wirral Waters the aim of the fund scheme is to create jobs and attract investors, it aims to remedy social difficulty through regeneration of a locality its objectives appear to very clearly meet this principle. Article 56 of the previously applicable General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) specifically addressed projects of this nature.

- 5.3 Although the GBER is not within the UK Subsidy Control regime, awards made under the GBER are subject to the same Common Principles under Article 3.4 of the TCA. GBER was painstakingly drafted to limit aid interventions to the scale and level that would deliver minimal distortions of competition only, and those that were considered balanced out against their distortive effects by their positive effects on investment and the economy, per type of activity. The limits of Articles 53 and 56 GBER were deemed appropriate for investments in restoring tangible cultural heritage and local infrastructure investments. Physical work on the project has not started and there is no risk that the subsidy will be compensating the beneficiary for works that the benefits would have funded in the absence of any subsidy. A project of this nature therefore is not likely to be deemed to have a material effect on trade between different states.
- 5.4 The subsidy is necessary because without it the development would not proceed since it would not be commercially viable and there are no other ways of achieving the objectives.
- 5.5 The subsidy is proportionate since it and the Strategic Investment Fund grant would not amount in total to more than what is required to fill the gap between the estimated cost and the estimated value of the project. The amounts to be apportioned between the cost of the works to the Hydraulic Tower and the commercial extension are compliant with the State Aid rules for investments in restoring tangible cultural heritage and local infrastructures permitted by Articles 53 and 56 of the GBER.
- 5.6 It is therefore considered that the subsidy's contribution to achieving the objectives outweighs the negative effects of distorting the market in commercial property developments particularly as that market is local and in any event has been stunted by the low market value attaching to a derelict area of dockland. The proposals within this report are considered to be compliant with subsidy control rules.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The monitoring and management of the grant will be resourced through the existing work programmes of officers within the Council's Place and Investment Team. The drawing up of the legal agreement will be managed by the Council's Legal team.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The detailed risks of the project in relation to the funding are identified along with appropriate mitigation measures within the project details in Exempt Appendix 2.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This report is consistent with the principles of Wirral Council's Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework and emerging Local Plan, which identifies Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone as an identified and agreed area of significant growth potential.
- 8.2 The Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework have been informed by consultation which has taken place with a number of private sector partners and local businesses through Wirral Chamber of Commerce sector forums.
- 8.3 There has been ongoing consultation with businesses on the need for the facility and Peel supported by Mersey Maritime have undertaken soft marketing to establish potential tenant interest and engagement. The Council has commissioned detailed demand studies. Further public consultation will take place as part of the planning application that will be submitted by Peel to the Council.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. It is not considered that the Project will have an adverse impact on any persons with protected characteristics. On the contrary they would be likely to benefit from the increased employment opportunities generated by the Project if it is successful.
- 9.2 The potential impact of the Maritime Knowledge Hub development has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan and no amendments have been made.
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This project will involve the redevelopment of 2.3 acres of brownfield land. In addition It will bring forward the refurbishment of a derelict listed building into economic use. The Council will work with Peel during the detailed design stage to ensure that regard is had to the Cool2 Policy.
- 10.2 The Specification for the new build elements of the development aim to be BREEAM Excellent. This will be as a minimum target and the aim is to maximise the sustainability offer, green credentials and performance of the project overall.
- 10.3 The Maritime Knowledge Hub will focus on addressing the technology challenges facing the maritime sector. Two major challenges currently facing the sector are decarbonisation and digitalisation; Maritime Knowledge hub will therefore focus the first stage operational plan on research and innovation in these technologies, supporting the borough in advancing climate emergency priorities within the wider business sector.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site Plan showing the site of MKH edged red being land to the east of East Float dock and west of Tower Road. The land edged blue will be retained in Peel ownership for the provision of a walkway.

Appendix 2 – Key project details - Exempt

BACKGROUND PAPERS

A number of background papers to this report are exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contain commercially sensitive information.

Outline planning consent for Wirral Waters Reference OUT/09/06509

Wirral Waters Investment Fund Business Plan - Exempt

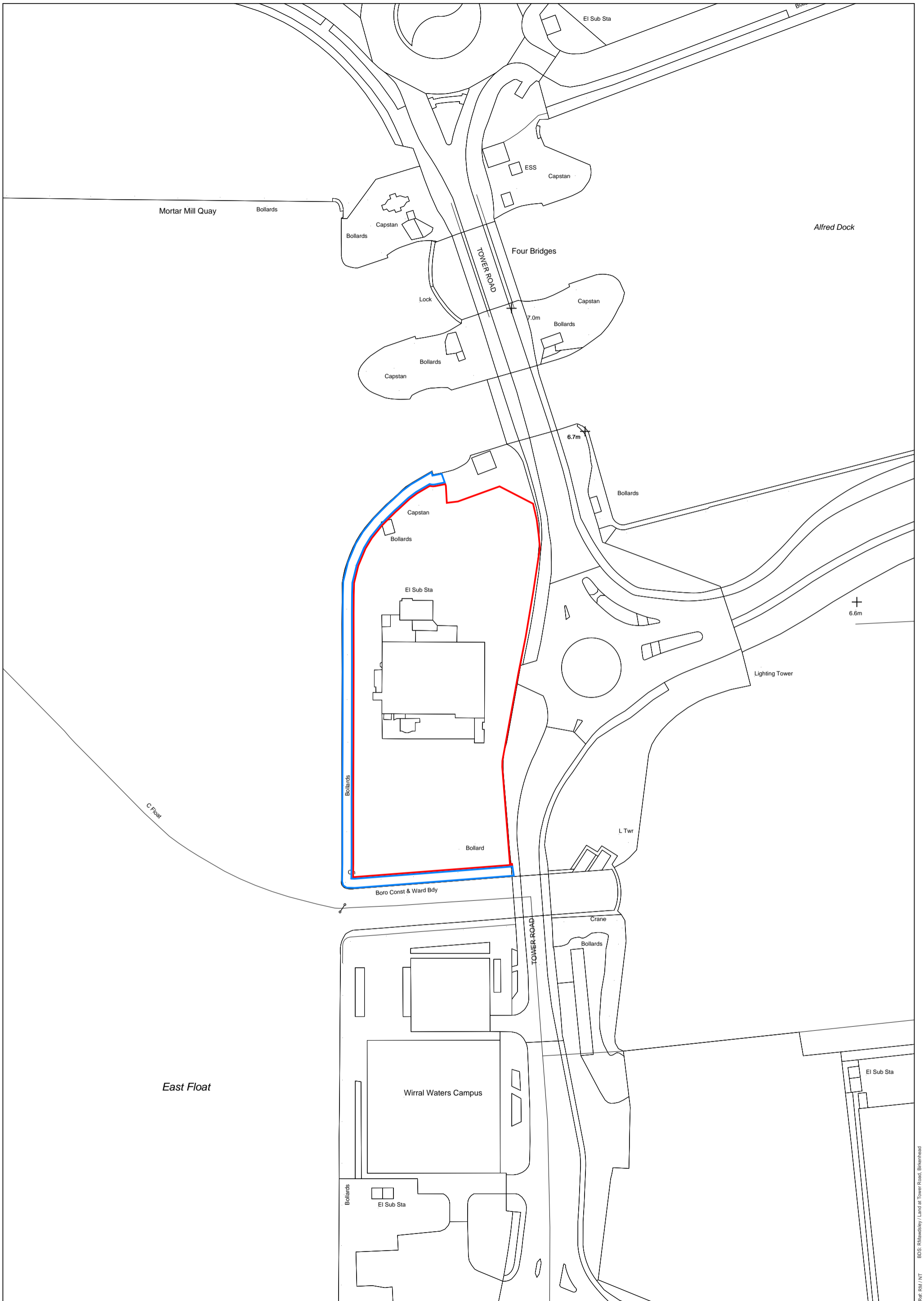
Amion Summary update note - Exempt

Avison Young WWIF Maritime Knowledge Hub report - Exempt

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
N/A	

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Ref: RM/NT BDS: R04wdskly/Land at Tower Road, Birkenhead

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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL WATERS ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT FUND
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report seeks approval to provide a grant to Peel Land and Property Investments (Intermediate) Limited to enable the delivery of new high quality mixed use floorspace at Egerton Village within Wirral Waters.

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The application for financial assistance contained in this report directly supports the following key themes within that plan.

- Prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live

Appendix 2 of this report is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

This matter affects Bidston and St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere and Seacombe Wards within the Borough.

The decision is regarded as a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

1. Approve a grant from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to Peel Land and Property Investments (Intermediate) Limited to support the development of new high quality mixed use floorspace at Egerton Village.

2. Authorise the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place to draw up and sign a conditional legal agreement between the Council and Peel Land and Property (Intermediate) Limited to reflect the grant arrangements.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To enable Peel Land and Property Investments (Intermediate) Limited to create new, high quality floorspace at Egerton Village, to support the priorities of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund (WWIF).
- 1.2 Egerton Village is a new, low carbon 14,671 sq ft gateway community, amenity and arts facility located in the Four Bridges area of Wirral Waters, and will provide a focal point for arrival and orientation around Wirral Waters. The development has been designed to create a new semi-public, semi-covered 'square' at its heart that will be used for events and other activities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of other options have been considered and were discounted as follows: -
 - a) **Provide a loan rather than a grant:** An independent appraisal of the application has concluded that the project is not currently viable and therefore requires grant funding rather than loan funding.
 - b) **Adopt a “do nothing” approach:** The development would be jeopardised, as the project is reliant on securing funding from other public/private sources to meet the identified viability gap. The WWIF grant will enable the delivery of a high-quality development which will support the Wirral Growth Plan. Without grant funding the project may not proceed at all.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Cabinet approved the development of an investment framework for the reinvestment of business rate uplift within the Wirral Waters part of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone at its 12 March 2015 meeting (Minute 156 refers). On 5 November 2015 Members formally approved the creation and operation of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund and the incorporation of the investment potential for Phase 1 (£16m by 2020) into the Council's Capital Programme (Minute 62 refers). The Cabinet report also identified potential for the Fund to enable longer-term investment of up to £47m by 2037.
- 3.2 The Investment Fund has been created on the basis of reinvesting uplifted business rates and/or prudential borrowing against future business rates into the Enterprise Zone up to 2037, to support new projects through grants and loans and generate further business rates income. The Wirral Waters Business Plan (August 2018) together with an updated summary note outlines the pipeline of projects that will be brought forward through the Investment Fund process.
- 3.3 The Business Plan set out that intervention in the early years of the programme if invested in the right projects and in the right cluster locations will have a

transformational impact in terms of attracting significant investment and enhancing the image of the area in and around Birkenhead.

- 3.4 The area in and around the Birkenhead Dock system suffers from a number of inter-related market failures following decades of industrial decline and lack of investment. New development in the area is often not viable without some form of public sector support. The low values and associated impact on viability, are caused by the historically poor external perceptions of the area, the lack of occupier confidence across all sectors and associated uncertainties about investment returns.
- 3.5 The Wirral Waters Investment Fund therefore provides a mechanism to support the following:
- Development viability support - funding support for commercial, industrial, and residential development schemes, to close the gap between costs and values, allowing commercial development schemes to proceed.
 - Land remediation and servicing – on-site and off-site works to address poor ground conditions through land remediation and the installation of key services.
 - Environmental improvements – on-site and off-site works aimed at enhancing the quality of the environment across the Wirral Waters area including the improvement of road corridors and gateway locations.
 - Infrastructure investment – on-site and off-site works targeted specific infrastructure weaknesses to enhance access and traffic flows.
 - High quality communities – a programme of on-site and off-site investment aimed at enhancing amenity to create a sustainable environment for businesses and residents moving into the area.

Wirral Waters Investment Fund Process

- 3.6 The Council's Finance department oversees the management of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund. In addition, external advisors have been commissioned to provide expert advice and support for the assessment and appraisal of business cases submitted to the WWIF, ensuring robust due diligence is undertaken. This includes providing subsidy control advice (see Section 5 Legal Implications below); undertaking a site-by-site independent business case review; analysing the property market to support the public investment decision; and reviewing the financial returns to the Council.
- 3.7 Key Project Details are set out in Exempt Appendix 2 attached.
- 3.8 Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has applied for a grant for viability support through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the delivery of Egerton Village, which comprises 14,671 sq ft of commercial floorspace to support key sector development at Four Bridges. Egerton Village has been designed as a four-sided, two storey courtyard. To the north the largest wing will potentially accommodate a variety of arts and creative industries and students in flexible workshop, studio and education space, with the potential for part to be used as a gallery. This space may also accommodate a visitor centre which will help signpost visitors and interpret the activities taking place.

- 3.9 Across the central square occupying an outstanding, waterfront, westerly location on the dock edge there is the potential for a new restaurant. Complementing these offers along the Tower Road frontage will be a series of smaller, retail outlets / kiosks potentially accommodating such amenity services as food retail, coffee, newsagents etc to support the local and emerging residential, commercial and student community. This will complement the developments coming forward within Birkenhead Town Centre progressed by the Wirral Growth Company.
- 3.10 Now that construction has begun on the 33,541 sqft grade A BREEAM Excellent No 1 Tower Road South Office building, next door to Egerton Village, there is a pressing need to deliver Egerton Village to establish greater and appropriate amenity that will assist in attracting new employers into the area and create a step change in terms of people's perception of the place establishing a vital and viable base for exploring the rest of Wirral Waters and the wider Left Bank area with clear linkages into Birkenhead Town Centre.
- 3.11 Egerton Village will serve existing and new businesses and communities, students, visitors and residents through the provision of much needed amenity space including an appropriate food and drink offer as well as providing studio and workspace accommodation with a focus on the 'arts'. A site plan showing the extent of the boundary is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.12 The development will be built using Modern Methods of Construction involving a panelised approach to construction. The modules are an A-frame construction and will form the fabric of the built environment. It will be BREEAM Excellent and will be distinct, innovative and cost effective in its design and in its use of modules and panels. A design competition has been held and the project has successfully been through PlacesMatter! design review process.
- 3.13 The aim is to try and create the first Net Zero Carbon building at Wirral Waters, that will offset all greenhouse gases that it produces. This will be achieved through its design, selection of materiality, using renewable energy and careful procurement during the construction and operating stages. The fabrication of the building is also of modular typology which means that construction is quick, efficient and provides an opportunity for engagement with the Wirral Met College Construction faculty.
- 3.14 Alongside the engagement with the construction students from the neighbouring college, social value will form a key element of this scheme and Peels intention is to ensure that they work collaboratively with partners to maximize opportunities for local supply chain spend and the use of local construction labour some of which can be accessed via the Wirral Construction Forum. Work will continue with tenants once the site is operational to promote further partnership working and create a project with lasting social value credentials.

Key Outputs

- 3.15 The project will deliver approximately 14,671 sq ft of new commercial floorspace and is estimated that it will generate additional business rates within the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone from practical completion until 2037. The project is projected to create 49 FTE new jobs following practical completion.

- 3.16 The project is projected to leverage in private sector investment during the construction phase and generate further investment by end users in the form of fit-out and ongoing operation.
- 3.17 The site benefits from full planning permission (APP/18/00647).

Project Costs and Funding Arrangements

- 3.18 The application for grant funding through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund relates to capital expenditure costs. No contribution will be made to the operating costs of Egerton Village.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial information is set out in detail in Appendix 2 to this report. Appendix 2 is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The offer of financial assistance is subject to the new Subsidy Control regime which as of 1 January 2021 replaced the previous EU State Aid rules. Subsidies awarded must satisfy 6 core principles, referred to as the "General Principles" which are to be found in Article 3 of the recently concluded UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. These core principles bear considerable resemblance to the sort of considerations already tested in EU State aid block exemptions. The new UK Subsidy Control regime is certainly no more restrictive than the current EU law framework.
- 5.2 The funding proposed is from Wirral Waters Investment Fund. This was established for the purpose of promoting investment and economic growth within the Wirral Waters priority regeneration area.
- 5.3 Article 56 of the previously applicable General Block Exemption (GBER) specifically addressed projects of this nature. Although the GBER is not within the UK Subsidy Control regime, awards made under the GBER are subject to the same Common Principles under Article 3.4 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. GBER was painstakingly drafted to limit aid interventions to the scale and level that would deliver minimal distortions of competition only, and those that were considered balanced out against their distortive effects by their positive effects on investment and the economy, per type of activity. The limits of Article 56 GBER were deemed appropriate for local infrastructure investments, of a scale such as the current proposal. Physical work on the project has not started and there is no risk that the subsidy will be compensating the beneficiary for works that the benefits would have funded in the absence of any subsidy. A project of this nature therefore is not likely to be deemed to have a material effect on trade between different states.
- 5.4 Peel has submitted evidence that the grant is incentivising the proposal, noting that without the funding the investment would not be proceeding as planned or under the current timescale without the aid. The funding pursues the policy objectives of

investing in local infrastructure. Therefore, the subsidy supports an outcome which is likely not to be the case in the absence of the subsidy. The proposals within this report are considered to be compliant with subsidy control rules.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The monitoring and management of the grant will be resourced through the existing work programmes of officers within the Council's Place and Investment Team. The drawing up of the legal agreement will be managed by the Council's Legal team.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The detailed risks of the project in relation to the grant are identified along with appropriate mitigation measures within the exempt Appendix 2.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 This report is consistent with the principles of Wirral Council's Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework and emerging Local Plan, which identifies Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone as an identified and agreed area of significant growth potential.

8.2 The Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework have been informed by consultation which has taken place with a number of private sector partners and local businesses through Wirral Chamber of Commerce sector forums.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The potential impact of the Egerton Village development has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan and no amendments have been made.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This project will involve the redevelopment of 0.5 acres of brownfield land. In addition Peels aim is to try and create the first Net Zero Carbon building at Wirral Waters, that will offset all greenhouse gases that it produces. This will be achieved through its design, selection of materiality, using renewable energy and careful procurement during the construction and operating stages. The fabrication of the building is also of modular typology which means that construction is quick and efficient.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan showing Egerton Village edged red being land to the east of East Float dock and west of Tower Road.

Appendix 2 – Key project details - Exempt

BACKGROUND PAPERS

A number of background papers to this report are exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contain commercially sensitive information.

Notice of Grant of Planning permission APP/1800647

Wirral Waters Investment Fund Business Plan - Exempt

Amion Summary Update Note - Exempt

Avison Young WWIF Egerton Village report - Exempt

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
N/A	



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES: COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This paper summarises progress of Wirral Council's Business Support Service (BSS) commission which runs to May 2021. It asks Committee to endorse the extension of the current contract to September 2021 to align procurement timescales with the complementary Third Sector Infrastructure service and seeks authority to undertake market procurement for a reprioritised Business Support Service in 2021.

The report provides an overview of the emerging business support services specification, which is being developed in line with Wirral's strategic priorities and seeks authority for the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Chair and Spokespersons, to sign off the support specification, commence market procurement and select a supplier.

This matter affects all wards.

This is a key decision which requests delegated authority for use of council resources which exceed £500,000.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Appendix One of this report contains exempt information as defined in part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It is in the public interest to exclude the press and public under Paragraph 3 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

1. To endorse an extension of the Business Support Services contract to 30 September 2021.

2. To authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Chair and Spokespersons of the Economy and Regeneration and Development Committee to:
 - a. Approve the final Business Support Services specification for delivery of a new service from October 2021 to October 2024, with an option to extend by one year to October 2025 based on satisfactory performance.
 - b. Commence procurement and select the most economically advantageous supplier(s) to deliver the commissioned services.
 - c. Conclude the final contract award.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Frontline business growth support for Wirral businesses is key to delivery of Wirral's economic recovery, its significant programme of regeneration and future growth.
- 1.2 The current business support services commission has exceeded its contracted objectives.
- 1.3 To embed local priorities that include community wealth building, regeneration programmes and the Wirral Plan 2020-25 into our future business support services.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Closure of service: Provision of frontline business growth support remains critical to the economic recovery, regeneration and growth ambitions for the borough.
- 2.2 Recommissioning based on the current service specification: This would fail to take into consideration changes in our economy that include Brexit and Covid-19, external developments in business support provision and/or the strategic priorities of the Council.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out a vision for a 'prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations'. It promises that we will 'support inclusive economic growth and increase community wealth'. Businesses of all sectors, drawn from myriad sectors and operating varied models, will be crucial partners in the delivery of the Wirral Plan 2020-2025.
- 3.2 The global Covid-19 pandemic has placed our economy under unprecedented duress. The Stronger Economy Plan for Wirral states that supporting businesses to enable economic resilience and growth will be crucial in ensuring a shorter, shallower downturn and a quicker, steeper, and sustainable return to growth.
- 3.3 **Current Business Support Services Contract:**
 - 3.3.1 In October 2016 Cabinet agreed to rationalise, redesign, and outsource the in-house provision of frontline support for local businesses via a competitive commissioning process. A three-year contract was subsequently awarded on 01 June 2017 to Wirral Chamber of Commerce (Wirral Chamber), including a 5% annual price reduction and an option to extend for a further year subject to satisfactory performance. This contract was extended in 2020 for one year, to the end of May 2021.
 - 3.3.2 Frontline business support services procured through this contract are obligated to be open for free universal access; however, suppliers are entitled to commercialise specific elements of activity (e.g., through a charging policy, sponsorship, or

membership fees) to enable management of the annual contract price saving requirement. The activities covered by the contract are as follows:

Contracted Activities with Free Universal Access:

- Core business growth support
- Entrepreneurship/business start-up support
- Inward investor 'soft landing'

Contracted Activities in Scope for Commercialisation:

- Sector network development (forums)
- Workforce development
- Place shaping: Love Liscard activities

3.3.3 Additionally, the service provides Wirral Council with business sector intelligence, data and information to enable better informed decision-making and strategy development.

3.3.4 The budget for commissioning this service was agreed at £1,300,000 for the first 3 Years (01.06.17 to 31.05.20) with an additional £391,000 for the +1 facility (01.06.20 to 31.05.21).

3.3.5 As the specification for services effectively enabled the supplier to operate as the Council's frontline service for business engagement, the commission also included a flexible facility for any Council Service to buy suitably aligned additional activity/outputs up to a limit of a 20% increase in value. An Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice was therefore posted for the maximum possible contract value of £2,029,200, based upon all possible future variations and extensions of the contract.

3.4 **Outputs to date:**

3.4.1 Performance of the contract is measured against key performance indicators. Performance to the end of Quarter 3 2020/21 is outlined in Table 1 below; note that contractual targets were reviewed and revised at Year 2 end to maintain stretch in areas of overperformance. With a further three months of reported performance remaining in the current contract, delivery is on target to either achieve or overperform in all output areas except Liscard Shopping Centre footfall.

3.4.2 **Table 1: Wirral Business Support Service Cumulative Contract Performance to December 2020***

Ref	Output	Performance against target
1	Enterprises Engaged	Exceeding performance
2a	Businesses Supported <12 hrs	Exceeding performance
2b	Businesses Assisted >12hrs	Exceeding performance
3a	Potential Entrepreneurs supported to be enterprise ready	Exceeding performance
3b	Potential Entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	Exceeding performance
3c	New Enterprises Created: Direct	Exceeding performance

3d	New Enterprises Sustained	Exceeding performance
3e	New Enterprises Created: Indirect	Exceeding performance
4a	Jobs Created (FTE): Direct	Good
4b	Jobs Created/ Safeguarded (FTE): Indirect	Exceeding performance
5	Business Sector Intelligence Reports	Exceeding performance
6	Local Centre Improvements	Below target
7	Income Targets	Good

*Output definitions and detailed performance metrics are contained in Appendix One (exempt from publication).

3.5 **Commission Value:**

- 3.5.1 The approved permanent annual budget for business support services is £396,000 per annum, based on a fully benchmarked viable cost per output for the current contract and savings made to date. The original tender was designed with a requirement for increased savings to be made year on year through income generation to offset costs of delivery.
- 3.5.2 Maintaining an annual £396,000 budget envelope for future years would enable restructuring the new commission to take account of the conditions for the supplier market, allow some flexibility to increase/redesign outcomes and/or service activities, and reflect any changing demand/priority requirements in line with our large-scale recovery, regeneration and growth ambitions.

3.6 **Link with Third Sector Infrastructure (TSI) contract:**

- 3.6.1 Wirral Council's Public Health team commissions an infrastructure organisation to act as the conduit between the community, voluntary and faith (CVF) sector and the council. This contract is valued at £137,000 per annum and has been delivered by Community Action Wirral (CAW) which now operates in partnership with Wirral Chamber.
- 3.6.2 In response to changing demands and focus on the CVF sector, necessitated by covid-19, the shifting financial landscape in the public sector and by our evolving organisational priorities linked to community wealth building, a new way of working with the sector is required (see para. 3.7.7 - 3.7.8).
- 3.6.3 The TSI contract tenure extends to September 2021 and this represents an opportunity to jointly commission a reprofiled third sector support and Business Support Services contract. To bring forward a new service that meets our shared ambitions for business and CVF sectors, the commissioning timescales will be brought into alignment to commence in September 2021.
- 3.6.4 Public Health, following the review of TSI support, may decide to add to our BSS commission, specifically to provide bespoke business support services for the third sector.

- 3.6.5 Legal and procurement advice states that we can extend provision of the current BSS on the condition that the cost of extending remains within 10% of the total commission value (i.e., £202,290) and within the Public Contracts Regulations threshold of £189,000. This can be achieved within current budgets by extending to the end of September 2021, at a cost of £129,941.
- 3.6.6 Committee is asked to endorse the decision to extend the delivery of the current BSS contract to bring commissioning in line with the TSI contract.
- 3.7 Commissioning a new service:**
- 3.7.1 A new BSS must reflect the current context in which businesses operate to provide demand-led, evidence-based, and impactful support. This includes recognising and responding to the challenges and opportunities emanating from the global Covid-19 pandemic; Brexit and new trade regimes; changes in the market for business support, and; new and emerging local priorities that include community wealth building, regeneration programmes and the Wirral Plan 2020-25.
- 3.7.2 The Council has commissioned Mickledore to review the business support provision undertaken by Wirral Council within the context of the wider Liverpool City Region and national business support activity. This exercise will map business support services, which have expanded in recent years, to identify areas of potential duplication, gaps in provision and provide a set of specification recommendations.
- 3.7.3 Emerging findings which may inform the specification include:
- Less requirement for generic support services because of expanded LCR Growth Platform commissioned activity.
 - Initiatives to support larger organisations to localise their supply chains and skills.
 - High-value sector development work in existing and emerging priority sectors.
 - Enhanced services for newly established businesses to ensure that they are embedded in the local economy and achieve greater survival rates.
 - A short term offer that supports recovery aspects of Covid-19.
 - Brexit transition support for at least the next 12 months.
- 3.7.4 Wirral Council has committed to ensure that 'Community Wealth Building is intrinsic to everything the council does and will be embedded into all our activity going forward'. The Business Support Services commission provides an opportunity to support the delivery of both the Community Wealth Building Strategy and Inclusive growth strand of the Wirral Plan 2025.
- 3.7.5 The Wirral Plan 2025 and Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025 have objectives which are directly related to the BSS. These relate to 'creating jobs and supporting businesses' and 'maximising the ability of local enterprise as a driver of economic regeneration and community wealth building'.
- 3.7.6 The Wirral Community Wealth Building Strategy sets out the ways in which progress can be measured and Business Support Services in Wirral can be shaped to deliver the following relevant outputs:
- Number of new businesses created.

- Number of businesses successfully winning public sector contracts.
- Increase in the number of community land trusts.
- Funds raised through crowdfunding.
- Number of new apprenticeships starts.
- Decrease in the number of employees on zero-hour contracts.

3.7.7 The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has been appointed to support the embedding of community wealth building within a sustainable economic recovery in Wirral. Their emerging Action Plan will support BSS commissioning by:

1. Reviewing existing contracts and contract monitoring for BSS and TSI support programmes.
2. Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the third sector and aspirations to work differently.
3. Developing outline proposals for a Community Wealth Building (CWB) Hub, which explores the potential for a repurposing of the local business support landscape with increased connectivity to the voluntary, community and social enterprise infrastructure support bodies.
4. Making clear recommendations on how the Council's front-line business and CVF support contracts may need to be refocused to develop a strong local eco-system to support community wealth building.

3.7.8 Emerging findings which may inform the specification include:

- Ensuring that local wealth is harnessed to increase investment in local communities.
- Ensuring that residents can access secure and quality employment with progression opportunities and good terms and conditions.
- Supporting key sectors to grow and develop in ways that ensure local businesses and residents are prepared, supported and enabled to access local opportunities.
- Bringing together knowledge and understanding of the VCSE sector and the areas where entrepreneurial activity and energy can be supported to flourish.
- Leveraging support and funding from external providers.
- Harnessing the power of anchor institutions to understand their commissioning intentions and how these can be met from the local economy.

3.8 Procurement timescales:

3.8.1 In summary, the headline timescales are as follows:

January 2021 to April 2021	Consultation/Engagement and specification development
March 2021	ER&D Committee decision for commissioning intentions
March 2021	P&R Committee decision for commissioning intentions
April to June 2021	Procurement process
July 2021	Committee endorsement of appointment
July 2021 to September 2021	Mobilisation period
September 2021	Contract start

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding for the procurement and delivery of this contract is contained within the existing departmental budgets.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the BSS commission includes a flexible facility for any council service to buy, from their own budgets, suitably aligned additional activity/outputs from the successful contractor up to a limit of a 20% increase in contract value. This creates a maximum possible contract value of £1,900,800, based upon all possible future variations and extensions of the contract.
- 4.3 Legal and procurement advice states that we can extend provision of the current BSS to September 2021 on the condition that the cost of extending remains within 10% of the total commission value (i.e., £202,290) and within the Public Contracts Regulations threshold of £189,000. This can be achieved within current budgets by extending to the end of September 2021, at a cost of £155,655.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposed commissioning activity will be procured in accordance with Wirral Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the opportunity will be competitively tendered as per Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 5.2 The tender documents, including the terms and conditions of contract, will be developed with appropriate legal and procurement advice.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Where functions are transferring from the current supplier to another, both the receiver and sender organisations have a statutory responsibility (where the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) applies) to inform and consult representatives of employees affected by transfer or potential transfer situations.
- 6.2 No Council assets, ICT equipment or recharged services are proposed for supply/transfer as part of the commissioned model.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Risk of distorting competition through engagement with current contract providers: Our procurement and legal team are experienced in the management of market consultation with incumbent suppliers through procedures compliant with the parameters of Regulation 40 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which exist to ensure that any discussions do not distort competition and violate principles of non-discrimination and transparency.
- 7.2 Specification does not meet strategic need: this risk is mitigated through thorough specification development work in partnership with CLES, Mickledore and business support/third sector stakeholders to ensure strategic fit with local priorities and existing provision.

- 7.3 There is a risk that there is a lack of market interest in delivering this service.
- 7.4 There is a risk of disruption to service provision during service redesign, recommissioning and commencement of new services. To mitigate against this and minimise disruption, adequate time to plan for, and implement the mobilisation of new services has been built into the procurement process between contract award and commencement.
- 7.5 The procurement process is subject to scrutiny and at risk of legal challenge. Regard is given to contract procedure rules and relevant legislation at all stages of the process, while legal and procurement advice and support is obtained to ensure compliance.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Wide-ranging consultation is underway with stakeholders that include local businesses, representative bodies, council officers, business support providers, Liverpool City Region Growth Platform representatives and third sector organisations. This consultation and engagement will inform the future service specification.
- 8.2 Engagement with current contract providers in their roles as representative bodies, will be a crucial element of the commissioning needs assessment and specification development. Our procurement and legal teams are experienced in the management of market consultation with incumbent suppliers through procedures compliant with the parameters of Regulation 40 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which exist to ensure that any discussions do not distort competition and violate principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The recommendations in this report aim to reduce inequalities by providing access to employment, training, skills and enterprise opportunities for all residents. The integrated commissioning of Business Support Services and Community, Voluntary and Faith support services aims to increase access to services by persons from protected groups.
- 9.3 The potential impact of the Business Support Service Contract has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan, which can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>. No material changes to the EIA are required because of this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Wirral Plan 2025 includes a set of goals and objectives to create a sustainable environment which urgently tackles the environment emergency
- 10.2 It is anticipated that the emerging community wealth building and local supply chain development aspects of our future BSS commission will support the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 10.3 The Energy & Environment Sector Network, delivered as part of the Wirral Business Support Services contract, is key to facilitating the exchange of best practise, information and knowledge transfer across the business community.
- 10.4 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are therefore expected to reduce emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Business Support Service Performance to December 2020 (Exempt)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral CWB Hub – Emerging Findings, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Feb 2021
 Stronger Economy Plan for Wirral
 Emerging findings email, Mickledore, Feb 2021

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Report Business Support Service	10.2016
Executive Member Decision Business Support Service	12.10.2016
Delegated Report Business Support Service Pensions Provision	11.2016
Executive Officer Decision Business Support Service Pensions Provision	30.11.2016
Delegated Report Business Support Service Award of Contract	01.2017
Executive Officer Decision Business Support Service Award of Contract	26.01.2017
Officer Decision Business Support Services Contract Extension	24.02.2020



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND 2014-2020: WIRRAL WAYS TO WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks authority for the Council to enter into an extension of a supplier agreement with Involve Northwest whilst the Council awaits formal award of European Social Fund (ESF). Following a competitive tender exercise, Involve Northwest has been selected as preferred supplier to deliver the Worklessness Support Service, which is part of the Wirral Ways to Work Programme. The contract is due to expire on 30th June 2021, however there is scope within the current contract to extend for 16 months until October 2022.

This is a key decision and this matter affects all Wards within the borough.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy Regeneration and Development Committee request that Policy and Resources Committee approve the following recommendations:

- authorise the Law and Governance in consultation with the Director for Regeneration and Place to enter a contract extension and sign the supplier contract with Involve Northwest to continue delivery of the Wirral Ways to Work Worklessness Support Service.
- authorise an option for the Director of Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter a 3-month contract extension from July to September 2021 to cover off the risk of awaiting a grant funding agreement from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and then proceed to a full extension once confirmation of EU funds is received, should this option need to be utilised.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Ways to Work Programme is helping to address worklessness in Wirral. Wirral is an area which has had persistent levels of worklessness far exceeding regional and national averages for many years. Ways to Work provides services that support adults and young people into employment and training, and therefore successfully supports the Inclusive Economy theme of the Wirral Plan 2025.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 **Do Nothing:** The council takes no action and does not extend the contract with Involve Northwest from 1st July 2021. This option would significantly impact Involve Northwest by jeopardising the jobs of 35 staff employed to deliver the contract. Doing nothing would seriously reduce highly valued employability provision within Wirral which supports unemployed and inactive adults and young people into jobs and training.
- 2.2 **Delay/reduce the commissioned service:** If the Council chooses to delay or reduce the commissioned service beyond 1st July 2021 (until a finalised grant agreement is formally awarded via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), this will seriously risk the financial viability of Involve Northwest. The charity would declare staff redundancies thereby losing the staff to run the contract before it is formally awarded. Delay would therefore also seriously jeopardise Wirral Council's ability to deliver any future expected outputs of the Ways to Work Programme.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Wirral Ways to Work Programme is part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Ways to Work programme. The programme is designed to engage eligible workless young people and adults and support their progression into education, employment, and training via a suite of flexible, tailored employment support services.
- 3.2 The Ways to Work programme supports a number of key pledges in the Wirral Plan. The current programme has been delivering since April 2016 and has achieved the following outcomes as of 30th December 2020:
- Engaged 7,468 Wirral residents onto the programme
 - Supported 4,051 Wirral residents back into employment or training; and
 - Positive outcome rate of 54%
- 3.3 Ways to Work has provided immense benefit to residents who have been supported into local and regional employment and training opportunities, which not only supports a more inclusive Wirral economy, but also improves the health and wellbeing and life chances of individuals and their families through increased household incomes, improved mental and physical health, personal confidence, social networks and aspirations.

- 3.4 Wirral's Ways to Work Programme is currently broken down between two services under two ESF priorities. Involve Northwest deliver our Worklessness Support Service under Priority Axis 1.1 which is aimed at adults aged 16-64. The Council's 14-19 team deliver an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programme through Priority 1.3 Axis which is a stream of funding aimed at disadvantaged young people aged 16-29.
- 3.5 Involve Northwest delivers the programme through its 'ReachOut Partnership' model which operates and supports residents in some of the most deprived areas of Wirral through a network of community work clubs and dedicated job coaches. The service has been funded in various forms by Wirral Council over the last thirteen years and is a highly valued service which has made positive inroads into improving the lives and life chances of local residents.
- 3.6 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has Intermediate Body status which means they draft all ESF funding calls for the LCRCA, these are approved by the Department for Work and Pensions as Managing Authority. These are then published and authorised by European Structural Investment Funds committee.
- 3.7 The LCRCA has fully committed its initial funding of around £100m to calls and projects since 2016. Nationally, there are some areas who have not done so and there are further areas who have underspends on their delivery, this additional funding has been transferred to a National Reserve Fund and areas have been asked to apply for further elements of funding. To date, Liverpool City Region has secured an additional £20m through the Reserve Fund and this includes a further £13m for extended delivery of Ways to Work.
- 3.8 The Department for Work and Pensions as Managing Authority, are seeking to commit all reserve fund by September 2021, with all calls agreed and published before the end of April 2021. The Worklessness Support Service is reliant on the publishing of an ESF call against Priority Axis 1.1, which is the stream of funding targeting people aged 16-64. This is due to be published before April, which would then need to be appraised and authorised before 30th June 2021 for the Council to confirm the grant funding is available to continue this contract.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Wirral Council has identified £515,733.33 of match-funding to the Ways to Work Programme from 1 July 2021 to 31 October 2022 through the Public Health grant. This will enable the Council to draw down c£733k of additional ESF grant, providing a total Wirral programme worth £1.289m. Table 1 outlines the Worklessness Support Service contract value.
- 4.2 The values estimated for monthly contract costs are based on current average spend.

Table 1: Value of Worklessness Support Contract:

Contract	Awarded to	Total Value	Monthly Value	Contract duration
Wirral Worklessness	Involve	£1.120m	£70,000	1 July 2021 to 30 October

Support Service	Northwest			2022 (16 months)
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5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council decision will be authorising the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place to authorise agreement and commencement of the extension to the existing Worklessness Support Service contract for 16 months in total in line with the current provision for the maximum contract length within the original Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).
- 5.2 Should the Council not receive a grant funding agreement in sufficient time to exercise an extension from 1st July 2021 for the full period the Council will exercise the option to extend the contract at risk for 3 months July to September 2021, with full extension to come for a further 13 months once the legal GFA is received.
- 5.3 The proposed extension will be procured in accordance with Wirral Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Any new commission beyond the legal limits of the current OJEU notice will be competitively tendered as per Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Securing grant funding from ESF funds enables the Council to fund the relevant compliance and support roles that are needed to ensure successful delivery of the Worklessness Support contract. This therefore creates a saving to the Council's budget as these posts are original substantive Council positions.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Financial

- 7.1 The risk of ESF funds not being committed by DWP is now assessed to be medium, given that the process of development of a ESF call is underway and the LCRCA has been ringfenced an amount of the National Reserve Fund to bid for. This has been confirmed in writing by DWP. Officials at DWP have informed the LCRCA that they will try to speed up the appraisal process of applications, as there has been a delay over recent months due to COVID and other resource issues.
- 7.2 If in the event that DWP do not award the LCRCA the ESF funds in sufficient time to execute an extension from July 2021 for the full period then there is a risk that the Council will need to commit to funding the Worklessness Support contract at risk for 3 months using the match funding until the grant funding agreement is in place.

Reputational:

- 7.3 There is a high risk of reputational damage to the Council of not commencing the contract on time; stemming from the negative impact on unemployed Wirral residents who rely on the support provided by the service.

- 7.4 Any delay to the commencement of the Worklessness Support contract would likely put Involve Northwest, a Wirral based charity who locally employ 35 staff to deliver this valued service under significant financial stress and would risk an immediate commencement of staff redundancies. Other employees within their partnership delivery model which includes the Community Connectors Programme and Wirral Change, another local charity, could also potentially be put at risk.

Operational/contractual:

- 7.5 Any delay to the commencement of the Worklessness Support contract could jeopardise the Council's (and Involve Northwest's) delivery of expected ESF outputs and results as profiled in the revised grant funding agreement once executed.
- 7.6 As a relatively small local operator, Involve Northwest would be unable to deliver the service 'at risk' without the security of a contract and payment from the Council. Nor would the organisation be able to make staff redundant to then re-employ at a future date, which itself presents a significant risk to Wirral's programme if the Worklessness contract extension were to be delayed.
- 7.7 Currently the funds being applied for by LCRCA are for delivery up to September 2023 therefore re-commissioning of Priority 1.1 service may need to happen due to the limitations of the current OJEU notice period covering the current commission. If the existing contract is extended, then it is anticipated this would need to be from November 2022 to September 2023.

Brexit:

- 7.8 The UK Government has guaranteed that it will continue to sign new to the full value of the ESIF programme allocations.
- 7.9 The guarantee ensures that UK organisations will continue to receive funding over a project's lifetime if they successfully bid into EU-funded programmes before the end of 2020. The guarantee covers the full Multiannual Financial Framework allocation for structural and investment funds over the 2014-20 funding period, with payments to beneficiaries made up to the end of 2023.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This project supports the Inclusive Economy theme of the Wirral Plan 2025 which is being developed in full consultation with partner organisations and residents. The Wirral Growth Plan has also been informed by consultation which has taken place with a number of public and private sector partners and with local businesses, which were made accessible as possible to all stakeholders involved.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 The potential impact of the Worklessness Support Service Contract has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan, which can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>. No material changes to the EIA are required because of this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The recommendations within this report have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Portfolio Holders meeting 13.01.2021 – Item 3 ESF Update
 DWP ESF/YEI Call guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds/youth-employment-initiative-oc50s21p1801>
 Evaluation of Ways to Work Liverpool City Region (Draft) December 2018. Centrifuge Consulting

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Decision Report of the Portfolio Holder for Jobs and Growth - European Structural and Investment Fund Programme for England 2014-2020: Wirral Ways to Work Programme Extension	6 th July 2018
European Structural and Investment Fund programme for England 2014-2020: Wirral Ways to Work Programme	7 th March 2019



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	NEW FERRY – IMPLEMENTING THE REGENERATION PLAN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

In March 2017 an explosion in New Ferry devastated the heart of the retail centre, destroying businesses and homes, having a significant impact on the local community. Since that time, the Council has been fully supporting the recovery of the area, seeking additional funding to acquire the interests of key properties and parcels of land which will enable the regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre to proceed.

These acquisitions are crucial to the delivery of the New Ferry Regeneration Plan. This was produced by the Council and consulted on in September 2017 and has led to a preferred development option being selected with the support of the community. The plan seeks to protect local businesses and bring a mix of new residential and retail units into the town to create a sustainable future for New Ferry.

However, negotiations for the acquisition of a number of property interests are not progressing or have reached an impasse. The use of Compulsory Purchase Order(s) powers is therefore recommended as the Council is unlikely to be able to acquire these interests by agreement. Since Members first considered the regeneration plan proposals for New Ferry, a preferred development option has been endorsed by Leader Decision in December 2019. An outline planning application for the preferred development option was approved by the Council in September 2020. An updated viability assessment has also been recently undertaken which is detailed further in this report. This scheme will now be taken forward for delivery and a preferred developer partner will be appointed to deliver the scheme in 2021. It is anticipated that this will be delivered by 2024.

This report provides an update to Members on the progress of the regeneration in New Ferry. It also asks that the Committee recommends to Policy and Resources Committee, the use of Compulsory Purchase Order(s) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are used as a last resort, to acquire property critical to the implementation of the New Ferry Regeneration Plan. Finally, it updates members on the process for identifying a preferred developer to work with the Council on delivering the regeneration.

The matter affects the Bromborough Ward and is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee are requested to make a recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee to approve the following:

- (1) the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order(s) (“the Order”) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 226(1)(a), and section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the acquisition of land and new rights in respect of the area identified in the plan and table of Appendix 1 of the report to enable the regeneration of New Ferry to be undertaken and the process for the Order shall be subject to following the procedures laid down by the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.
- (2) the draft skeleton Statement of Reasons (Appendix 2) attached to this report, which (in addition to the information in this report) sets out the justification for making the Order.
- (3) the Director of Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance be granted delegated authority to:
 - (a) finalise the Statement of Reasons.
 - (b) draft the Order Map and Schedule before the making of the Order (if required).
 - (c) negotiate, agree terms and enter into agreements with interested parties including agreements for the withdrawal of blight notices and/or the withdrawal of objections to the Order and/or undertakings not to enforce the Order on specified terms, including (but not limited to) where appropriate seeking the exclusion of land or rights from the Order, making provision for the payment of compensation and/or relocation.
- (4) the Director of Law and Governance be granted delegated authority to:
 - (a) take all steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Order including the publication and service of all notices and the promotion of the Council’s case at any public inquiry.
 - (b) in the event the Order is confirmed by the Secretary of State, to advertise and give notice of confirmation and thereafter to take all steps to implement the Order.
 - (c) take all steps in relation to any legal proceedings relating to the Order including defending or settling claims referred to the Upper Tribunal and/or applications to the courts and any appeals.
- (5) That where required to assist in the delivery of the New Ferry Preferred development option and may be appropriated for planning purposes pursuant to Section 122 of

the Local Government Act 1972 to enable Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to be utilised to override any third-party rights of land or part thereof.

- (6) That the Economy, Development and Regeneration Committee be authorised to make all necessary further decisions that are not otherwise delegated to officers, in relation to the Compulsory Purchase Order and consequential on the Compulsory Purchase Order including the selection process for and approval of a development partner the structure of that partnership arrangement whether through a land transaction or otherwise and any related land transactions and settlement of compensation and the engagement of appropriate advisors to advise on compensation for any business interests.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council is committed to the regeneration of New Ferry. It endorsed the New Ferry preferred development option in December 2019. There are a series of critical strategic acquisitions of land and property that is required to implement and deliver the regeneration proposals that have been endorsed by the Council.
- 1.2 There is approved capital funding in place of £1.3m to acquire the interests of all the properties required for the redevelopment. A number of sites have already been acquired and negotiations with property owners have taken place over the last two years, which are detailed in the plan in Appendix 1. However, for various reasons the acquisition of the remaining land and property interests cannot be acquired by agreement.
- 1.3 A number of the sites and properties in New Ferry are derelict and in a dilapidated state of repair. This is having a detrimental effect on the area and detracts from attracting new investment. Therefore, while the acquisition of the land and property required for the regeneration would be ideally achieved by agreement, the use of compulsory purchase order powers is now being sought (as a last resort) to enable the Council to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of New Ferry.
- 1.4 The Order will enable the full site assembly for preferred development option and remove these derelict and dilapidated properties and premises.
- 1.5 The strategic acquisition of various sites in New Ferry is necessary to deliver the preferred development option and of a suitable scale to make the development opportunity attractive and with financial assistance, which has now been secured, commercially viable.
- 1.6 The redevelopment of these sites will support the delivery of good quality housing provision and contribute to the authority's house building targets which will meet local housing needs in the area. This in turn will make New Ferry a more desirable area. The influx of new residents has the potential to have a positive impact in terms of increased footfall and spend in the local centre.
- 1.7 Delivering the regeneration and the preferred development option will also help to meet the Wirral Plan 2025 strategic priorities - specifically the themes for 'Safe and Pleasant Communities and Inclusive Economy'.
- 1.8 In the absence of a voluntary sale by the owners of their interests in the Order Land the most appropriate compulsory purchase power is under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which allows acquiring authorities, with permission of the Secretary of State, to compulsorily purchase land in its area, if the authority thinks that the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement on or in relation to the land. In this case, given the

dilapidated condition and low demand for many of the properties concerned, the acquisition and demolition of these properties is considered vital to enable the New Ferry Regeneration Plan and preferred development option to proceed.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Members could decide not to proceed with the Order. In such case all the land will not be acquired by agreement, and the regeneration masterplan would not be fully delivered. The partial redevelopment of Council owned sites would result in piecemeal development and leave a number of derelict and dilapidated properties remaining in New Ferry. Not proceeding with the Order would impact negatively on the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area leading to further decline in the retail centre, with significant impact on the local community and businesses. It would also damage the reputation of the Council, which has pledged to support New Ferry's recovery and regeneration.
- 2.2 There are other alternative compulsory purchase powers including powers under section 17 of the Housing Act 1985. It is considered that proceeding with the powers under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is the most appropriate choice as the New Ferry Regeneration Plan provides for a mix of housing and retail.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The explosion in New Ferry in March 2017 had a very significant effect on people's lives and businesses in the area and beyond. Many businesses reported damage and a number were forced to cease trading with immediate effect. In addition, a significant number of households suffered structural damage which resulted in occupiers being displaced into temporary accommodation.
- 3.2 The Council developed a New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan, with the help of GVA Grimley. This was consulted on in September 2017 with the local community and finalised in December 2017, as a way of positively responding to the issues in New Ferry and working with local people and businesses to create a sustainable future for the area. This led to the preferred development option was endorsed by the Council in December 2019 and includes re-development plans for 79 residential units, 1008 m² of new retail accommodation and 78 public car parking spaces. See Appendix 3 for a plan of the preferred development option.
- 3.3 There have been a significant number of achievements in taking forward the regeneration of New Ferry which can be summarised as follows:
 - Resources of £1.3m approved by the Council to fund strategic acquisitions for the regeneration in December 2018;
 - Acquisition of key sites for the redevelopment including 41-43 Bebington Road, ("the blast site") and the site of the former Griffith's butchers, 68-72 Bebington Road;
 - The demolition of damaged buildings and site clearance in readiness for redevelopment;
 - Assisting in the establishment of the New Ferry Community Land Trust, "New Ferry CLT";

- Putting forward a successful bid to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority which has resulted in resources of £500,000 to support the work and development of the CLT. This includes the acquisition of a prominent building in the Town Centre, 78-80 New Chester Road, which will be refurbished and brought back into economic use;
- The submission of a £4.65M funding bid to the Government's Future High Street Fund. This resulted in £3.2M of funding being awarded to the Council from MHCLG which will be used to support regeneration and development in New Ferry;
- Various community projects – notice board, alleyway project, community garden/planting;
- Outline planning permission was secured in September 2020 for the preferred development option across three specific sites in the town centre.

3.4 In 2019 the Council carried out soft market testing with potential housing providers regarding the development opportunities within New Ferry. Initial discussions indicated that there were several Registered Providers who expressed an interest in becoming involved in the redevelopment plans. Since then, the Council has been approached by a number of local developers/house builders who have expressed an interest in the scheme.

3.5 The Council has been actively negotiating with various property owners in New Ferry for the land and property that will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement for over 2 years. The properties and land to be acquired are shown in the attached plan and table (Appendix 1). A number of key sites have been acquired by negotiation (shown in blue on the plan), but there are a number of others (shown in pink) where agreement has not been achieved. As an impasse has now been reached on these acquisitions, as a last resort a recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee is sought for authorisation to make a Compulsory Purchase Order.

3.6 Whilst some progress has been recently made in negotiations for a couple of properties, for most of the remaining land interests, these are unlikely to be acquired by agreement. It is therefore recommended that the use of Compulsory Purchase powers should now be sought as a last resort.

3.7 The Council will deliver the preferred development option. It will do this either directly or by working with a preferred developer partner to the Council's own defined timescale. In indicative terms the delivery programme will be as follows;

Future High Street Funding awarded – December 2020

Making of CPO (subject to Member agreement) – June 2021

Preferred Developer identified – July 2021

Completion of CPO – November 2022 (estimated 18 months assuming that the CPO has to run its full course.)

Development of Griffith's site completed by January 2023

Development of 41-43 Bebington Road completed by March 2023

Development of Woodhead Street car park completed by September 2023

New Chester Road site (subject to CPO) completed by September 2024

Bebington Road/Grove Street site (subject to CPO) to be completed by December 2024

3.8 Detailed timescale site development plans are now in preparation. The Council will commence a procurement process in March 2021 to identify a preferred development partner and once concluded this matter will be reported back to Members.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 £1.3m of funding for the Strategic Acquisitions Programme was approved by Cabinet on the 17th December 2018. This covers funding for the acquisitions, business relocations, site clearance works and meeting any inquiry/legal costs associated with the Compulsory Purchase Order.

4.2 There are no known revenue funding implications arising from this report.

4.3 It is considered that the retail market both nationally and locally has been significantly adversely impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic with demand for units and the values they can attract being significantly reduced. This is the case with the current retail picture for New Ferry also. The residential market has generally held its value and there remains a demand for this use in New Ferry. With some adjustment between the retail/residential mix across the various development sites within the preferred development option and with the inclusion of the Future High Street Fund, (a grant from Government was approved on 26 December 2020), the scheme is viable and therefore can be delivered. The Council has already approved funding of £1.3m in December 2018, to fund property and land acquisitions to enable site assembly to deliver the scheme.

4.4 The Future High Street Funding award includes financial support to enable the delivery of the preferred development option (£2.6M), with the remainder of £0.6M to be used to facilitate highways infrastructure improvements. The £2.6M of funding can be used to make a contribution to the selected developer, subject to Subsidy Control rules to support in the delivery of the scheme.

4.5 New residential properties will result in increased council tax income for the authority once the redevelopment works have been completed. The addition of new commercial units may also provide an increase to business rates income.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 It is acknowledged that the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land will amount to an interference with the human rights of those with an interest in the Order Land. These will include rights under Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”) (which provides that every natural or legal person is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of his possessions) and Article 8 of the ECHR (which provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence). However, the acquisition of land “in the public interest” is specifically allowed by the ECHR. The Council is of the view that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land which outweighs the ECHR rights and that the use of compulsory purchase powers in this matter is proportionate as this will improve the environmental well-being of the area.

- 5.2 The principal terms of any disposal and scheme delivery will be brought for Committee approval in due course following the appointment of a preferred development partner and further delegated authority will be sought as necessary for implementation.
- 5.3 Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 allows a local authority, on being authorised to do so by the Secretary of State, to have power to acquire any land in their area if the authority think that the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement on or in relation to the land.
- 5.4 A local authority can only exercise the power if the development, re-development or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objectives;
- (1) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
 - (2) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area;
 - (3) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.
- 5.5 It is considered that all three of these issues can be met by the making of the CPO and the following considerations justify the Council using the CPO powers recommended in this report.
- 5.6 Section 13(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits a local authority to purchase any new rights over land compulsorily. Those whose property interests are affected by the order have a right to compensation. Compensation could include (depending on a person's circumstances):
- the market value of the property interest
 - compensation for a reduction in value of any retained land
 - reimbursement for the costs of moving from the land
 - statutory loss payments, and
 - other costs, including reasonable professional fees in respect of the negotiation and settlement of compensation.

- 5.7 The proposals in this report may have an adverse effect on property so that an owner-occupier is unable to realise the market value that would have been obtainable had the owner's land not been affected by the proposals because prospective purchasers either will not proceed with the purchase or, having learned of the planning proposals, will only offer a price 'substantially lower than that for which it might reasonably have been expected to sell'. This is generally referred to as 'planning blight'. Sections 149 to 171 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are designed to relieve hardship by making it possible, subject to conditions, for owner-occupiers or mortgagees of certain properties to require the Council to purchase their interests.
- 5.8 A person whose interest qualifies for protection and who has fulfilled the other statutory requirements may serve on the Council a notice in the prescribed form requiring it to purchase the interest. The notice is known as a 'blight notice'.
- 5.9 An authority that does not wish to accept a blight notice may serve on the claimant within two months of the date of service of the blight notice, a counter notice in the prescribed form specifying the grounds upon which objection is made to the claim. Upon receipt of the counter notice the claimant, if not satisfied, has a period of two months in which to refer the objection to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for determination. Appropriate delegated authority is sought within the recommendations within this report to deal with any blight notices that may arise from the proposed Order.
- 5.10 Any changes to any regulatory orders governing existing car parking will be the subject of separate processes and this process will not pre-determine such process.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 This regeneration project will be delivered by the Council's Special Projects Team in conjunction with Asset Management and Legal Services using existing resources. The legal team may seek external advice from appointed Counsel regarding the CPO should this be required.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a risk that any Compulsory Purchase Order action taken will result in objections being received which could result in a Local Public Inquiry. This will prolong the time taken to secure ownership and demolition of the remaining interests and consequent delivery of any scheme. As with all such proceedings it is difficult to project exactly how long the process will take, but this could be over 2 years from start to finish. The service of the Order in a timely manner will ensure that the Council has used its reasonable endeavours in relation to the procedural matters under its control.
- 7.2 Any objections formally made to the service of the Order could result in a Local Public Inquiry being held and there is a possibility that the Secretary of State may not confirm the Order following the Inquiry. However, officers consider that there is a compelling case in the public interest to proceed with the Order.

- 7.3 All risks associated with the proposal will be identified and managed in line with the Corporate Risk Management Procedure as part of the project delivery process.
- 7.4 As the re-development will require reserved matters planning approval, there is a risk that this would not be approved, should this be fundamentally different to the outline application. However, a competitive selection process will be undertaken to appoint a suitable development partner with the skills, experience and resources to deliver the scheme. The project team will work closely with development partners and Development Control officers to ensure that an acceptable reserved matters application is submitted and that the design meets the key objectives of the New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan and the preferred development option.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The development of the New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan was subject to a public consultation in September 2017 and the preferred development option which was consulted on in January 2019.
- 8.2 Ward members and the Member for Parliament have been informed of the proposal to seek the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers by Council Officers and are in support of this action.
- 8.3 The property owners would be notified and kept informed as the process progresses. Negotiations to acquire the properties by agreement will continue in conjunction with the Order.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Pursuant to Part II of the Equality Act 2010, public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and,
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9.2 Public authorities must have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and,
 - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

9.3 The Council is not aware of any significant equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals set out within this report.

9.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this report. This is published on the Council website <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The re-development of the sites, including the Order Land, will result in the removal of old, dilapidated and inefficient buildings. These will be replaced with modern homes built to current energy efficiency standards. The Council will work with its delivery partner(s) to promote energy efficiency and incorporate low carbon initiatives where possible.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Lee Parker**
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Table and plan of land/properties to be acquired by CPO

Appendix 2 Draft Skeleton Statement of Reasons

Appendix 3 Preferred Development Option Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan, November 2017, GVA Grimley

Outline Planning Applications DPP3/20/00415, DPP3/20/00420, DPP3/20/00418

BDP – Masterplan B – see attached appendix 3

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Guidance on preparing CPO, MHCLG 2019

Equality Impact Assessment, completed February 2021.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Report - New Ferry Regeneration Strategic Acquisitions	17th December 2018
Delegated decision Report - Preferred Development Option for New Ferry	20th December 2019

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NOTES

- Woodhead Street Car Park**
- Houses:
- 2b3p - 8 units
 - 3b4p - 7 units
- Public parking spaces:
 General - 66
 Disabled - 4
- Apartments:
- 1b2p - 12 units
 - 2b4p - 18 units
- Subtotal residential units: 45 units**
- Bebington Road and Car Park**
- Apartments:
- 1b2p - 16 units
 - 2b4p - 7 units
- Public parking spaces:
 General - 3
 Disabled - 5
- Retail:
- 535 m²
- Subtotal residential units: 23 units**

- | REVISION / DESCRIPTION | DRAWN | AUTHORISED | DATE |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------|------|
| KEY PLAN | | | |
| Boundary Road | | | |
| Apartments: | | Retail: | |
| 1b2p - 9 units | | 473 m ² | |
| 2b4p - 2 units | | | |
| Subtotal residential units: 11 units | | | |
| Total residential units: 79 units | | | |



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PROJECT New Ferry	
DRAWING TITLE Illustrative Masterplan Preferred Option B	SCALE @ A3 1:1000
JOB NUMBER P3000050	DATE May 2019
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION

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APPENDIX 1- TABLE AND PLAN OF LAND/PROPERTIES TO BE ACQUIRED UNDER THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

Property Address
New Chester Road
104 New Chester Road, New Ferry, CH62 5AG
106 New Chester Road, New Ferry, CH62 5AG
106A New Chester Road, New Ferry, CH62 5AG
108 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
110 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
112 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
114 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
116 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
118 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
120 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
122 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
124 New Chester Road, New Ferry CH62 5AG
Bebington Road
52 Bebington Road, New Ferry CH62 5BH
Cleared site
56-58 Bebington Road, New Ferry CH62 5BH
60 Bebington Road, New Ferry CH62 5BH
62 Bebington Road, New Ferry CH62 5BH
64 Bebington Road, New Ferry CH62 5BH
Grove Street
Industrial Unit, Grove Street, New Ferry (Building/land behind 7 and 9 School Lane)
Other
Land within the Passageway between 46 and 48 Bebington Rd, New Ferry
Land within the Alleyway/pavement behind properties 48-72 Bebington Road, New Ferry



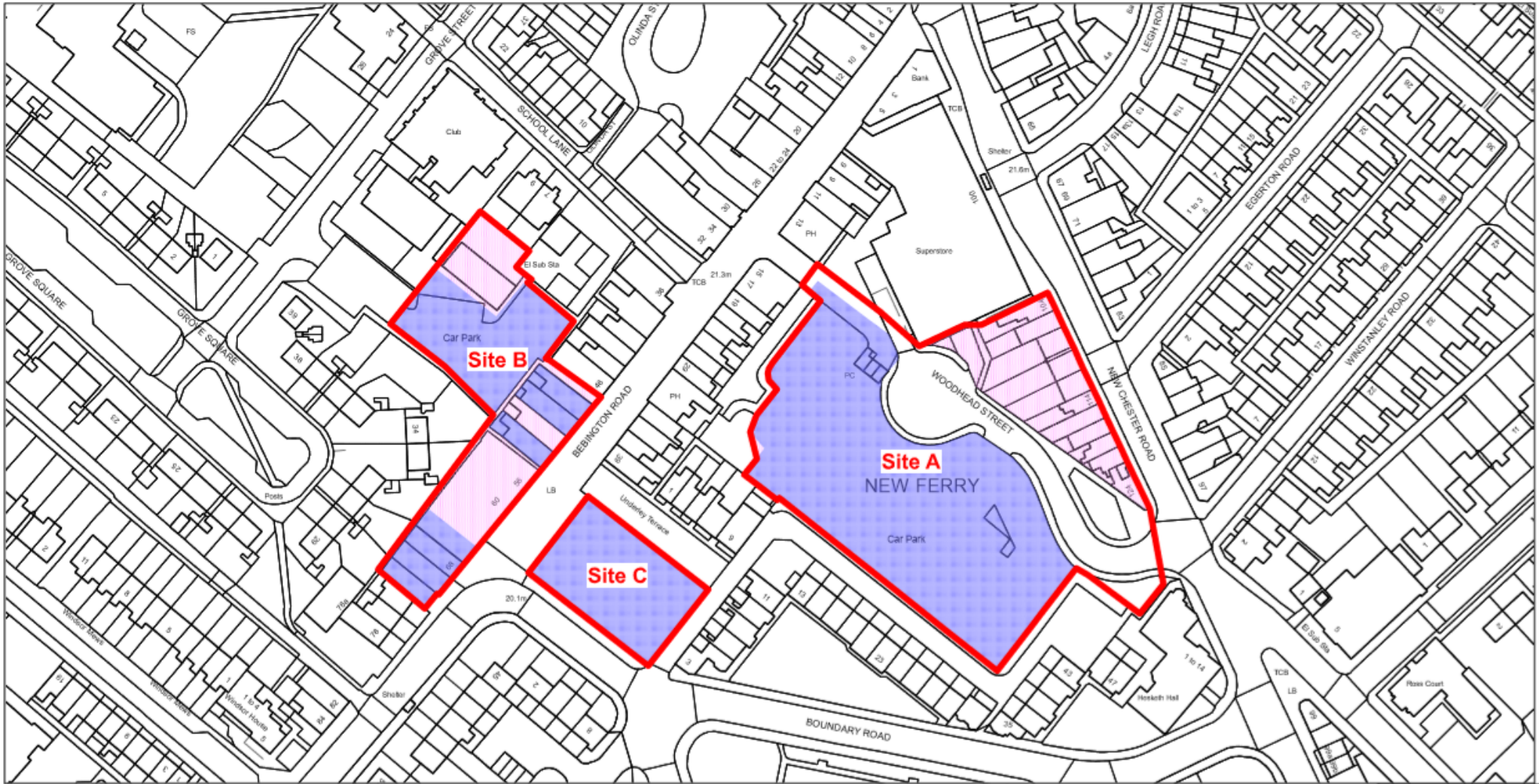
Site Boundaries



Council Ownership



Properties to be acquired by CPO



CPO Plan
 New Ferry Regeneration Scheme
 Wirral

Scale:
 1:1500

Date:
 09.02.2021



APPENDIX 2

Draft Statement of Reasons for making a Compulsory Purchase order

STATEMENT OF REASONS

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL (NEW FERRY) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2021

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 THE ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981

Contents

Item	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	
2 ENABLING POWERS	
3 DESCRIPTION OF ORDER LAND	
4 REASONS FOR COMPULSORILY ACQUIRING THE ORDER LAND	
5 HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND	
6 CURRENT PLANNING POSITION & ORDER SCHEME	
7 JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS	
8 ANY SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE LAND	
9 CONCLUSION	
10 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS AFFECTED BY THE ORDER	
11 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS FOR ANY PUBLIC INQUIRY	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wirral Borough Council (" the Council") has made the Wirral Borough Council (New Ferry) Compulsory Purchase Order 2021(' the Order') under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This document is the non-statutory Statement of Reasons ('Statement') prepared on behalf of the Council in accordance with the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government Guidance on Compulsory Purchase process and the Crichel Down Rules (July 2019) (the "Guidance") to explain the reasons and justifications for making the Order.
- 1.2 The Council has made the Order to secure outstanding interests and thereby facilitate the development of a mixed-use scheme, which includes 15 houses, 64 apartments and 1,020 sqm of retail space. The site is comprised of land with an area of approximately 1.14 hectares and is located at Woodhead Street car park and land off New Chester Road, land off Boundary Road, land off Bebington Road including existing car park off Grove Street, New Ferry ("the Order Land").
- 1.3 The Council's resolved to grant outline planning permission for the developments identified at 1.2 above on 2nd September 2020, subject to conditions (DPP3/20/00415, DPP03/20/418 AND DPP3/20/00420 refers). The developments are described in the planning permission as:
- (i) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 15 houses and 30 apartments on Woodhead Street car park and land off New Chester Road, together with retention of 70 car park spaces for public use;
 - (ii) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 11 apartments and 480sqm retail floorspace on land off Boundary Road;
 - (iii) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 23 apartments and 540sqm retail floorspace on land off

Bebington Road, including existing car park off Grove Street, together with retention of 8 car park spaces for public use.

(‘the Order Scheme’)

- 1.4 The Order Scheme would transform New Ferry and would make a significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and deliver very significant benefits including the following; delivering sustainable regeneration of the area with new homes and retail businesses; delivering new infrastructure to improve accessibility to the retail area; environmental improvements which will enhance the area and the overall regeneration with improve social well-being and opportunity in an area that has a range of deprivation challenges.
- 1.5 The Order has been submitted to the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government for confirmation. If confirmed, the Order will enable the Council to acquire compulsorily the land required to facilitate the Order Scheme. This Statement explains why the Council considers that, for the purposes of the powers enabling the Order, the Order Scheme will contribute to:
- the development, redevelopment or improvement of the Order Land;
 - improving the economic and social well-being of the area of New Ferry through the provision of new housing and additional employment opportunities; and
 - the environmental well-being of the area as a consequence of the public realm improvements
- 1.6 The extent of the Order Land is shown edged red and coloured pink on the Order Map which accompanies the Order (“Order Map”)
- 1.7 Over 75% of the Order Land is owned by the Council, however there are other land interests currently in third party ownership which make up the site comprised in the Order Land. The Council is now seeking to secure ownership of all of the Order Land to ensure that the Order Scheme can be implemented and so that the comprehensive benefits referred to at section 1.4 above are secured.

1.8 The Council has and will continue to take steps to consult and negotiate with third party owners to acquire their interests by agreement, but it is clear that compulsory purchase powers will need to be employed to ensure that the full Order Scheme can be delivered.

1.9 A copy of this Statement, the Order and the accompanying maps and background documents are available for inspection at the following locations:

TBC

They will also be available for inspection on the Council's website (**insert link**)

2.0 ENABLING POWERS

2.1 Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act (as amended by the 2004 Act) (the "1990 Act") enables a local authority to make a compulsory purchase order if it thinks that acquiring the land in question will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment, or improvement on, or in relation to, the land being acquired.

2.2 Section 226(1)(a) of the 1990 Act states that a local authority must not exercise its powers under section unless it thinks that the proposed development, redevelopment or improvement is likely to contribute to achieving the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.

2.3 The Council is satisfied that the proposed Order Scheme will result in overwhelming social, economic and environmental well-being improvements to the area through redevelopment of the Order Land with a comprehensive development providing new high quality new housing, and retail and improvements to the public realm.

2.4 The Acquisition of Land Act 1981 sets out the process for compulsory acquisition and applies to the Order, and the acquiring authority is the Council.

2.5 The making of the Order is consistent with the Guidance, and in particular Section 1 which provides advice on orders made under section 226 of the 1990 Act.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF ORDER LAND

- 3.1 The Order Land¹ is delineated in red and shown coloured pink on the plan attached to the Statement of Reasons at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Order Land forms part of a site of approximately 1.14 hectares, within the area of New Ferry. Within the Order Land boundary are a number of land and building interests still in private ownership. The former properties at 41- 43 Bebington Road and 54 - 66 Bebington Road were demolished by the Council in 2017, and 68 - 72 Bebington Road in 2020, pursuant to section 84 of the Building Act 1984 and the Order Land is vacant land.
- 3.3 Details of the ownerships and other interests in the Order Land to be acquired are listed in the Schedule² annexed to the Order in Appendix 3.
- 3.4 The Council has carried out Land Registry searches and a review of available deeds and similar information. IT has also served Service of Requisitions for Information pursuant to section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 on behalf of the Council and a review of information returned in response. The Council has also carried out site inspections.
- 3.5 It is considered the Schedule to the Order is therefore as accurate as it can be based on diligent inquiries made on behalf of the Council.
- 3.6 The Order Map indicates the area within which a number of land interests are sought to be compulsorily acquired. The Order Map has been carefully delineated to ensure that the parcels of the land to be acquired includes only the land that is required to facilitate the delivery of the Order Scheme.

4.0 REASONS FOR COMPULSORILY ACQUIRING THE ORDER LAND

- 4.1 Past attempts to develop the Order Land have been unsuccessful in most cases, due to a mismatch between the landowners' assessments of market value and the

assessment of the Council. In some cases, owners have not responded to the Council despite repeated attempts to contact them.

- 4.2 The Council has been seeking to assemble the Order Land required for the Order Scheme since January 2019.
- 4.3 To deal with any unregistered titles or possible implied or other rights which may exist over the site. It is considered prudent and necessary to include the entire site in the Order **(TBC)** so that any private express or implied rights, covenants or other interests that may have been granted, entered into or acquired over the Order Land or any part of it can be dealt with.
- 4.4 The decision to use compulsory purchase powers is considered to be a last resort to ensure the delivery of the Development.
- 4.5 The interests to be acquired include those of freehold landowners, and any private express or implied rights that may have been granted over the Order Land. A summary of the main land interests are as follows (plot numbers are as referred to in the Order Map and Order Schedule):
- 4.6 Formal written offers to acquire their land interests were sent to the relevant landowners by the Council between January 2019 and present date, but agreements to acquire the parcels of land have not yet been finalised.

5.0 HOUSING & PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The borough's Housing Strategy (The Wirral Plan a 2020 Vision: Wirral's Housing Strategy) outlines the Council's overall strategic objectives for housing. It sets out a vision for "more and better, well-managed affordable housing in mixed income, mixed tenure successful places." The Housing Strategy overall supports the key objectives of the Order to ensure the safety of the residents and also the surrounding neighbouring housing. The Housing Strategy also supports the subsequent residential redevelopment of the Order Land.

- 5.2 The strategic planning framework on the making of the Order consisted of the following key documents:

Council plans available to support this Scheme

Wirral UDP

Wirral (draft) Local Plan

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

- 5.3 The NPPF is a material consideration. It seeks to ensure that in the pursuit of sustainable development, the three-overarching economic, social and environmental objectives are delivered through the implementation of plans and the application of policies. Section 2 paragraph 8b seeks safe built environments as a key social objective of achieving sustainable development. The NPPF seeks to deliver a sufficient supply of homes, significantly boosting the supply of homes and ensuring that land suitable for housing is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 5.4 The draft Local Plan provides the strategic context for housing need in Wirral. This provides a target of **(TBC)** new homes for the Borough for the period of 2020-2037.
- 5.5 The Wirral Local Plan Issues and Options consultation was published for consultation between January and April 2020. It is currently estimated that The Submission Draft Local Plan will be published for public comment later this year, prior to submission to Secretary of State for independent examination. Once adopted the Wirral Local Plan will replace the current Wirral UDP.
- 5.6 The relevant policies of the development plan - **TBC**
- 5.7 The Council considers the Order Land to be capable of delivering a housing scheme achieving a significant qualitative housing gain; there is also potential to deliver a quantitative housing gain. The commitment to the re-provision of housing and delivery of such gain within 10 years of the confirmation of the Order thus accords with adopted policy.

5.8 The new homes to be erected upon the Order Land will provide safe and good quality homes, delivered in an improved physical environment with the new buildings designed to interface with the adjoining streets [and public spaces].

5.9 The Council's approach accords with the key relevant principles of the Government's National Estate Regeneration Strategy.

5.10 On the basis of the above, the Council contends that the provision of a housing gain also accords with the Councils' established policies and the planning framework.

6.0 CURRENT PLANNING POSITION & ORDER SCHEME

6.1 The Council granted outline planning permission for the Order Scheme in September 2020, subject to conditions (DPP3/20/00415, DPP03/20/418 and DPP3/20/00420 refers). The Development is described in the planning permission as:

- (i) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 15 houses and 30 apartments on Woodhead Street car park and land off New Chester Road, together with retention of 70 car park spaces for public use;
- (ii) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 11 apartments and 480sqm retail floorspace on land off Boundary Road;
- (iii) Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for development of up to 23 apartments and 540sqm retail floorspace on land off Bebington Road, including existing car park off Grove Street, together with retention of 8 car park spaces for public use.

6.2 The Order Scheme is a significant opportunity for economic, social and environmental improvements which can help achieve the broad goals of sustainable development and also help in the wider regeneration of the area.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS

Promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of the area

- 7.1 The centre of New Ferry has been in decline for a number of years. This is evidenced by a number of factors:
- (1) key retailers withdrawing from New Ferry. For example the Co-op that occupied the largest property left in 2017;
 - (2) high vacancy rates (recorded at 34% in 2019); and
 - (3) property conditions deteriorating due to a lack of investment.
- 7.2 The New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan has been endorsed by the Council with the aim of reversing this decline by promoting and improving the economic well-being of the area in the following ways:
- (1) a comprehensive strategy for the whole of the district centre is in place;
 - (2) An approved and funded strategic acquisitions programme is in place. This enables the purchase of all the identified key sites and properties in the centre;
 - (3) A bid for additional investment from the Future High Streets Fund has been made to Government and funding of £3.2M has been awarded to provide financial assistance to the regeneration plan and to support infrastructure improvements to improve the accessibility to the centre;
 - (4) The Government's Re-opening High Streets Safely initiative is supporting a number of campaigns to shop safe, shop local which encourages the community to use their local facilities;
 - (5) The New Ferry Community Land Trust has been established to promote the area and work with the local community on local initiatives;
 - (6) The construction of new residential and mixed-use development will create greater diversity in the centre, bringing in new residents, generating increased footfall and condensing the high street. It will also include new retail provision designed to meet current and emerging market requirements.

Promotion or improvement of the social well-being of the area

- 7.3 New Ferry suffers from high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 identifies two of the four Lower Layer Super Output Areas in the immediate proximity of New Ferry Town Centre are in the most deprived 10% in the whole country; with the LSOA to the south west in the most deprived 20%. This has declined further since the previous IMD study in 2015.

- 7.4 There are also significant mobility challenges around New Ferry with 35.1% of local households not having access to a car or van, significantly higher than the national average (26.2%). This means that these households are heavily reliant on New Ferry as the main retail centre within walking distance.
- 7.5 The New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan will promote or improve social well-being by:
- (1) creating a diversified retail centre providing a range of uses including retail, residential and community, which will create the area as the social centre of the community.
 - (2) By doing this derelict and vacant properties will be removed which will improve the area and reduce anti-social activity.
 - (3) An improved centre will be more attractive to the local community meaning they do not have to travel to other areas to shop and with the infrastructure improvements proposed, accessibility will be further improved to the facilities which will help to support older people by reducing issues of social isolation.

Promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of the area

- 7.6 The centre of New Ferry is characterised by a number of vacant sites (caused by the explosion in 2017) which resulted in a number of properties having to be demolished for structural and health and safety reasons. Some of these are vacant sites which are overgrown and not being maintained. This creates an unattractive appearance and a perception of the town and centre, which also attracts fly-tipping.
- 7.7 The implementation of the New Ferry Regeneration Plan will promote or improve the environment of the area by:
- (1) removing vacant sites and vacant and derelict buildings;
 - (2) providing new development which will be built to the latest environmental standards,
 - (3) through good design the environment of the area between the developments will be improved to encourage walking and safe routes,
 - (4) infrastructure improvements [surfacing, lighting, parking areas] will be designed to standards which improve the environment of the area,
 - (5) the Community Land Trust will promote a series of environmental measures to improve alleyways, create a community garden and planters,

(6) routes linking the local school and Port Sunlight will be assessed to improve connectivity in the area.

No planning impediment

7.8 There is no planning impediment to the redevelopment proposals as outline planning permission was granted in September 2020. (insert date and link to approval)

Human rights

7.9 It is acknowledged that the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land will amount to an interference with the human rights of those with an interest in the Order Land. These will include rights under Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”) (which provides that every natural or legal person is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of his possessions) and Article 8 of the ECHR (which provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence). However, the acquisition of land “in the public interest” is specifically allowed by the ECHR. The Council is of the view that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land which outweighs the ECHR rights and that the use of compulsory purchase powers in this matter is proportionate as this will improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Equality Act 2010

7.10 Pursuant to Part II of the Equality Act 2010, public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and,
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.11 Public authorities must have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual

orientation) and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- and,
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Council is not aware of any significant equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals set out within the regeneration plan and this document.

No alternative site or means

- 7.12 The geographical nature of the area, as can be seen from the plan at Appendix X of this report, means that there are no alternative sites or means. The area is an urban area with high density meaning that sites are immediately adjacent to each other and satisfactory re-development is impossible without acquiring the properties outlined in this report.

Compelling case in the public interest

- 7.13 The retail area is in decline. It is characterised by a number of vacant sites, derelict and dilapidated properties and a poor environment. Without intervention, the area will continue to decline and this will have an adverse impact on remaining businesses and the local community. This along with the matters set out above make a compelling case for the Order being in the public interest.

Viability

- 7.14 It is considered that the retail market both nationally and locally has been significantly adversely impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic with demand for units and the values they can attract being significantly reduced. This is the case with the current retail picture for New Ferry also. The residential market has generally held its value and there remains a

demand for this use in New Ferry. With some adjustment between the retail/residential mix across the various development sites within the preferred development option and with the inclusion of some of the £3.2M of the Future High Street Fund, (a grant from Government approved on 26 December 2020), the scheme is viable and therefore can be delivered. The Council has already approved funding of £1.3m in December 2018, to fund property and land acquisitions to enable site assembly to deliver the scheme.

Measure of last resort

- 7.15 It has always been the Council's intention to acquire the required properties by negotiation. However, after extensive negotiations, these are now at an impasse and unlikely to be purchased by agreement. The Council has the funding in place to acquire and relocate or extinguish any businesses, as well as rehousing any residential tenants.

Reasonable prospect of scheme going ahead

- 7.16 The Council has an endorsed regeneration strategy in place with funding to meet the acquisition, legal and enquiry costs to support the CPO. The Regeneration Plan has the support from the local community, Ward Councillors and other key stakeholders such as the Liverpool City Region and Homes England. Furthermore, there is outline planning consent in place, and interest from private sector partners and registered providers in the scheme. The possibility of additional Future High Streets Funding means that there is a reasonable prospect of the scheme going ahead.

Preferred Development Partner

- 7.17 The Council will deliver the preferred development option. It will do this either directly or by working with a preferred developer partner to the Council's own defined timescale. In indicative terms the delivery programme will be as follows;

Future High Street Funding awarded – December 2020

Making of CPO (subject to Member agreement) – June 2021

Preferred Developer identified – July 2021

Completion of CPO – November 2022 (estimated 18 months assuming that the CPO has to run its full course.)

Development of Griffith's site completed by January 2023

Development of 41-43 Bebington Road completed by March 2023

Development of Woodhead Street car park completed by September 2023

New Chester Road site (subject to CPO) completed by September 2024

Bebington Road/Grove Street site (subject to CPO) to be completed by December 2024

- 7.18 The development partner will work with the Council in progressing with a phased development programme, which is dependent on the Council obtaining full site assembly and the confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order.

8.0 ANY SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE LAND

- 8.1 Some areas of land – the Co-op building and an area owned by Port Sunlight Village Trust – have been included for land referencing purposes as there may be land issues which need to be dealt with in relation to these sites adjacent to the redevelopment sites, to enable that development to take place.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Given the progress made to date in assembling the required land, and the financial viability assessment, the Council is satisfied that it has necessary acumen, experience and resources to both complete the land assembly and to implement the proposals relating to the Order Scheme.
- 9.2 The Council has set out above its detailed reasons for making the Wirral Council (New Ferry) Compulsory Purchase Order 2021. In summary these reasons are as follows:
- (i) The Council thinks that the proposed Order Scheme will facilitate development which is likely to contribute to achieving the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area, and further details of these are set out in preceding sections;
 - (ii) The Council considers that there are no impediments to delivering the Order Scheme if the Order is confirmed;
 - (iii) The proposals for the redevelopment of the Order Land accord with local and national planning policy;
 - (iv) There is a resolution in place to grant planning permission for the Order Scheme
 - (v) There is sufficient funding in place to deliver the proposals for the Order Land
 - (vi) The Order Scheme satisfies the tests set out in the Guidance;

9.3 Having considered relevant National Planning Policy, Guidance and Unitary Development Plan and draft Local Plan Policies the Council is satisfied that there is a compelling need in the public interest for compulsory purchase powers to be sought in order to secure the development, redevelopment or improvement of the Order Land by way of the delivery of the Order Scheme for the economic, social and environmental improvement of this part of the Wirral Borough. The Council has therefore made the Order and asks the Secretary of State to confirm the Order.

10.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS AFFECTED BY THE ORDER

10.1 The Council will make the Order and associated documents available on its website at www.wirral.gov.uk. To obtain further information or planning-related enquiries please contact David Ball at; davidball@wirral.gov.uk

10.2 Owners and occupiers affected by the scheme who wish negotiate or discuss details of the Order, including selling your property or interest and matters of compensation should contact Steve McMorran at: stevemcmorran@wirral.gov.uk

11.0 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS FOR ANY PUBLIC INQUIRY

11.1 The Council intends to refer to, or put in evidence, the documents (or relevant extracts from those documents) which are listed below. The Council reserves the right to refer to or adduce additional documents.

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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	THE PEOPLE'S POOL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee with an update on a proposal brought forward by an external organisation named Our Lido Ltd (OLL), a company limited by guarantee (no shareholders), to build a lido complex on a Council site within Wirral, fully funded by external grant funding applied for by OLL.

The proposal ('The People's Pool') is to provide a hub for the community with a mixed business model to support this to include a food and drink offer, retail, spaces for community use, a proactive employment and training policy, and potentially partnerships with local independent businesses and social enterprises. The aspirations for the pool itself are that it will provide a 50 metre long pool, open all year round and will be heated using environmentally sustainable energy. The proposal has the potential to provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits, including increased visitor footfall in New Brighton and secondary visitor spend, and will support community wealth building.

A decision has previously been taken by the Council to approve up to £80,000 grant funding to contribute towards feasibility work for the People's Pool project through the Council's Capital Budget (Council, 2 March 2020, Minute 122 refers). A decision has also previously been taken by the Leader of the Council to support the People's Pool project and to approve the investigation to identify a Council site within Wirral to potentially be transferred under the community asset transfer process or occupied in some other way to be decided at a future date (Leader Decision, 24 March 2020 refers).

Since its previous decisions, the Council has faced significant financial pressures largely connected to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has required it to review its commitments. The New Brighton Masterplan has also been commissioned to develop a long-term framework to inform future decisions in New Brighton. It is considered that this represents a material change of circumstances. This report therefore recommends that Economic, Regeneration and Development Committee agree to award £67,500 grant funding to Our Lido Ltd to support further feasibility work and that the Director of Regeneration & Place enters into a discussion with Our Lido Ltd regarding potential Council-owned sites which could be brought forward by Our Lido Ltd for the People's Pool proposal.

Our Lido Ltd proposes that the £67,500 would enable further early feasibility work to progress the project and would strengthen the case for next stage bidding to funding programmes; increasing the likelihood of the full project being delivered and providing the intended economic, social and environmental benefits.

It is envisaged that the operation of the People's Pool will support the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and further feasibility funding will help to inform potential options for the New Brighton Masterplan, which is due to be consulted on later in 2021.

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The proposals contained in this report directly supports the following key themes within that plan.

- Prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live

This matter affects the New Brighton ward within the Borough

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee are recommended to agree:-

1. To the award of a grant of £67,500 to Our Lido Ltd from the Council's Capital Budget to support feasibility work to progress the People's Pool proposal and that delegated authority be given to the Director of Law and Governance to finalise the terms of the grant agreement.
2. That the Director of Regeneration & Place be authorised to enter into a discussion with Our Lido Ltd regarding potential Council-owned sites which could be brought forward by Our Lido Ltd for the People's Pool proposal, on the following basis:
 - i. that any site proposals for the People's Pool would be subject to future public consultation; and
 - ii. that any future decision to identify a Council-owned site for Our Lido Ltd to bring forward for development of the People's Pool would require further Member approval.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To support feasibility work for the People's Pool project to strengthen the case for next stage bidding to funding programmes and support the delivery of the project's intended economic, social and environmental benefits.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 *Do nothing* – This option would be to not award the £67,500 grant to OLL to assist in further feasibility work, however it is considered that this would undermine the ability of OLL to secure further feasibility funding and may result in the termination of the project.
- 2.2 *Provide a reduced amount of funding* – This option would be to reduce the level of grant provided to OLL below the proposed £67,500, however, it is considered that a reduced grant award would undermine the ability of OLL to develop the proposal to a sufficiently advanced position to be able to bid for further pre-development funding, which may result in the termination of the project.
- 2.3 *Provide funding on a recoverable basis* – This option would be to provide OLL with a repayable grant, however, as a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, OLL has no other means of raising funding at this stage.
- 2.4 *Do not enter into discussions with OLL regarding potential sites* – Entering into discussions with OLL as part of the New Brighton Integrated Masterplan process would enable further feasibility testing of potential sites. There would be no obligation on the Council to identify a suitable site and any site-specific proposals would be subject to public consultation, which is intended to take place through the Masterplan process.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The People's Pool Proposal

- 3.1 Our Lido Ltd's vision for the People's Pool is that it will be a community resource for the people of the Liverpool City Region, which will also act as a unique visitor destination. The People's Pool will celebrate Wirral's marine setting and social heritage. It will do so through inspiring, innovative design which is driven by strong social and environmental values. The goal is to deliver a 50m, Amateur Swimming Association compliant competition size main pool, heated and open all year round. It will have a smaller, children's/teaching pool, and possibly a cold-water pool. Associated facilities such as spa and rehabilitation facilities will be explored, and it is hoped to have studio spaces for health, fitness and wellbeing sessions, and for gathering opportunities for community groups. The food and drink offer will be of high quality and accessible, and the retail offer and other elements may provide an opportunity to partner with local independent and social businesses.

3.2 The proposal will embed the principles underpinning the Community Wealth Building Strategy, maximising the opportunities it brings for local people, business and the economy.

3.3 The intended outcomes for the People's Pool proposal include the following:

Social

- Increased participation in swimming
- Contribute to reducing inequalities across a range of health, educational and economic provisions
- Improved quality of life for residents of all ages and backgrounds
- Community cohesion and reduced isolation
- Staff and volunteer wellbeing
- Education and learning opportunities (swimming; aquatic & marine environment; thought leadership; social history)

Environmental

- Recycling & waste capture in construction and operation
- Renewable energy generation (potentially contributing to local provision)
- Enhance and improve the carbon footprint of any site through development
- Influence through supply chain
- Influence on user behaviour

Economic

- Community wealth building
- Job creation
- Skills training
- Employee/volunteer/trainee progression
- Increased visitor footfall in the immediate locality
- Secondary spend in the visitor economy
- Catalyst to retail, hospitality & leisure businesses on site
- Contribution to the LCR's social business sector and visitor offer

Strategic Fit

3.4 **The Wirral Plan to 2025** sets out an ambition for the Borough which includes a prosperous and inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; a cleaner greener Borough that celebrates, protects and improves the environment and urgently tackles the environment emergency; and safe vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.

3.5 **The Wirral Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025** supports the latest Wirral Plan and sets out three strategic objectives: democratic economy; generative economy; and financial resilience. The three strategic objectives will be delivered across the following five pillars of the community wealth building:

- Plural ownership – residents in Wirral have a say on the wealth generated by their communities.

- Land and assets – Council land and assets are used to build community wealth, including ways in which Council assets can be used for the benefit of the local community
 - Making financial power work for local places – wealth that exists in Wirral is harnessed to increase investment in local communities.
 - Workforce – residents of Wirral are employed in secure, well-paid jobs with progression of opportunities and good terms and conditions.
 - Procurement – procurement practices of Wirral’s anchor institutions are used to build the wealth of local communities.
- 3.6 It is considered that the People’s Pool proposal supports the objectives of the Wirral Plan to 2025 and embeds the principles of the Wirral Community Wealth Building Strategy.
- 3.7 Wirral Council has declared an environment and climate emergency and has developed the **Cool Wirral 2 Strategy** as part of the Cool Wirral Partnership. This sets Wirral on the path to achieve two main goals:
- To stay within a local emissions ‘budget’ of 7.7 million tonnes (Mt) of CO₂ between 2020-2100 and to reach ‘net zero’ pollution as early as possible before 2041
 - To ensure a climate resilient Wirral adapted to cope with existing change and further unavoidable disruption this century
- 3.8 The People’s Pool is seeking to promote new buildings designed for low energy ‘zero carbon’ use and will be exploring opportunities for renewable energy use in support of the Cool Wirral 2 Strategy.
- 3.9 The Council is also developing a **Sports and Physical Activity Strategy** which seeks to work with local residents and partners to provide accessible and affordable services that help to make physical activity a part of everyone’s everyday lives. The strategy will cover four key strategic priorities:
- Active people
 - Active partnerships
 - Active places
 - Active open spaces
- 3.10 This strategy will form the overarching document that supports the Draft Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy for Wirral (2019) and will provide residents, external funders and all other stakeholders with the confidence in the Borough’s ability to work collaboratively in a range of ways to increase physical activity. The next stage of the process will involve consultation with investors, stakeholders, community groups, sports clubs, and residents.
- 3.11 The Council will work with OLL to ensure that any proposals reflect the objectives of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and its supporting documents.

Feasibility Work

- 3.12 A decision has previously been taken by the Council to approve up to £80,000 grant funding to contribute towards feasibility work for the People’s Pool Project through

the Council's Capital Budget (Council, 2 March 2020, Minute 122 refers). The Leader of the Council agreed to support the People's Pool project and approve the investigation to identify a Council site within Wirral to potentially be transferred under the community asset transfer process or occupied in some other way to be decided at a future date (Leader Decision, 24 March 2020).

Stage One Report

- 3.13 £12,500 of the £80,000 grant has provided match funding for £12,500 pre-development funding secured by OLL from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Strategic Investment Fund, to develop an operating business model to demonstrate that the proposal can operate self-sustainably without requiring ongoing public revenue support, incorporating a demand study ('Stage One Report').
- 3.14 OLL engaged Amion Consulting to assist with the production of the Stage One Report and used swim demand data from Swim England. Extensive research was also undertaken to gather comparator information on income and expenditure of other lidos across the UK.
- 3.15 Council officers received the Stage One Report and its supporting VAT Report in December 2020 and submitted joint feedback with officers from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to Our Lido Ltd to seek clarification on aspects of the Report. OLL has provided a response which addresses each point in turn. A copy of the final Stage One Report is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.16 The Stage One Report contains a number of assumptions and variables, involving a range of income streams and types of expense, reflecting the early stage of the scheme. These assumptions could naturally vary and impact on the project. At this point, officers are satisfied that the proposal has a reasonable chance of operating self-sustainably, on the basis of the assumptions contained within the report and the further points of clarification provided by OLL, however, it is considered that an up-to-date business model would need to be provided and be subject to independent verification, prior to any potential transfer arrangement being agreed. The following points should be noted:
- Grant funding has not been secured for future pre-development stages of the People's Pool project. The project will require additional funding from other parties to bring it to a successful conclusion.
 - Initial business modelling demonstrates pre-operating and initial year losses. It is noted that any fundraising will need to cover such losses (as well as any working capital requirements) until the scheme is net cash generative.
 - The capital cost of developing the scheme has not been finalised and is dependent on the site, however it is expected to be a multi-million pound scheme. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has agreed in principle to provide £750,000 capital funding towards the project.
 - When depreciation and funding future renewal costs are considered, it is important to note that the operating surplus is unlikely to cover the cost of borrowing to fund the

capital. OLL's strategy is to fund the capital cost of creating this community asset solely through public investment and fundraising.

Grant Proposal

- 3.17 The objective of OLL is to provide an iconic and multi-use facility which will contribute to the wider visitor economy in Wirral. OLL propose that the £67,500 would enable key elements of capital feasibility work to proceed and would provide the crucial lever that will enable OLL to secure funding for the next stages of development and delivery. OLL are proposing that the £67,500 would be used to complete RIBA Stage 0 and commence RIBA Stage 1, including identifying spatial requirements; reviewing potential sites; developing an outline planning strategy and developing a capital funding strategy. A copy of the grant proposal is included in Appendix 2.
- 3.18 OLL has indicated that the estimated budget to undertake the further feasibility work including developing an outline business case lies between £150,000 and £200,000, with a timescale of four to six months. OLL aims to bid for funds that will underpin the project's foundations for a longer period, to allow work to proceed without having to pause as currently. OLL has confirmed that this funding would be sought from sources external to the Council.
- 3.19 A specific site to build the People's Pool has yet to be identified, however, the Council is exploring the potential for a lido to be accommodated on a Council-owned site within New Brighton through the emerging New Brighton Integrated Masterplan, which the Council has commissioned BDP, supported by AspinallVerdi and Curtins, to work with local stakeholders to produce. Once approved, the Masterplan will provide a long-term framework to inform the Local Plan and guide investment decisions. Further feasibility work carried out by OLL would help to support the development of potential options for the Masterplan, which is due to be subject to comprehensive public consultation later in 2021.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council grant is being charged against the Capital Programme allowing the spreading of the financial cost over a number of years. If the project does not lead to an asset being created, the £67,500 and previous £12,500 could not be capitalised and would need to be charged back to revenue or covered by use of reserves.
- 4.2 If insufficient external funding is received there may be pressure on the Council to step in with additional funding for the project to achieve its final outcomes.
- 4.3 Potential negative financial impacts could fall on any nearby Council sites delivering the similar services as the proposed project, such as sports and recreation sites delivering Wirral swimming programmes, however the People's Pool intends to increase swimming participation in the Wirral and attract visitors from outside the area to complement existing provision.
- 4.4 A Community Asset Transfer may incur VAT and stamp duty land tax (SDLT) liabilities dependent upon the potential transfer arrangement. The Council will seek to remove or minimise any liabilities where it can by use of tax planning and by taking appropriate advice.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 OLL will need to enter into a formal grant agreement to ensure the delivery of the grant outcomes, to be approved by Legal Services.
- 5.2 Issues for the grant under the subsidy control regime will need to be addressed and appropriate de minimis certification obtained.
- 5.3 Issues involved in potential future land disposal under the subsidy control regime may need to be addressed at a later date.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 As this is an application for a grant to carry out a feasibility study, existing officers' time will be required to monitor progress and grant compliance.
- 6.2 Further public consultation may be required if potential site options are brought forward. If this goes beyond the scope of the New Brighton Masterplan, additional resourcing may be required in terms of officer time and consultation materials.
- 6.3 Should the feasibility work show the People's Pool project would be feasible, there may be a future request for land to be transferred under the community asset transfer process or occupied in some other way to be decided at a future date. Consideration would need to be given to any opportunity costs involved from alternative site use.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Risk	Identified Mitigation Measures
Our Lido Ltd are not able to secure further pre-development funding to progress to the next stage	Although some funding has been secured in principle, Covid has added a level of uncertainty to this. OLL will need to work proactively with stakeholders and potential funders to secure the funding required. It is considered that the Council providing £67,500 grant funding for feasibility work will strengthen the case for the next stage funding bids.
Funding required for the capital development cannot be secured	The current situation regarding grant funding is in a state of flux as funding sources have been diverted towards Covid recovery. EU funding sources are also about to end and there is some uncertainty about what will replace them. The project will need a robust, flexible fundraising strategy and substantial funding resource to raise the amounts required.
That the feasibility work undertaken using the £67,500 funding would not provide	The outputs of the feasibility work will need to be closely monitored to ensure that the

Risk	Identified Mitigation Measures
sufficient information for the Council or the public to assess potential site proposals	work is sufficiently detailed to inform future decision-making.
A suitable site, in the right location, cannot be found	Identifying a potential suitable site is part of the New Brighton masterplanning process. If a suitable site cannot be found, consideration will need to be given to whether there is an alternative location elsewhere on the Wirral or in the wider LCR which meets the same criteria in terms of views, size, market access and community support. If a suitable site cannot be found, a decision will need to be taken about whether to progress with the scheme.
A site is identified in a suitable location but it is not big enough to accommodate all of the intended functions	It is possible that a site will be identified which meets some but not all of the criteria. For example, it may not be big enough to accommodate a 50m pool, all the dry facilities and services or the car park. If such a site is deemed viable on the basis of the socioeconomic benefits and other criteria, a revised financial plan will be required to assess income and costs for the revised specification
The scheme is not able to operate self-sustainably and the Council is required to provide ongoing revenue support	Would need to be satisfied before providing a site that operations were robust once a more detailed design and business model has been developed.
The facility has a negative impact on Council leisure services	There is already a national shortage of swim teachers and an alternative facility which may result in loss of staff and cancelled memberships to Council facilities. OLL would need to work with the Council's leisure service and partners to ensure that the People's Pool provided a complementary offer.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 OLL has engaged widely with community groups to date, including Wirral Change and umbrella organisations such as Community Action Wirral and Wirral Community of Practice. As part of the early stages of the New Brighton Integrated Masterplan, the masterplan team has engaged with a number of key stakeholders on a one-to-one basis in addition to a wider public consultation exercise between 26 October and 16 November 2020 via the Council's Have Your Say webpage. Key documents were published on-line, available for download alongside an online survey, as well as a mapping tool that allowed respondents to place 'pins' and make comments on specific geographic sites.

- 8.2 Respondents were able to request paper copies of the survey, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the Have Your Say site alongside the online survey. Public computers were available to book at New Brighton's Floral Pavilion, however this facility had to close part way through the consultation due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- 8.3 The consultation invited views on the key issues and opportunities for New Brighton across a number of topics including design, open spaces and transport. A total of 3,891 people visited the New Brighton Masterplan consultation page during the consultation period. Out of these 282 people either took the survey and/or used the places tool.
- 8.4 As part of the consultation, respondents were also asked three specific lido-related questions:
- The extent they agreed/disagreed with the statement "The lido is generally a good idea for the masterplan"
 - When thinking about a lido, what is most important to you?
 - What else do you think the People's Pool development could include?
- 8.5 Respondents were also asked to identify where on the map (of New Brighton) a potential scheme could be located.
- 8.6 A large proportion of respondents (90 per cent) either strongly agreed or agreed that a lido was generally a good idea for the masterplan and the two factors considered most important for respondents was to provide a facility for local people's health and wellbeing and for it to be an attraction that serves the Liverpool City Region and attracts visitors. Respondents also noted the importance of a lido to be usable all seasons and some expressed concerns regarding the potential impact on traffic. Others highlighted the importance of using sustainable energy sources in the construction and operation of the lido, and to ensure that it provided value to the local community during mid-week or off-season periods, such as in the form of a community space.
- 8.7 Although initial consultation carried out as part of the Masterplan demonstrated support, it is recognised that this represents a small sample of interested parties and any potential site options would need to be subject to a comprehensive public consultation at a future date. OLL have noted that community consultation will be extensive and a Community Steering Group will be formed to help guide the design and planning processes.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help Council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 OLL's ambition for The People's Pool is for it to be inclusive, actively working to break down social, cultural and financial barriers to bring people together. Accessibility and social inclusion are fundamental considerations for the People's

Pool and OLL are aiming to embed user needs and aspirations into its design, both for the physical facility and the operating model.

9.3 An overarching, initial Equality Impact Assessment has been produced which has identified that the project would have a positive impact on protected groups and would help to address health inequalities. A full Equality Impact Assessment would be required at a later date once the proposal has been developed further and if a potential site has been identified. This would need to be supported by a Health Impact Assessment, to assess the potential health effects of the proposal on the population, particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, and a full assessment of how the project could address health inequalities and improve health outcomes.

9.4 The Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Where possible the People’s Pool will invest in environmentally friendly solutions and design, including potential for the facility to be heated using environmentally sustainable energy and to support active travel, in line with the Cool 2 Climate Change Strategy for Wirral.

10.2 Measures would need to be taken through the design and planning process to identify any potential impacts on factors including transport, flood risk, biodiversity and coastal change; with appropriate mitigation measures identified.

10.3 As a result of the initiatives outlined above, it is considered that the content and recommendations contained in this report are likely to have no overall impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases and, where possible, the proposal could reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. A full assessment of environmental impact, including statutory assessments relating to flood risk and biodiversity, would be required as the scheme progresses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: People’s Pool Operating Business Model ‘Stage One Report’ (Exempt)
Appendix 2: Grant Proposal (Exempt)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

New Brighton Masterplan Consultation Report (December 2020)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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Cabinet – People’s Pool (taken as a decision by the Leader of the Council using delegated powers due to the COVID-19 pandemic)	24 March 2020
Council – Council Budget	2 March 2020, Minute 122



ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	2020/21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE (APR - DEC)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the projected year-end revenue and capital position for Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee as at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2020) of the 2020/21 financial year.

The Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic continues to present financial risk due to uncertainty and fluidity in the external environment.

The overall financial position for the Council remains challenging, and a number of actions are in progress to mitigate the overall forecast position presented at quarter 3, including limiting spending to essential areas of service delivery only, with Corporate Directors supported to mitigate the risk of overspending. This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee:

1. Note the adverse year-end forecast position presented at Quarter 3 of £0.714m.
2. Note the impact of funding and expenditure as a direct consequence of Covid-19, including the additional funding sources which have been identified, but as yet, not received.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Revenue Budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other reporting frequencies could be considered, but quarterly reporting is standard practice.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1.1 This report provides a summary of the projected year-end revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3, Month 9 (December 2020) of 2020/21 financial year.
- 3.1.2 The year-end forecast recorded as part of December's financial monitoring activity represents an adverse variance from budget of £0.721m for this committee.

3.2 2020/21 COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET

- 3.2.1 The budget for the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee is included within the Regeneration & Place Directorate.
- 3.2.2 The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee is predicting an adverse budget variance of £0.714m at year-end. The majority of income losses in this committee are, in part, mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Compensation scheme, which is recorded as a separate and distinct funding stream within the report presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 17 February.
- 3.2.3 Since Q3 was reported there has been confirmation that the MerseyTravel Levy pressure was not going to materialise and that it would be within budget. It is also going to be slightly lower next Financial Year due to the change in demographics on which it is calculated.

TABLE 1 2020/21 – Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee Revenue Budget & Forecast

	Full Year		Variance (+ Fav, - Adv)	%	Adv/Fav
	Budget	Forecast			
	£0	£0	£0		
Regeneration	24,371	24,898	-527	-2%	Adverse
Planning	1,185	1,383	-198	-17%	Adverse
Special Projects	266	255	11	8%	Favourable
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	25,697	26,857	-714	-3%	Adverse

3.2.4 **Regeneration:** An adverse forecast position has as a result of the in-year delay to the strategic restructure for the Regeneration and Place team (£0.225m). In the original plan for this service, it had been agreed to fund growth to ensure a sustainable service could be delivered. In light of the difficulties for the organisation caused by Covid-19, this plan has been rephased to 2021/22, releasing funds to support the wider organisational budget gap. However urgent activity did need to be conducted, and this is being delivered by locum staff, the expense of this shows within this service. There is a forecasted overspend on the MerseyTravel levy of £0.266m which we have now had confirmed will not materialise.

3.2.5 **Chief Planner:** The adverse forecast variance of £0.198m is due to income losses as a result of reduced demand for Planning Applications as a result of Covid-19 and additional pressure from the increased contract / exceedance costs of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The income losses, are in part, mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme.

3.2.6 **Special Projects and Regeneration:** There is a small favourable forecast variance of £0.011m. This is due to projects being put on hold as a consequence of Covid-19.

3.3 2020/21 COMMITTEE CAPITAL BUDGET

TABLE 2 2020/21 – Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee Capital Budget & Forecast

Programme	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Adult Social Care & Health	7.550	0.991	-6.56	-87%
Children, Young People & Education	5.500	3.614	-1.89	-34%
Economy, Regeneration & Development	60.362	40.972	-19.39	-32%
Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport	21.851	32.805	10.95	50%
Housing	7.806	6.123	-1.68	-22%
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure	0.774	1.499	0.72	94%
Total	103.843	86.004	-17.84	-17%

3.3.1 Table 1 provides an update on the 2020/21 capital Programme. A number of significant variations have arisen since the programme was agreed in March 2020. These include the re-profiling of expenditure into and out of the 2020/21 financial year, inclusion of additional grant funded schemes, variations to spend forecasts and the inclusion of potential new capital schemes that are seeking funding via this report. Further detail is provided below.

3.3.2 Given the budgetary pressures that the Council faces, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak, a review of the programme continues to try and identify schemes that may no longer be financially viable, essential or deliverable. This review has resulted in scheme reductions totalling £5.81 million and the reprofiling of budget into future years of £61.56 million. It is anticipated that further reductions and/or deferrals of budget will be made as the review continues. Such deferrals will reduce the borrowing costs incurred during 2020/21 (the effects of which are included within the Quarter 3 revenue monitoring) and also delays the resultant Minimum Revenue Provision charges into future years.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This is the Quarter 3 budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Council for 2020/21. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This is in addition to the personal duty on the Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer to make a report, if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:
1. Senior Leadership / Directorate Teams regularly reviewing the financial position.
 2. Availability of General Fund Balances.
 3. Review of existing services and service provision.
 4. Capitalisation directive

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. This report has no impact for equality implications at this stage, however any associated actions may require an assessment.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report on financial performance.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee Wednesday, 17 February
2020/21 Revenue Budget Monitoring for Quarter 3
2020/21 Capital Budget Monitoring for Quarter 3

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Committee Meeting	Date
Economic, Regeneration and Development Committee	27 October 2020
Economic, Regeneration and Development Committee	24 November 2020
Economic, Regeneration and Development Committee	26 January 2021



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ACTIVE TRAVEL MEMBER WORKING GROUP
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the establishment of a members working group focussed on active travel. It is considered that a working group focussed on active travel is required to support the Council to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This proposal is within the wider context of the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to ‘a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030’.

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Councils vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan.

- A cleaner, greener borough which celebrates, protects and improves our environment and urgently tackles the environmental emergency
- A prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations
- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The matter is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy Regeneration and Development Committee is recommended to approve that:

1. The Active Travel Working Group be established with the Terms of Reference as attached to this report at Appendix 1.
2. The Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Active Travel Working

Group and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The creation of an Active Travel Working Group is proposed as a positive step. The work of the group will enable this Committee to make appropriate decisions and recommendations which will support the delivery of increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council could choose not to establish an active travel cross party working group. However, it is considered that having such a group would assist the Council in actively working to deliver ambitious inclusive walking and cycling projects as required to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2017 the Department of Transport published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy which set out the ambition for England to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The strategy sets out how the Government wishes to change the perception of cycling from being seen as a niche activity to a normal activity for all. The benefits are considered to be wide ranging, for people cheaper travel and better health, for businesses increased productivity and increased footfall in shops and for society as a whole it means lower congestion, better air quality, and vibrant, attractive places and communities.
- 3.2 Investing in active travel can bring environmental, health and economic benefits:
- Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
 - Active travel can contribute towards the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity for adults each week, which are hugely important for maintaining health.
 - Walking and cycling can contribute towards economic performance by reducing congestion, supporting local businesses and more. The benefit to cost ratio of investments in walking and cycling are estimated at 5.62:1 (or 'very high' value for money).
- 3.3 In July 2020, the Department of Transport published Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking for 2020-25. This plan was described by the Prime Minister as the "most ambitious plan yet to boost cycling and walking". Some of the key policies to deliver on this ambition are:

- £2bn of ringfenced funding for walking and cycling overseen and administered by Active Travel England a new inspectorate, which will ensure projects meet new design standards, and be delivered on time.
- The creation of a 'national e-Bike programme' – this will enable the elderly, or those who travel far to take to bikes as part of journeys.
- A new approach on health will be piloted in selected places with poor health rates to encourage GPs to prescribe cycling, with patients able to access bikes through their local surgery.
- Improvements to the National Cycle Network
- Making streets safer by consulting to strengthen the Highway Code to better protect pedestrians and cyclists; improving legal protections for vulnerable road users; raising safety standards on lorries; and working with the police and retailers to tackle bike theft.

- 3.4 Alongside Gear Change, a new Local Transport Note (LTN1/20) was published by the Department of Transport setting out new standards for infrastructure design. LTN1/20 sets out five core design principles which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot, based on best practice both internationally and across the UK. LTN1/20 set outs that networks and routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive.
- 3.5 To support this vision the Government have set out that £2 billion of new investment, in addition to existing funding, will be provided over the next five years. However, Gear Change makes clear that the Government will not fund or part-fund any scheme that does not meet the new standards and principles. A new commissioning body and inspectorate, Active Travel England, led by a new national cycling and walking commissioner will be established in the near future which will have the power to hold the active travel budget, approve and inspect schemes, lead on training, good practice, knowledge sharing, inspect highway authorities and review major planning applications. Active Travel England will also begin to inspect, and publish annual reports on highway authorities, whether or not they have received funding, grading them on their performance on active travel and identifying particularly dangerous failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians. It is the intention that the commissioner and inspectorate will in this regard perform a similar role to Ofsted in raising standards and challenging failure.
- 3.6 The Government consider that Covid-enforced lockdown has resulted in increased rates of walking and cycling across England. This pattern is said to have been repeated worldwide with many authorities acting rapidly to expand space for cycling and walking. In May 2020, the Department of Transport announced a £250 million emergency active travel fund, which is the “first stage of a £2 billion investment, and part of the £5 billion in new funding announced for cycling and buses in February.” The Department of Transport also published fast-tracked statutory guidance for local authorities to “make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians”.
- 3.7. It is considered that the establishment of the Active Travel Working Group would be a positive step having regard to the recently published Department of Transport Gear Change guidance and also given Wirral’s ambitious regeneration programme. The work of the Group would be designed to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This

development of the Local Plan is also within the wider context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

- 3.8 As such it is proposed that the working group will play an advisory role in the development of active travel schemes. The group would advise on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral. This would be with a view to aiding greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiatives. The group would need to take account of the wider context of the potential for sustainable transport projects to contribute to:
- health and well-being;
 - tackling the climate emergency and improving air quality;
 - improving accessibility;
 - reducing congestion by encouraging active travel modes especially for shorter journeys;
 - achieving value for money;
 - helping economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - tackling transport poverty and inequality of access; and
 - inclusive economic growth.

- 3.9 It is proposed that the remit of the group includes policies, processes and resources, infrastructure, including reviewing best practice and Department of Transport guidance, advising on consultation and community engagement and behaviour change and vision. Specifically, the role of the group will include:

- advising on the development and implementation of an Active Travel Strategy and Infrastructure Plan as part of building an evidence base and developing business cases for future funding applications as appropriate;
- advising on wider activity to support the implementation of 'Gear Change' and the uptake of active travel across Wirral;
- providing input into a review of current and pipeline active travel projects and supporting the implementation of any actions arising;
- providing a collective voice to respond to consultations on policies and proposals that will impact upon pedestrians and cyclists in Wirral, and wider Liverpool City Region as appropriate;
- facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practice in order to encourage and promote increased levels of active travel; and
- guiding, responding and working with, as appropriate, the Wirral Active Travel Forum.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to the establishment of an active travel working group. However, the Government have set out that £2 billion of new investment for active travel over the next five years and to existing funding will be provided over the next five years. The recently published guidance makes clear that the Government will not fund or part-fund any scheme that does not meet the new standards and principles. Therefore, the establishment of the working group would

aid greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiative and advise on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral therefore ensuring Wirral was best placed to secure funding going forward.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The establishment of the Active Travel Working Group is in compliance with the Council's Constitution. This group would not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of this Committee.

5.2 Paragraph 26 of Part 1 of the Council's Constitution states as follows:

“Panels, Forums, Working Groups, Liaison and Task & Finish Groups may be established by Committees. The purpose of these working groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service, according to their remit. These groups do not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of the committees. Their membership may include councillors from each party, non-councillors by invitation and, occasionally, employees”

5.3 Paragraph 2 of Part 3 Section B of the Council's constitution states as follows

“Working Groups Involving Members

Working groups, may be established by a Committee from time to time to develop recommendations or investigate issues of interest or concern alongside formal Sub-Committees. They shall be for specific purposes and shall be time limited. They will only be established when the matter cannot be undertaken by a relevant Committee and each committee is limited to establishing [two] such committees at any one time.

They usually fall into one of the following categories:

(a) Advisory groups relating to policy development or service functions

Usually established to advise about an issue or subject area. The relevant Committee shall specify terms of reference and membership, which may include invited persons holding relevant expertise or knowledge and Members who are not members of the parent Committee.

(b) Task & Finish Groups

Small groups of Members appointed by a Committee or Sub-Committee for the purpose of advising the parent committee about either:

(i) an in-depth policy review

(ii) performance monitoring

(iii) responding to a major policy consultation.

The terms of reference and purpose are specified by the relevant Committee.”

5.4 The Working Group will comprise of seven members, one of whom will be the Chair of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee. In addition, Members of other Committees may be invited to attend as and when appropriate at the discretion of the Chair of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee. The

appointment of Members to the Working Group will be made having regard to the political balance of the Council as a whole. The Active Travel Working Group would come within the category of an Advisory Group.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Lead Commissioner Transport and Technology will provide the strategic transport support role for this working group, alongside wider support from colleagues from Democratic Services.
- 6.2 There may be minor implications in terms of staffing time in terms of setting up and attending Working Group meetings, which can be managed within current resources.
- 6.3 There are no other staffing, ICT and assets implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The establishment of the working group has been identified as a mitigation against the Council failing to meet the standards set by the new Active Travel England body.
- 7.2. The new Active Travel England body will assess Wirral's performance with respect to sustainable travel outcomes, particularly cycling and walking, which will be taken into account when considering funding allocations for local transport schemes. In addition the Government have set out that future funding will be conditional on work starting and finishing by specified dates. If work has not started or been completed by the specified times, they will ask for funds to be returned. The new Active Travel funding body and inspectorate will enforce the standards and time limits with the aim of raising performance.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In 2019 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in conjunction with Sustrans published their first Bike Life report. The information in the report comes from local cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,491 residents aged 16 or above in LCR. The survey was conducted by social research organisation NatCen and is representative of LCR residents, not just those who cycle. The working group can consider engagement reports such as this as well as other national and regional research in providing advice to Committee.
- 8.2 The Council currently has a formally constituted Active Travel Forum, membership of this group is open to anyone individual or organisation with an interest in active travel. It is proposed that this established Active Travel Forum and the proposed cross party working group relationship is formalised in order that the established Active Travel Forum has a formal route to Committee via the proposed Active Travel Working Group. It is proposed that the working group will guide, respond and work with, as appropriate, the Active Travel Forum. Advice will be sought from Legal Services and Committee Services as to how this can best be facilitated.

- 8.3 Public consultation for individual cycling and walking schemes will be undertaken in line with processes that are required for the undertaking of work on the adopted highway for 'traffic management measures' as per the Council Constitution.
- 8.4 The Chair of the Committee and Party Spokespersons have been consulted on the proposals in this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The establishment of the working group will support the Council to give due regard to the impact of policies, practices and actions. Gear Change recognises that increasing levels of cycling and walking can help tackle inequalities. Inclusive design and accessibility runs through all five of these core design principles in LTN1/20 which specifies that designers should always aim to provide infrastructure that meets these principles and therefore caters for the broadest range of people.
- 9.3 Infrastructure must be accessible to all and the needs of vulnerable pedestrians and local people must be considered early in the process to ensure schemes are supported locally in the long term. This working group will support the Council to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Increasing cycling and walking will help to combat climate change. By encouraging and enabling people to travel more on foot and by cycle instead of the private car harmful emissions will be reduced. Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
- 10.2 Gear Change identifies that mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emission and that meeting the targets to double cycling and increase walking would lead to savings of £567 million annually from air quality alone and prevent 8,300 premature deaths each year and provide opportunities to improve green spaces and biodiversity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Active Travel Working Group Draft Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Department for Transport Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918442/cycling-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

Department for Transport Gear Change July 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951074/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf

Sustrans Bike Life Report Liverpool City Region

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-liverpool-city-region/>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	

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Active Travel Member Working Group

DRAFT Terms of Reference V5

Background / Context

The Active Travel Working Group (“the Working Group”) been established to consider what the opportunities and barriers may be to deliver ambitious inclusive walking and cycling projects as required to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This is within the wider context of the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to ‘a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030’.

In the context of the Local Plan and to guide the future development of Wirral the group will consider the potential for sustainable transport projects to contribute to:

- health and wellbeing;
- tackling the climate emergency and improving air quality;
- improving accessibility e.g. to employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities;
- reducing congestion by encouraging active travel modes especially for shorter journeys;
- achieving value for money;
- helping economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- tackling transport poverty and inequality of access; and
- economic growth.

Purpose and remit of the Group

The overarching purpose for the Working Group is to act as an Advisory Group, making recommendations on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral and to aid greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiatives. The Working Group will consider the role of active travel in the borough, the future vision of Wirral as a sustainable borough and in delivering public health and climate change objectives.

The remit of the Working Group includes:

- Policies, processes and resources.
- Infrastructure, including reviewing best practice and Government guidance
- Consultation and community engagement
- Behaviour change and vision

This Working Group will be given the following specific tasks:

- advising on the development and implementation of an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan as part of building an evidence base and developing business cases for future funding applications as appropriate.
- advising on wider activity to support the implementation of ‘Gear Change’ and the uptake of active travel across Wirral

- providing input into a review of current and pipeline active travel projects and supporting the implementation of any actions arising
- providing a collective voice to respond to consultations on policies and proposals that will impact upon pedestrians and cyclists in Wirral, and wider Liverpool City Region as appropriate
- facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practice in order encourage and promote increased levels of active travel
- guiding, responding to, and working with, as appropriate, the Wirral Active Travel Forum

The Working Group has no decision-making powers on behalf of the Council, but recommendations and findings from this group will be presented to the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee

Membership

1. The Working Group will comprise of seven members, one of whom will be the Chair of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee. In addition, Members of other Committees may be invited to attend as and when appropriate at the discretion of the Chair of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee
2. The appointment of Members to the Working Group will be made having regard to the political balance of the Council as a whole.
3. The Working Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee, unless he or she chooses not to do so or otherwise a Chair will be selected by the Group from amongst its number.
4. The Working Group meetings must have at least 3 members to be quorate.
5. The Working Group may appoint a Vice Chair.
6. Relevant officers and representatives of external organisations including the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Local or National Active Travel Organisations may also be invited to attend as dictated by the agenda.

Meetings

- Meeting will be virtually at a 4-weekly frequency.
- Meetings will last no more than two hours.
- Meetings are not open to the public but minutes will be shared on the website after approval by the Chair as an accurate record.
- The Membership will be consulted throughout the year, as appropriate, regarding individual scheme designs as part of the standard consultation process for infrastructure schemes.
- Meetings will be structured around themes and issues, with evidence and information being provided by officers, partner organisations and technical/policy advisors to support discussion and planning. Context information and background reading will be provided by the Secretariat in advance as appropriate.

- Meetings will include presentations and demonstrations of local, regional and national initiatives, as well as discussions on local active travel delivery.

Secretariat

Meeting agendas and papers to be sent out to representatives at least one week in advance of the Forum and all administration and support will be provided by Democratic Services.

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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 March 2021

REPORT TITLE:	ECONOMY REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVENANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee. It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee are invited to agree or otherwise determine the content of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee work programme which is proposed in this report for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan formats were explored, with the current framework open to amendment to match the requirements of the Committee

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- The Council Plan
- The Council's transformation programme
- The Council's Forward Plan
- Service performance information
- Risk management information
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee has responsibility for developing and delivering a vision for Wirral as a place. It is responsible for developing and determining or recommending all planning and transport policies, including the Local Plan, and infrastructure planning. It is also responsible for promoting regeneration, economic development and associated activities, including the tourism, culture and visitor economy, and for removing barriers to growth.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:

(a) development and delivery of the Council's strategic objectives for planning, sustainability and transportation;

(b) developing and recommending those plans and strategies which together comprise the Local Plan;

(c) developing and adopting or recommending (if reserved to Council) other spatial planning documents, including but not limited to

- (i) supplementary planning documents (SPD) and planning policy advice notes;
- (ii) Master Plans and development briefs;

(iii) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and

(iv) [The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when applicable];

(d) economic development, including but not limited to infrastructure, enterprise, skills and seeking, securing and managing external funds to achieve that, directly or in partnership with joint ventures and external companies or bodies as well as with the Combined Authority and government bodies;

(e) the Council's functions and partnerships regarding the promotion of economic growth and the establishment and development of business;

(f) the promotion and development of the economic factors in the area, such as seeking to ensure sufficient and appropriate employment sites, investment, adult skills, apprenticeship schemes, productivity, development sites and so forth;

(g) overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the Wirral Growth Company LLP

(h) reviewing major projects and any project boards having regard to capacity to deliver, corporate priorities and resources, and advise the Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate;

(i) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and

(j) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct implications to staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications. However, there may be implications arising as a result of work programme items.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Anna Perret**
(Anna Perret, Scrutiny Officer)
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Work Programme update

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Constitution

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee	26th October 2020

ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

4 March 2021

Item	Key Decision Yes/No	Lead Departmental Officer	Wirral Plan Priority
Revised statement of community involvement	Yes	Keith Keeley	'Inclusive Economy'
Maritime Knowledge Hub	Yes	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone Investment Fund - Maritime Knowledge Hub	Yes	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone Investment Fund	Yes	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
New Ferry – implementing the regeneration plan	Yes	David Ball	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral ways to Work	Yes	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
Business Support Services Commissioning Intentions Paper	Yes	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
The People's Pool	No	Sally Shah	'Inclusive Economy'
Active Travel Cross Party Member Working Group	No	Julie Barnes	'Inclusive Economy'
Q3 Financial Monitoring report	No	Shaer Halewood	'Inclusive Economy'
Work Programme Update	No	Anna Perrett	'Inclusive Economy'

Key decisions – to be scheduled

Item	Key Decision	Lead Departmental Officer	Wirral Plan Priority
Application for Financial Assistance	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone Investment Fund	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme for England (2014-2020)	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Devolution Funding	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplan	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Hind Street Regeneration Strategy	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Hind Street Highways Strategy	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Temporary Market, Birkenhead	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Appointment of Preferred Developer to Deliver the New Ferry Regeneration Masterplan and Authority to Commence a Compulsory Purchase Order	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Enterprise Zone	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Spatial Framework for the Borough	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Growth Company - Final Site Development Plan for Birkenhead	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Growth Company Final Site Development Plans for Moreton and Bromborough	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'

Wirral Growth Company - Birkenhead Offices Funding Agreement	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Investment Plan	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
The People's Pool Lido	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Department for Transport Active Travel Allocation	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Active Travel Strategy	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Sustainable Urban Development Work Package 7	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Mass Transit	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Liverpool City Region Cycling Walking Investment Plan - Birkenhead to New Brighton	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Livable Neighbourhoods	Yes		'Inclusive Economy'
Report on transport schemes including SUD work package 7 – acceptance of funding	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Investment Plan	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Parking strategy	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Local Development Scheme	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Spatial Framework for the Borough	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Tower Road South Development	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral Waters Connectivity (7) - Duke Street (Phase 2)	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Wirral International Business Park Connections - A41 Carlett Park	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
A41 Phase 1 Business Case (PART EXEMPT)	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'
Liverpool City Region Cycling Walking	Yes	David Ball	'Inclusive Economy'

Investment Plan - Birkenhead to New Brighton			
Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplan (EXEMPT)	Yes	David Ball	'Inclusive Economy'
Preferred Developer to Deliver the New Ferry Regeneration (PART EXEMPT)	Yes	Alan Evans	'Inclusive Economy'

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Financial Monitoring Report	TBC	Shaer Halewood
Regen Committee Work Programme Update	TBC	Committee Team
Public questions	Each meeting	

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Task and Finish Reviews				
-	-	--		-
Spotlight Sessions and Workshops				
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Have your say

New Brighton Masterplan

Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 26 October to 16 November 2020

Report: 1 December 2020

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Key Findings

A masterplan is being developed for New Brighton which will set out a clear and shared vision for the area over the next 15 years.

People's views were invited on the issues the New Brighton Masterplan should address and the type of place New Brighton could be, as part of a public consultation which ran from 26 October 2020 to 16 November 2020. A summary of key findings is set out below:

- Most of the consultees described New Brighton using positive language (79%) and the word most associated with the town was 'potential', followed by terms such as 'vibrant', 'exciting' and 'up & coming'.
- Most consultees felt that New Brighton's Promenade and Coast was the most special and distinctive thing about the town (33%).
- 42% of consultees thought that "New Brighton is a great place to live, where residents can access all the benefits of being by the coast"; only 3% felt that it is "a major destination for events and happenings".
- The town's namesake, Brighton in Sussex was deemed to be the town that best sets an example for New Brighton (26%), with Llandudno in Wales highlighted as being next best (10%).
- When asked to prioritise what is most needed in New Brighton, leisure attractions were at the top of the list. Workspace was deemed least necessary.
- A lido (outdoor pool facility) was by far the most suggested idea for a land use/attraction/building in New Brighton with 60% of respondents suggesting this. The next most popular ideas were for a gym/spa/leisure centre and a pier (both 7%).
- The open space or street that the highest proportion of people (20%) thought could be improved was Tower Grounds, whilst the area or building that could most benefit from improvement was Marine Promenade (Lacy's to the Floral Pavilion) at 30%. This was closely followed by Fort Perch Rock (29%).
- Most people (61%) either strongly disagree or disagree with having some tall buildings in New Brighton. Only 12% agreed.

Travel & Transport

- Walking infrastructure was ranked as most important when travelling to and around New Brighton, followed by free car parking.
- 47% of people agreed that there is enough car parking in New Brighton. 29% disagreed.
- Most people (55%) agreed that enhancing the train station and its surroundings would improve the travel experience. 17% disagreed.
- Most people (67%) agreed that more room for pedestrians and cyclists would improve their travel experience to New Brighton. 12% disagreed.
- When asked to comment on how cyclists and pedestrians travelled together on the waterfront, the largest proportion of people (41%) felt better separation of the cycle and pedestrian lanes was needed, along with better enforcement of lane use and speed (24%).
- 41% of people agreed with the statement that better bus waiting facilities would enhance travel experience to New Brighton.
- In regard to general traffic and transport comments, 53% of the respondents mentioned parking. Specific issues were the need for dedicated parking for residents, and the need for better parking provision for the Victoria Quarter.
- Outside of parking issues 16% of respondents identified a need for more frequent and direct public transport that had a wider reach, both within Wirral and beyond.
- Also popular (15%) was the idea of a hop-on, hop-off mode of transport along the waterfront, perhaps extending to Seacombe Ferry. There were various suggestions of what form this may take, including tram, land train and electric bus.

The Lido

- The majority of respondents, 90%, either strongly agreed or agreed that a lido was generally a good idea for the masterplan.
- That it should provide a facility for local people's health and wellbeing was deemed the most important aspect of a lido by 20% of people.

- In addition to the lido itself, most respondents felt that the development should also include a sun terrace and/or space for outdoor events and activities (26%) and a café, bar, or restaurant (24%).
- 11% of the comments made using the 'lido' pins on the mapping tool mentioned the need for it to be an all season 'winterproof' facility.
- The most popular suggested site for a lido was the area around the original Derby Pool (now site of the Derby Pool public house), followed by The Dips.

New Brighton's Assets

New Brighton's top three assets were identified by respondents as

- Marine Promenade including its buildings and Marine Lake.
- The Dips.
- Tower Grounds.

New Brighton's Issues

The top issues presenting New Brighton were considered to be

- The derelict buildings and wasteland comprising Union Terrace, Lacy's and the Queen's Royal Hotel sites.
- Litter afflicting the area around the Marine Lake and Marine Point.

New Brighton's Opportunities

The most often highlighted opportunities for New Brighton by respondents were

- To convert Fort Perch Rock into an attraction.
- Utilise The Dips as an outdoor events arena.
- Improve/expand the skate park at Tower Grounds.



Methodology

A masterplan is being developed for New Brighton which will set out a clear and shared vision for the area over the next 15 years.

To help shape the Masterplan, a public consultation was carried out using Wirral Council's 'Have Your Say' consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk, where there was a page dedicated to the New Brighton Masterplan. The consultation ran between 26 October 2020 and 16 November 2020. Key documents were published here, available for download alongside an online survey, as well as a mapping tool that allowed respondents to place 'pins' and make comments on specific geographic sites. Respondents were able to request paper copies of the survey, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the Have Your Say site alongside the online survey. Public computers were available to book at New Brighton's Floral Pavilion, however this facility had to close part way through the consultation due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Email & written responses

16 responses were received via email. These were examined and the points raised aggregated into the survey results to ensure the views were represented in the final analysis.

The consultation was promoted in a number of ways, and key stakeholders who have been involved in the development of the Strategy were informed of the consultation. The COVID-19 virus continues to place limitations on our efforts to engage our local communities. However, in an effort to raise awareness amongst as many residents, stakeholders and businesses as possible, we instigated a full communications campaign, using all communications channels available to the council, to underpin the aims of the consultation process. This included issuing press releases to outline the purpose of the consultation and to direct people to our site, which were picked up by regional media outlets such as the Liverpool Echo and Wirral Globe, posting stories on Wirral View (the council's own wraparound news pages for its corporate website,) news items in the 20,000-subscriber council e-newsletter and in numerous posts on the council's social media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook & Instagram.) This included issuing press releases to outline the purpose of the consultation and to direct people to our site, which were picked up by regional media outlets such as the

Liverpool Echo and Wirral Globe, posting a number of stories on Wirral View (the council's own wraparound news pages for its corporate website,) news items in the 20,000-subscriber council e-newsletter and in numerous posts on the council's social media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook & Instagram.) In addition, we were also able to secure the support of interest groups, including peoplespool.co.uk, who acted as champions on behalf of the council to promote the consultation and encouraged people to take part.

Questionnaire design

The consultation questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents', businesses, and other stakeholder's views on what should be the key elements of the New Brighton Masterplan. In particular, the consultation invited views on:

- Key proposals of the masterplan, including the lido (outdoor pool facility) and travel and transport.
- Ideas for future use and development of land, open spaces, and streets.
- New Brighton's assets, opportunities, and issues

To enable further understanding, and in-depth analysis, respondents were invited to provide free text comments to expand on their ideas or concerns.

Interpretation of results

In terms of the results of the questionnaire it is important to note that:

- The public consultation is not representative of the overall population of Wirral or New Brighton but provides information, in particular, on the opinion of those residents who engaged with the Council, and an important indication of where there may be particular strength of feeling in relation to New Brighton's future.
- Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded. All free text questions that invited respondents to write in comments are multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 percent.
- In order that they can be summarised, all free text responses to the public consultation have been categorised using a 'tagging' system based on the

main themes arising from the comment. Comments may cover multiple themes, therefore there are more comment categories than comments.



Questionnaire results

Q1: What is your interest in New Brighton?

Most respondents to the survey either live in (46%) or visit (40%) New Brighton. Those falling in to the 'other' category included people who live on the periphery of New Brighton and those who are part of a special interest group, including the Active Travel Forum and Momentary Art Project.

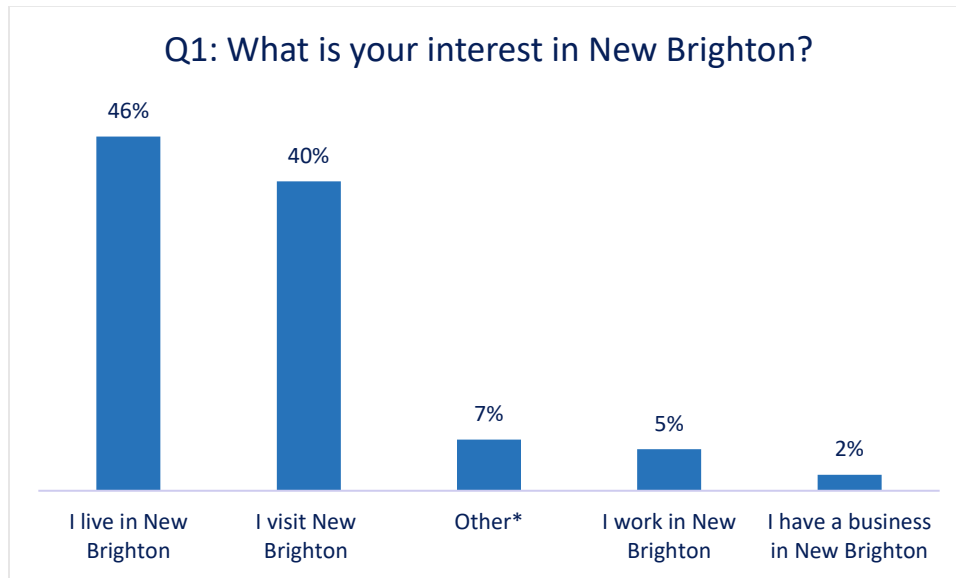


Figure 1: What is your interest in New Brighton?

*Some of the interests in the 'other' category responses related to the main selection options. Where this is the case, they have been aggregated into the appropriate category above.

Other (categorised)	Frequency
Periphery of New Brighton	8
Interest Group	3
Potential business owner in New Brighton	2
Previous resident	1
Total	15

Table 1: 'Other' responses to Question 1



Where people expressed a negative sentiment about the town, it was predominantly in respect of the untapped potential of the town and the perception that it is run down. Similar sentiments have been grouped together into categories to provide an overview of how respondents described New Brighton. (Figure 4, Table 2)

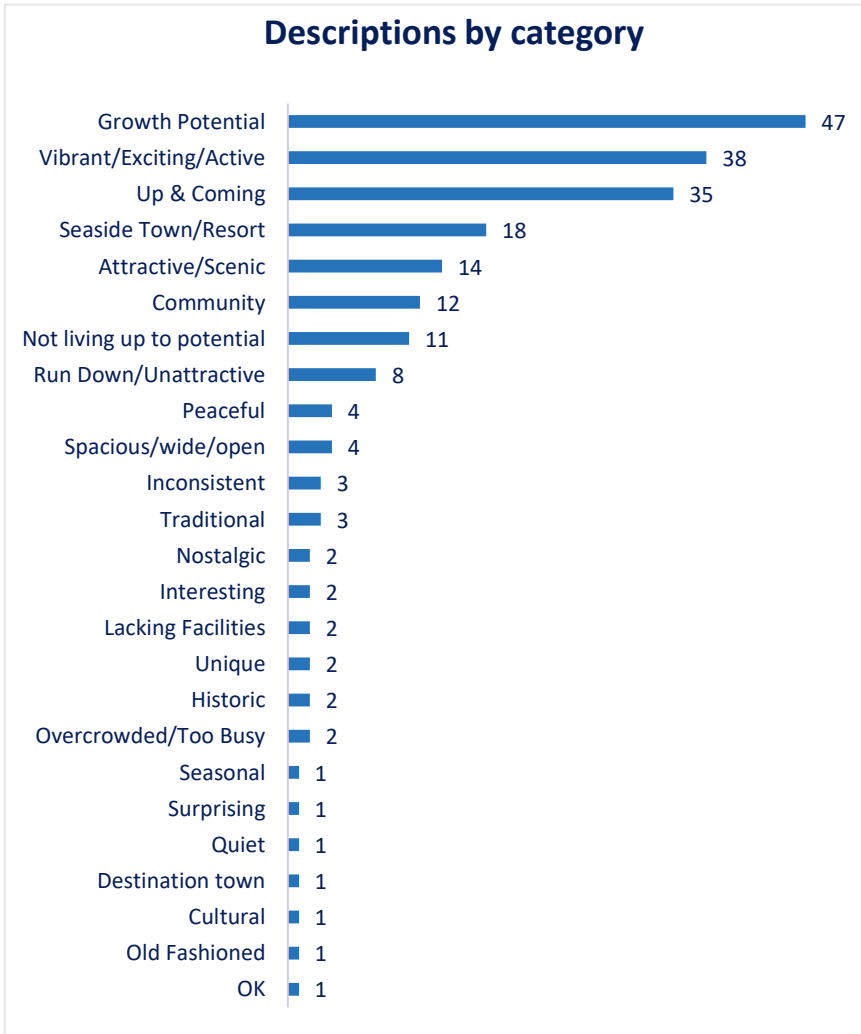


Figure 4: Chart showing top descriptions of New Brighton (categorised)

Key word (categorised)	Frequency
Growth Potential	47
Vibrant/Exciting/Active	38
Up & Coming	35
Seaside Town/Resort	18
Attractive/Scenic	14
Community	12
Not living up to potential	11
Run Down/Unattractive	8
Spacious/wide/open	4
Peaceful	4
Traditional	3
Inconsistent	3
Overcrowded/Too Busy	2
Historic	2
Unique	2
Lacking Facilities	2
Interesting	2
Nostalgic	2
OK	1
Old Fashioned	1
Cultural	1
Destination town	1
Quiet	1
Surprising	1
Seasonal	1

Table 2: Question 2 key words (categorised)

Q3: What is special or distinctive about New Brighton?

The survey indicates that most people feel that the promenade and coast make New Brighton special (33%). Greenspaces and parks (18%) and the Floral Pavilion (16%) are also features that people felt make the area special and distinctive (figure 5).

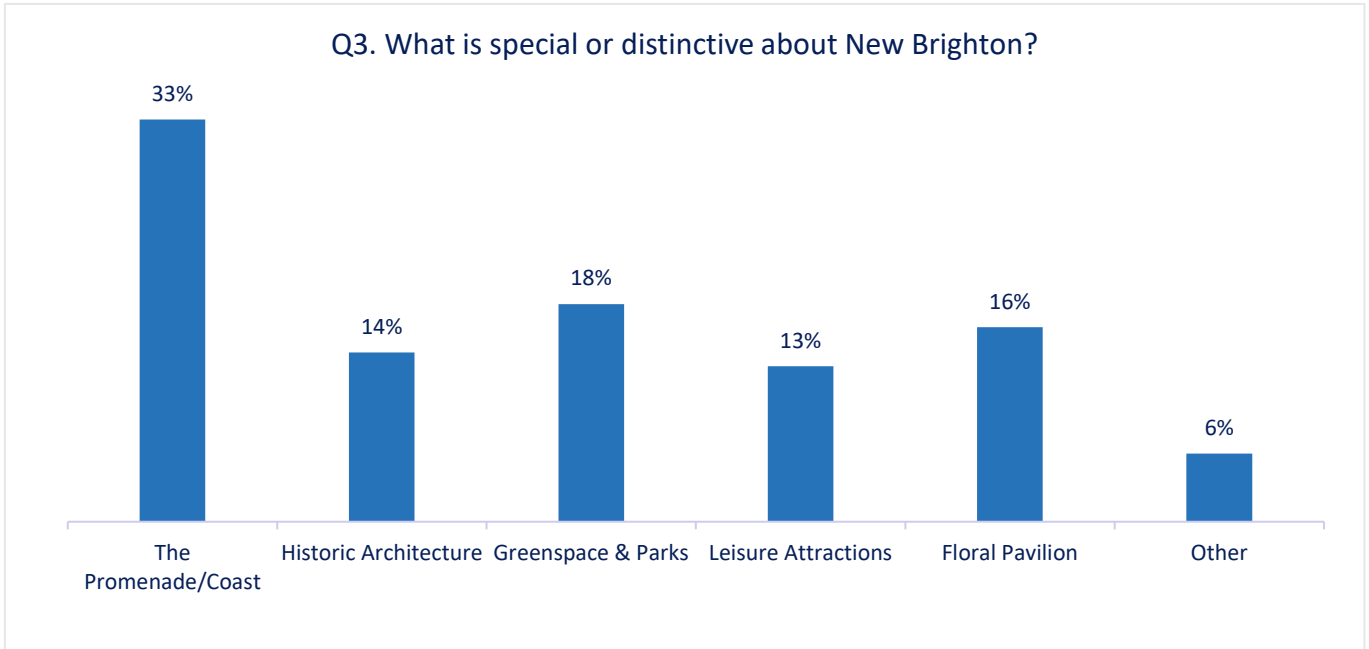


Figure 5: What is special or distinctive about New Brighton

In the 'Other' comments many people pointed to the local community as being something distinctive and unique about New Brighton. Independent businesses also featured highly, often mentioned in conjunction with the burgeoning 'Victoria Quarter'.

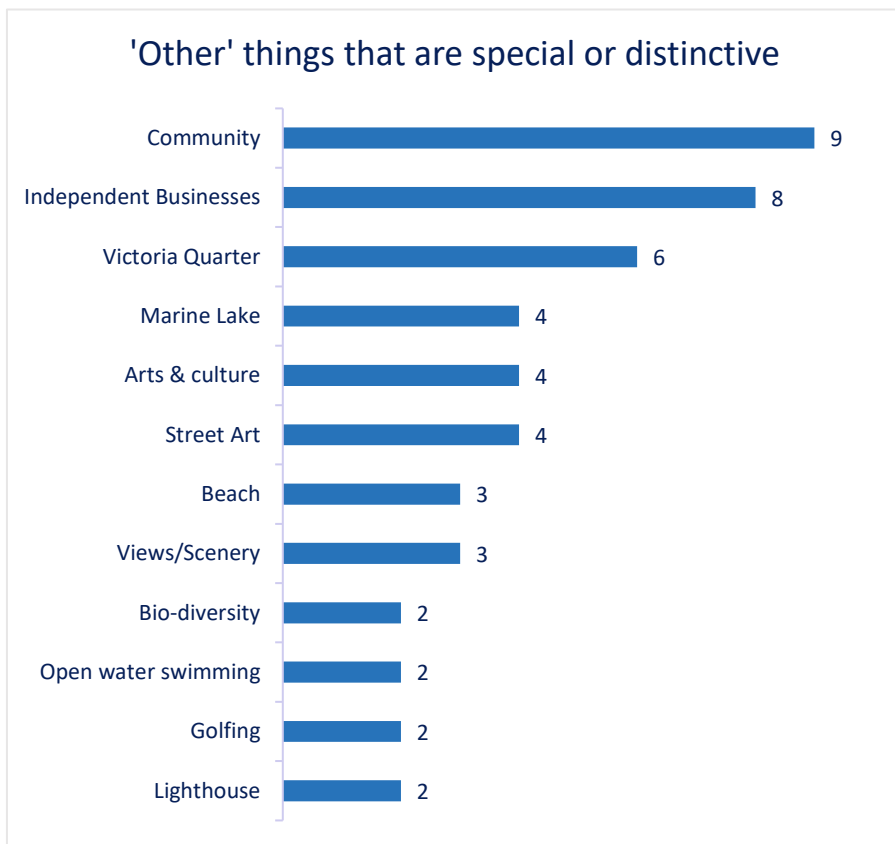


Figure 6: 'Other' things that are special and distinctive about New Brighton

Tables 3 & 4 contain the data upon which the above charts are based:

What is Special or distinctive about New Brighton	Frequency
The Promenade/Coast	207
Historic Architecture	87
Greenspace & Parks	112
Leisure Attractions	80
Floral Pavilion	100
Other	35
Total Responses	621

Table 3: What is special or distinctive about New Brighton

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
Community	9
Independent Businesses	8
Victoria Quarter	6
Street Art	4
Arts & culture	4
Marine Lake	4
Views/Scenery	3
Beach	3
Lighthouse	2
Golfing	2
Open water swimming	2
Biodiversity	2
Proximity to Liverpool	1
Sand Dunes	1
Fort Perch Rock	1
Traditional alongside modern	1
Transport Links	1
Pubs/Bars	1
Low cost/free activities	1
Windmill Sunsets	1
Dips	1
Formal Sport	1
Total Responses	59

Table 4: 'Other' things that are special about New Brighton (categorised)

Q4: Out of the below options, which do you think best describes New Brighton?

Respondents were offered four phrases and asked to select the one that they feel best describes New Brighton.

The phrases were:

- *New Brighton is a traditional seaside resort for day trips and sometimes longer stays.*
- *New Brighton is a great place to live, where residents can access all the benefits of being by the coast.*
- *New Brighton is a distinctive place with a strong independent spirit and cultural offer.*
- *New Brighton is a major destination for events and happenings.*

The phrase that most people, 42%, felt best described New Brighton was:

“New Brighton is a great place to live, where residents can access all the benefits of being by the coast”

Conversely relatively few people (3%) felt that “New Brighton is a major destination for events and happenings.”

Figure 7 illustrates the proportion of people who believe each phrase best describes New Brighton.

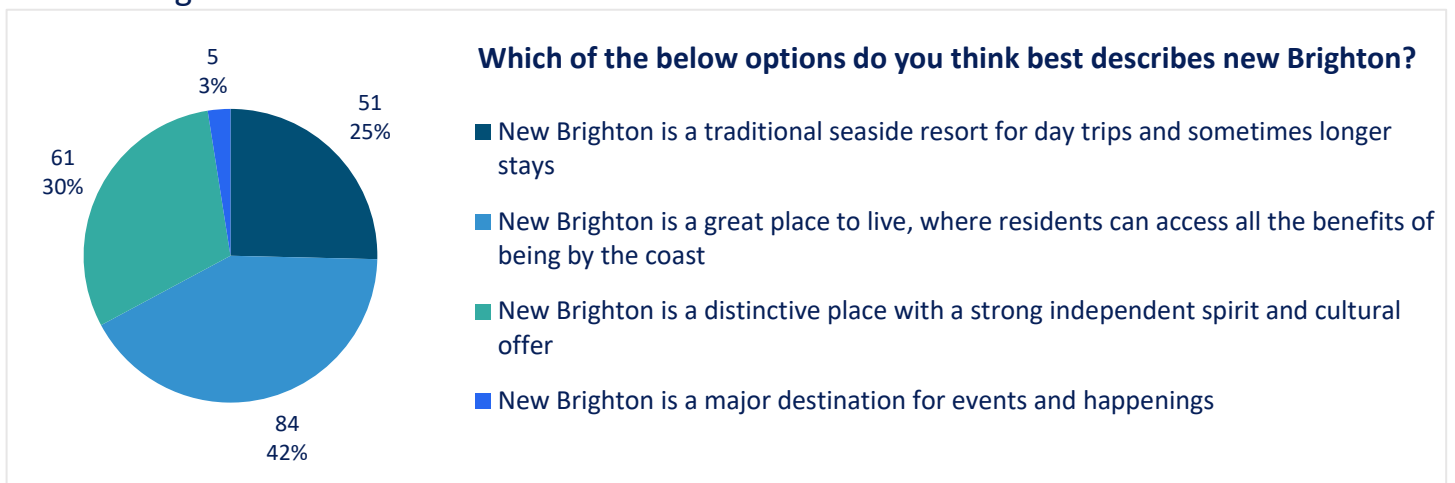


Figure 7: Chart illustrating which statement best describes New Brighton?

Table 5 contains the data upon which the above chart is based:

Out of the below options, which do you think best describes New Brighton?	Frequency
New Brighton is a traditional seaside resort for day trips and sometimes longer stays	51
New Brighton is a great place to live, where residents can access all the benefits of being by the coast	84
New Brighton is a distinctive place with a strong independent spirit and cultural offer	61
New Brighton is a major destination for events and happenings	5
Total Responses	201

Table 5: Number of responses to each statement

Q5: Can you name another town in the UK or elsewhere that sets a good example for New Brighton?

When asked to provide an example of a town that sets a good example for New Brighton, the highest number of responders (26%) pointed to Brighton in Sussex (figure 8). 10% identified Llandudno in North Wales as a good example. Other towns near to the top of the list were Abersoch, Scarborough, Southport and St Ives.

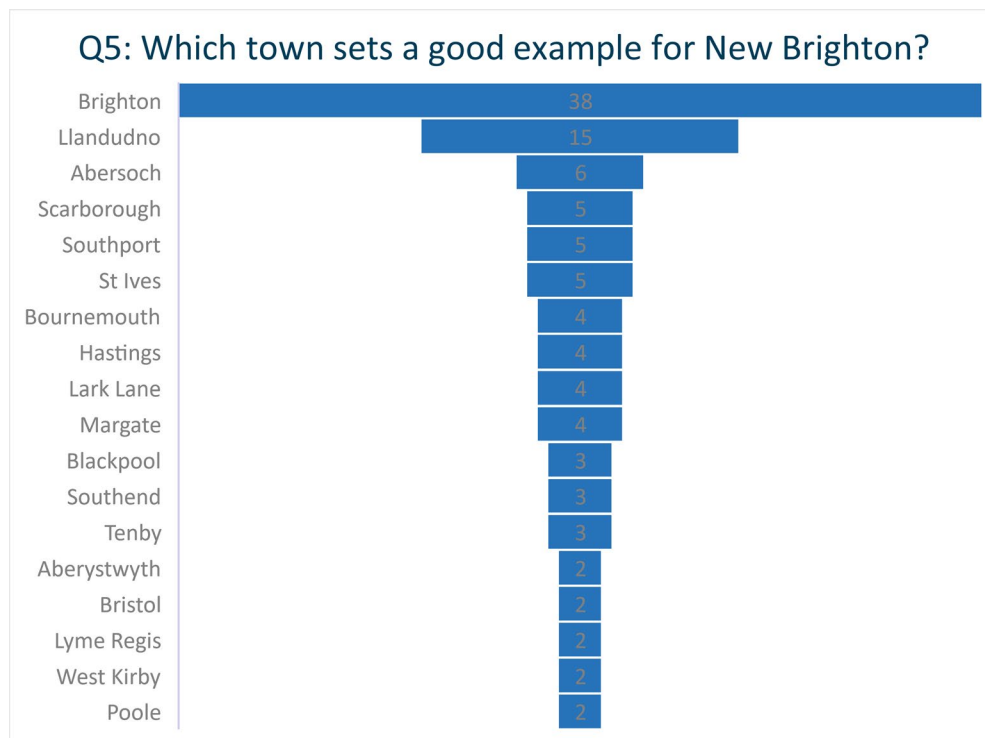


Figure 8: Which town sets a good example for New Brighton?

Place	Pivot
Brighton	38
Llandudno	15
Abersoch	6
Scarborough	5
Southport	5
St Ives	5
Bournemouth	4
Hastings	4
Lark Lane	4
Margate	4
Blackpool	3
Southend	3
Tenby	3
Aberystwyth	2
Bristol	2
Lyme Regis	2
West Kirby	2
Poole	2

Table 6: Data table of top places that set a good example for New Brighton



Q6: Can you prioritise what is needed most in New Brighton?

Respondents were asked to rank from 1 to 6 the offered options according to what they felt is most needed in New Brighton. As a result, the options were returned in the below priority order, based on their average rank:

- 1 Leisure attractions**
- 2 Retail (including cafes and restaurants)**
- 3 Open Space**
- 4 Hotels**
- 5 Housing**
- 6 Workspace (e.g. offices)**

Figure 9: Prioritised list of what is needed in New Brighton

Leisure attractions are deemed to be most needed in New Brighton, followed by retail establishments including dining, then open spaces. Ranked fourth and fifth were hotels and housing. Workspace was considered to be least in demand.

Q7: Do you have an idea for a particular attraction / land use / building / open space that would enhance New Brighton?

When asked for ideas for an attraction, land use or building that would enhance New Brighton the majority, 60%, of respondents suggested a lido. Other popular ideas were a leisure, gym or spa, or a combination of these (7%). A further 7% of people thought a pier would enhance New Brighton, often mentioned in conjunction with re-introducing a ferry service to Liverpool.

Other top 10 most popular ideas were bringing Fort Perch Rock back in to use as an attraction, some suggested allowing Historic England to take it over. The idea that more independent businesses should be encouraged was amongst the top 10, sometimes mentioned in conjunction with supporting the Victoria Quarter. The below chart illustrates the top 10 most popular ideas as categorised.

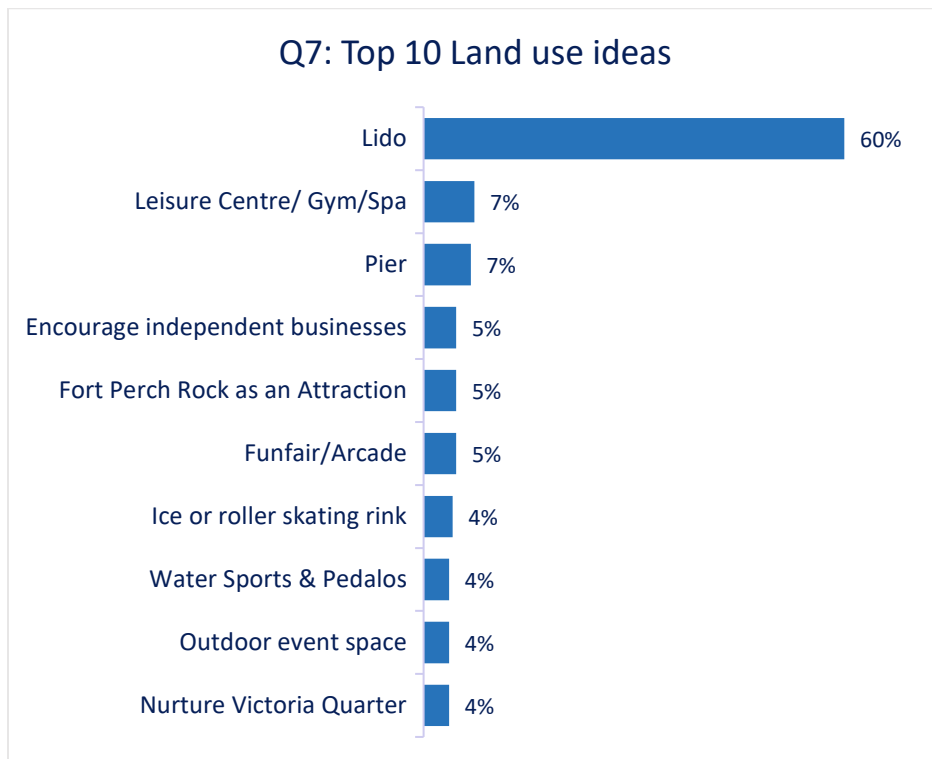


Figure 10: Top 10 land use ideas in New Brighton

Idea	Frequency
Lido	118
Leisure Centre/ Gym/Spa	15
Pier	14
Funfair/Arcade	11
Fort Perch Rock as an Attraction	10
Encourage independent businesses	9
Ice or roller skating rink	8
Nurture Victoria Quarter	7
Outdoor event space	7
Water Sports & Pedalos	7
Creative/Arts hub - studio & exhibition space	7
Ferry to Liverpool	7
Skatepark	6
Rescue/Redevelop historic facades/buildings	5
Cafe Culture - encourage	5
Plant Trees	5
Sustainable/green infrastructure	5
Iconic Landmark/gateway	5
Land train/tram/shuttle bus along prom and/or to Seacombe Ferry	4
Rebuild Tower	4
Indoor Water Park	4
Adventure playground	4
Beach Huts	4
Ablutions block for beach/water sports users	4
Hotel accommodation	4
Historical preservation	3
Public toilets	3
Trampoline Park	3
Community Centre	3
Nightlife	3
3g football pitches	3
Fine Dining	3
Wardens to enforce litter/parking/safety	3
Viewing platform	2
Market	2
Independent businesses - cafes	2
Pedestrianise Victoria Road	2
Attractive Floral/ Planting Displays	2
Picnic Areas	2
Exercise stations	2
Splash Park outdoors	2
Marina	2
Outdoor games (chess /table tennis /volleyball /tennis etc)	2
Train Station as community hub	2
Street vendors/kiosks	2

Idea	Frequency
Mixed development	2
Create more open green spaces	2
Parking - Seabank Road	1
Businesses serving local residents - banks/post offices	1
Dedicated camper van parking	1
Campsite	1
Live Music Venue	1
Naturist Beach	1
Casino	1
Community Orchard	1
Beach Facilities	1
Refurbish Victorian Shelters	1
Improved signage - visitor information	1
Maritime Attractions	1
Skydiving Centre	1
Miniature Golf	1
Flexible workspace	1
Botanical Gardens in Dips	1
Seaside Town/Resort	1
Children's Activities	1
Illuminations	1
High end retail	1
visitor centre	1
museum	1
Cycle infrastructure	1
Pedestrianise	1
5k running track	1
No Change necessary	1
Landscaping/Greenery	1
Paint sea wall	1
Holiday Park - caravans/chalets	1
Coach Park/station with facilities	1
Palm House/Conservatory	1
Climbing Wall	1
Active Design	1
Enlarge Marine Lake	1
Zip Wire	1
Beachfront dining	1
Man made reef (surfing)	1
Congestion Charge	1
Remodel Floral Pavilion	1
Calendar of events	1
Dedicated dog friendly and dog free areas	1
Total	372

Table 7: Table of categorised ideas for an attraction/land use/building or open space that would enhance New Brighton

Q8: In what areas could accessibility in New Brighton be improved?

Consultees were asked in what ways accessibility in New Brighton could be improved. Most respondents (27%) felt that car parking provisions could be improved, closely followed by public transport (25%) and cycling provisions (22%). 13% felt walking infrastructure could be improved.

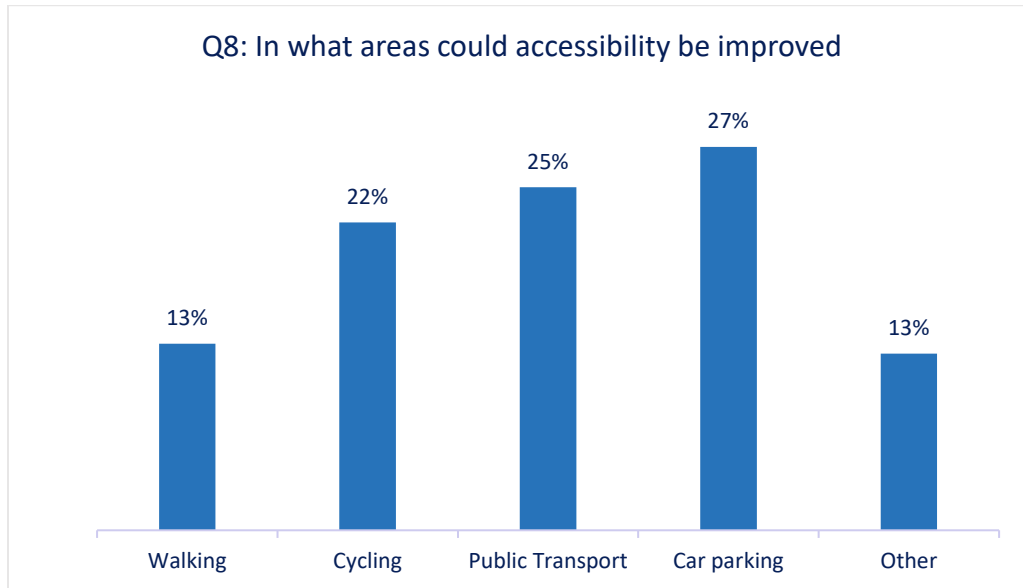


Figure 11:: What areas of accessibility could be improved in New Brighton?

In what areas could accessibility in New Brighton be improved?	Frequency
Walking	37
Cycling	61
Public Transport	68
Car parking	76
Other	35
Total	240

Table 8: Table showing what areas of accessibility could be improved in New Brighton

A further 13% had suggestions for other ways in which accessibility could be improved. Of these several users suggested the idea of hop-on hop-off transport along the prom, which was also a popular suggestion amongst the comments pinned to the places map tool. Also mentioned multiple times was the re-introduction of a ferry service. A park and ride scheme was suggested by a number of users, as well as subsidised and more frequent and far reaching public transport to new Brighton.

'Other' ways in which accessibility can be improved

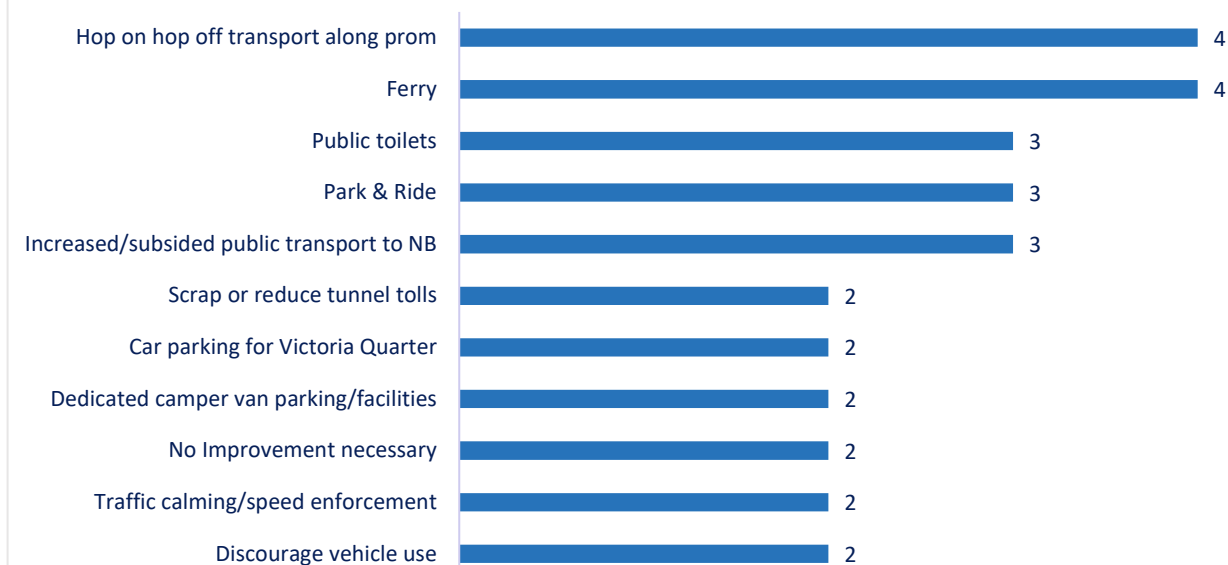


Figure 12: 'Other' ways in which accessibility can be improved in new Brighton

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
Ferry	4
Hop-on hop-off transport along prom	4
Increased/subsided public transport to NB	3
Park & Ride	3
Public toilets	3
Discourage vehicle use	2
Traffic calming/speed enforcement	2
No Improvement necessary	2
Dedicated camper van parking/facilities	2
Car parking for Victoria Quarter	2
Scrap or reduce tunnel tolls	2
Steps from shore to riverside	1
Essential Services - e.g. banks, post office	1
Engaging activities for visitors and residents	1
Cycle Lanes	1
Skate Park	1
Prohibit Motorhomes/camper vans	1
Running track	1
Modernise but retain traditional feel	1
Accessibility for mobility scooters	1
Litter management	1

Table 9: 'Other' way in which accessibility can be improved - categorised.

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
Promote area	1
Dedicated resident's parking	1
EV Charge points	1
Disability friendly bike/buggies for hire	1
Parking away from residential areas	1
Taxi accessibility	1
Independent businesses	1
Ice Skating rink	1
Maintain pavement & dropped kerbs	1
Total	48*

*Some respondents mentioned more than one idea, hence more responses than responders.

Q9: Which streets and open spaces in New Brighton could be improved?

When asked which of New Brighton’s streets and open spaces could be improved, most people pointed to Tower Grounds (20%). The Dips, the Promenades and Seabank Road followed, with similar numbers of people feeling these areas needed improvement – between 16% - 18% of respondents.

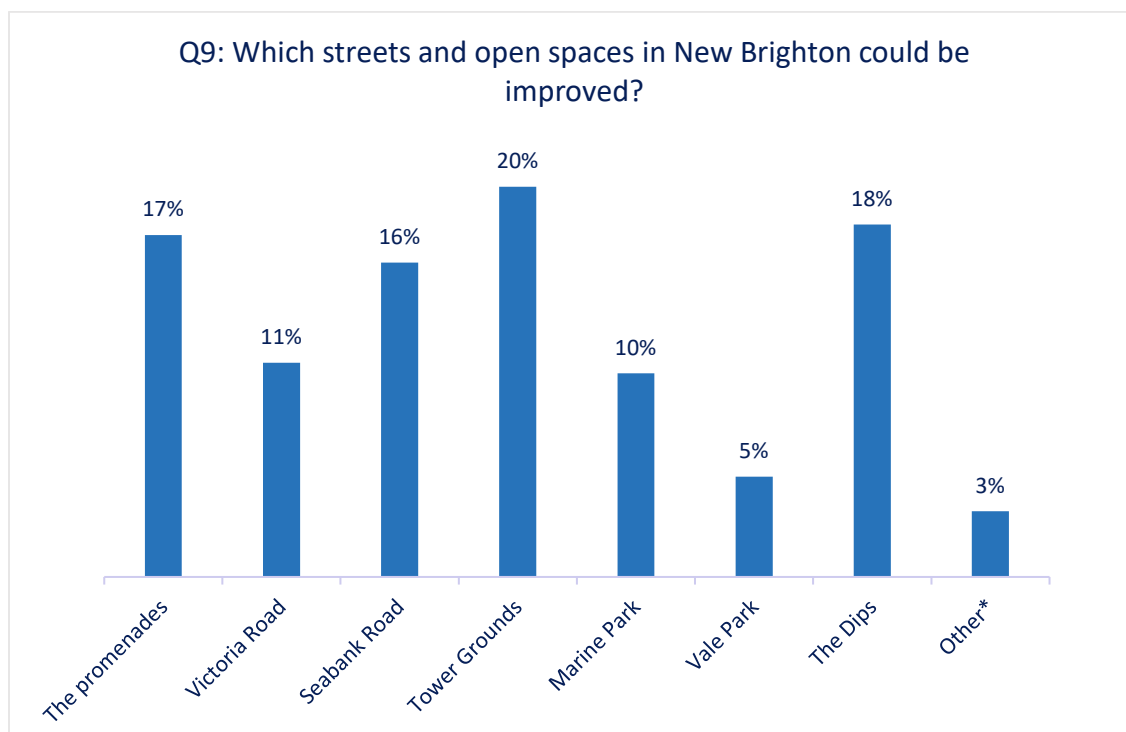


Figure 13: Which streets and open spaces could be improved?

*Some of the streets and open spaces indicated in the ‘other’ category responses related to the main selection options. Where this is the case, they have been aggregated into the appropriate category above.

Which streets and open spaces in New Brighton could be improved?	Frequency
The promenades (includes x7 from the 'other' category)	99
Victoria Road (includes x3 from the 'other' category)	62
Seabank Road (includes x1 from the 'other' category)	91
Tower Grounds	113
Marine Park	59
Vale Park	29
The Dips	102
Other*	19
Total	574

Table 10: Data table showing which streets and open spaces could be improved.

The below table illustrates the other streets and open spaces that respondents feel could be improved, that did not form part of the main selection options.

Three people mentioned that public toilet provisions could be improved. Other areas that more than one person felt could be improved were Fort Perch Rock, litter bin provision and cycle infrastructure.

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
Public toilets	3
Fort Perch Rock	2
Bins	2
Cycle infrastructure	2
Beach	1
Outside train station	1
Marine Lake	1
All streets	1
Lighthouse	1
Arts & culture	1
Union Terrace	1
Queens Royal Hotel	1
Grand Hotel site	1
Travelodge service area	1
Total	19

Table 11: 'Other' streets and open spaces that could be improved (categorised)



Q10: Which areas and buildings in New Brighton could benefit from development and/or refurbishment?

Most respondents feel that the area of Marine Promenade between Lacy's to the Floral Pavilion (30%) could benefit from redevelopment or refurbishment, and a similar proportion (29%) thought that Fort Perch Rock and the lighthouse could.

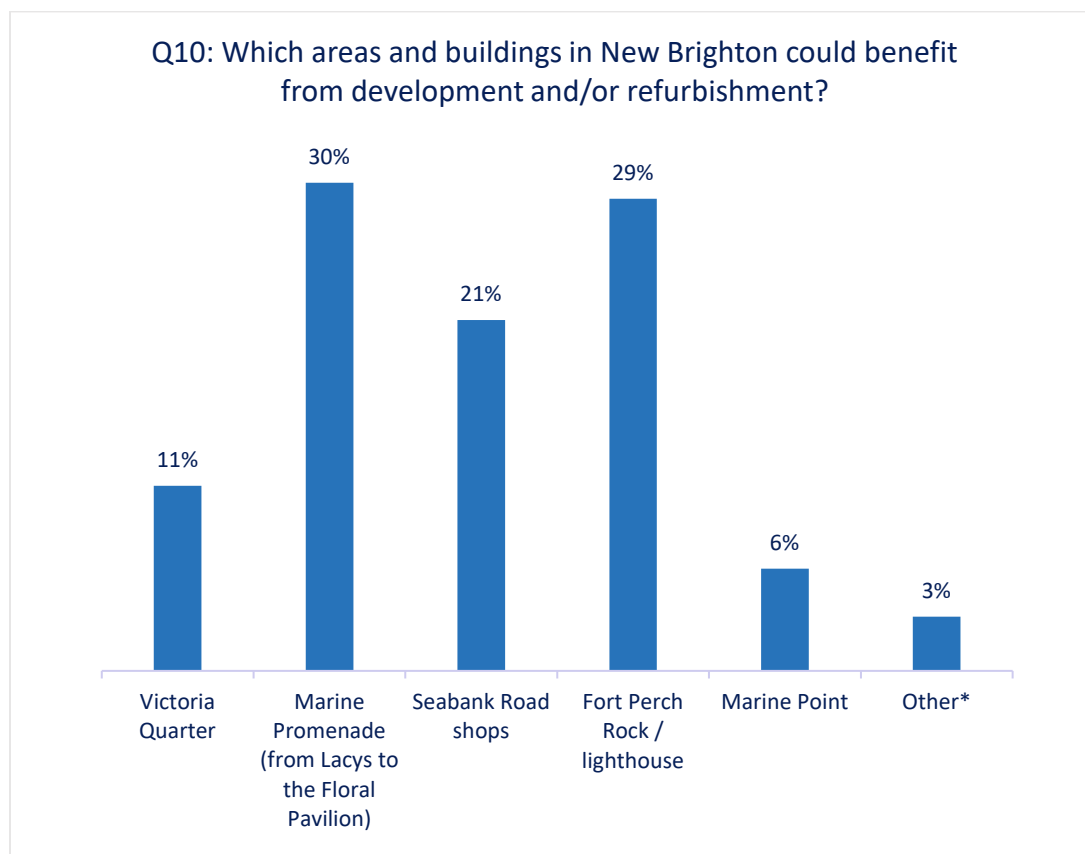


Figure 14: Which areas and buildings could benefit from development or refurbishment?

*Some of the areas and buildings indicated in the 'other' category responses related to the main selection options. Where this is the case, they have been aggregated into the appropriate category above.

Which areas and buildings could benefit from development and/or refurbishment?	Frequency
Victoria Quarter (includes x1 from 'other' section)	58
Marine Promenade (from Lacy's to the Floral Pavilion)	153
Seabank Road shops (includes x1 from 'other' section)	110
Fort Perch Rock / lighthouse (includes x1 from 'other' section)	148
Marine Point (includes x3 from 'other' section)	32
Other	17
Total	518

Table 12: 'Other' areas & buildings that could benefit from re-development

The below table illustrates the other areas & buildings that respondents feel could be refurbished and/or redeveloped, that did not form part of the main selection options.

3 people mentioned that Marine Point and the casino may benefit from a refurbishment. Other areas that more than one person felt could be redeveloped or refurbished were The Dips, the train station, the beach, and the art deco amusement arcade facade.

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
The Dips	2
Train Station	2
Beach	2
Amusement Arcades	2
Floral Pavilion	1
Redevelopment over demolition	1
Grand hotel	1
Fort Perch Rock/lighthouse	1
Waste Handling station, bottom Victoria Road	1
Victorian shelters	1
Old co-op Building	1
Total	20

Table 13: data table showing which 'other' areas & building could benefit from refurbishment or development.

Q11: What do you think about having some tall buildings (8 or more storeys) in New Brighton?

Most people (61%) either strongly disagree (38%) or disagree (23%) with having some tall buildings in New Brighton. Only 12% agreed, 7% strongly so.



Figure 15: Chart to illustrate proportion of respondents who agree with tall buildings in New Brighton

Q12: When travelling to and around New Brighton, what is most important to you in order of importance?

Respondents were asked to rank from 1 to 5 the offered options according to what they feel is most important to them when travelling to and around New Brighton. As a result, the options were returned in the below priority order, based on their average rank:

- 1 Walking infrastructure**
- 2 Free car parking**
- 3 Cycling infrastructure**
- 4 Railway links**
- 5 Bus links**

Figure 16: Ranked list of what is most important when travelling to and around New Brighton.

Walking infrastructure, such as the promenade is deemed to be most important when travelling to and around New Brighton, followed by free car parking. Cycling infrastructure and railway links were closely ranked third and fourth, with only 0.3 difference between their average rank. Bus links are considered to be least important.

Questions 13 to 16 – Travel to and around New Brighton

Respondents were presented with statements relating to various aspects of travel to and around New Brighton and asked to what extent they agreed with them. Questions related to car parking, train and bus transport and space for cyclists and pedestrians.

Figure 17: Q13: There is enough car parking in New Brighton and I can usually find a space where I want



Figure 18: Q14: An enhanced train station and/or its surroundings would improve my travel experience.



Figure 19: Q15: More room for pedestrians and cyclists will improve my travel experience around New Brighton

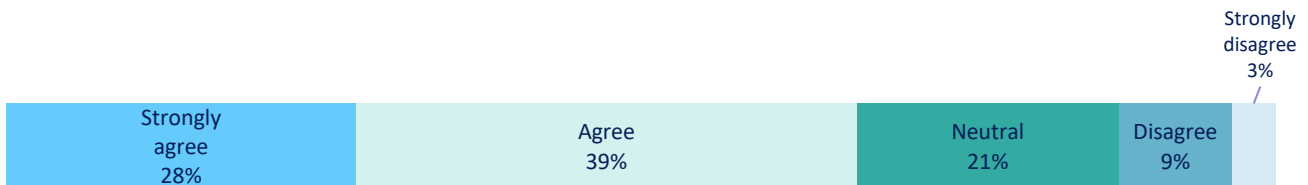


Figure 20: Q17: Improved bus waiting facilities would improve my travel experience.



Overall, more people agreed with each of the statements than disagreed. Of the 4 statements, the one that garnered most agreement was that more room for pedestrians and cyclists would improve their travel experience to New Brighton (figure 19) where 67% of people either agreed (39%) or strongly agreed (28%) with the statement. Further comments around this were garnered in question 16, which are detailed in the next section.

A relatively high proportion of people (55%) agreed that enhancing the train station would improve the travel experience (figure 18), whilst 47% agreed that there was enough parking in New Brighton (figure 17). The statement that improved bus waiting facilities would enhance the travel experience (figure 20) is the only one where more people had a neutral response (49%) than those in agreement (41%).

The statement that garnered the most disagreement was that there is enough parking, with 29% disagreeing, against 47% in agreement.



Q16: Do you have any comments on how pedestrians and cyclists travel together along the waterfront?

As noted above, 68% of respondents believed that more room for pedestrians and cyclists would improve their travel experience to and around New Brighton.

When asked to comment on how pedestrians and cyclists travel together on the waterfront the predominant theme was that better separation is required between cyclist and pedestrian lanes. 41% of respondents mentioned this. Also mentioned often was a need to enforce lane use and speed on the waterfront (24%). The temporary cycle lane implemented during the lockdown earlier in 2020 was popular and 15% felt that this should be permanently re-instated. A relatively high proportion of people felt that the current arrangements were working well.

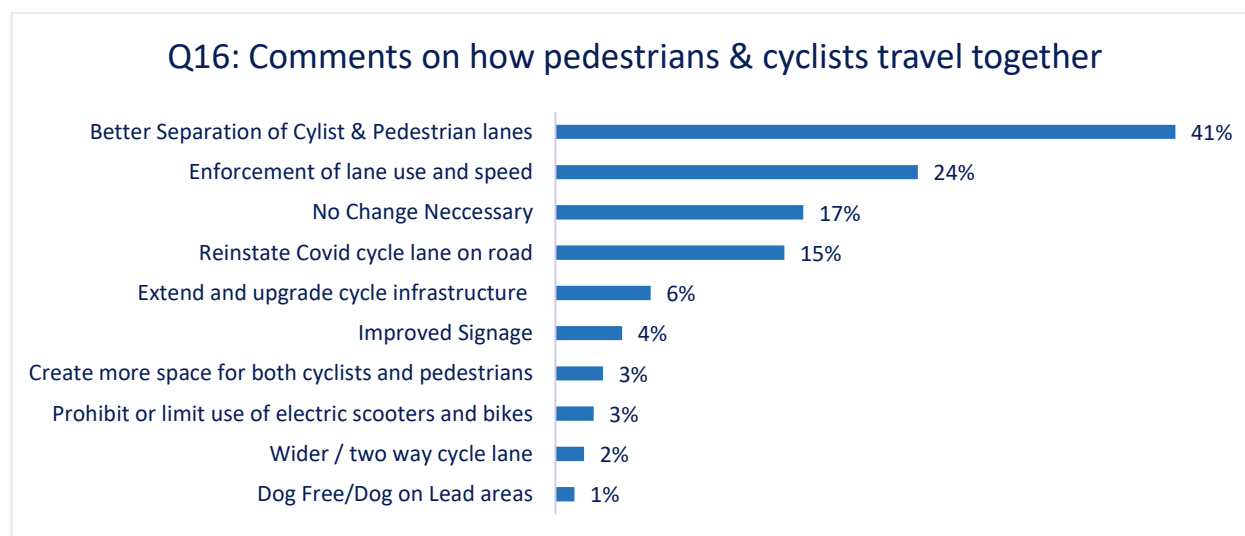


Figure 21: Chart illustrating top types of comments about pedestrians and cyclists travel together.

Comment	Value
Better Separation of Cyclist & Pedestrian lanes	65
Enforcement of lane use and speed	38
No change necessary	26
Reinstate Covid cycle lane on road	24
Extend and upgrade cycle infrastructure	10
Improved signage	7
Create more space for both cyclists and pedestrians	5
Prohibit or limit use of electric scooters and bikes	4
Wider / two-way cycle lane	3
Dog Free/Dog on Lead areas	2
One-way system on Prom	1
Prohibit campervans/motorhomes from Kings Parade	1
Speed calming measures for cyclists	1
Prohibit vehicles from driving & parking on prom alongside enforcement	1
Blown sand obscures cycle lane	1
Accessible/disability friendly path	1
Ferry to Liverpool	1
Vehicle speed enforcement	1
Better Lighting/Streetlighting	1
Secure Bicycle Storage	1
Total	194

Table 14: Data table of categorised comments about how pedestrians and cyclists travel together

Q18: Are there any other general traffic or transport matters you would like to see improved?

When asked about other traffic and transport matters that they would like to see improved parking in some form accounted for 53% of the comments raised. Top of the parking issues was a desire for dedicated resident's parking, with residents finding themselves unable to park during peak times (figure 22). There is also a call for dedicated parking/facilities for camper vans, which is felt would alleviate parking problems along the waterfront and provide somewhere safe for the camper vans with appropriate waste disposal.

One of the top emerging themes was the need to nurture the Victoria Quarter including by improving the parking provision to the area to support the businesses there. It is suggested that the disused Co-op site may become a car park serving this area, perhaps multi-storey. Also suggested were signposting the area from the train station and having buses stop there.

There were several suggestions that a Park & Ride scheme might create improvements, with Derby Pool, Seacombe and Coastal Drive being suggested areas.

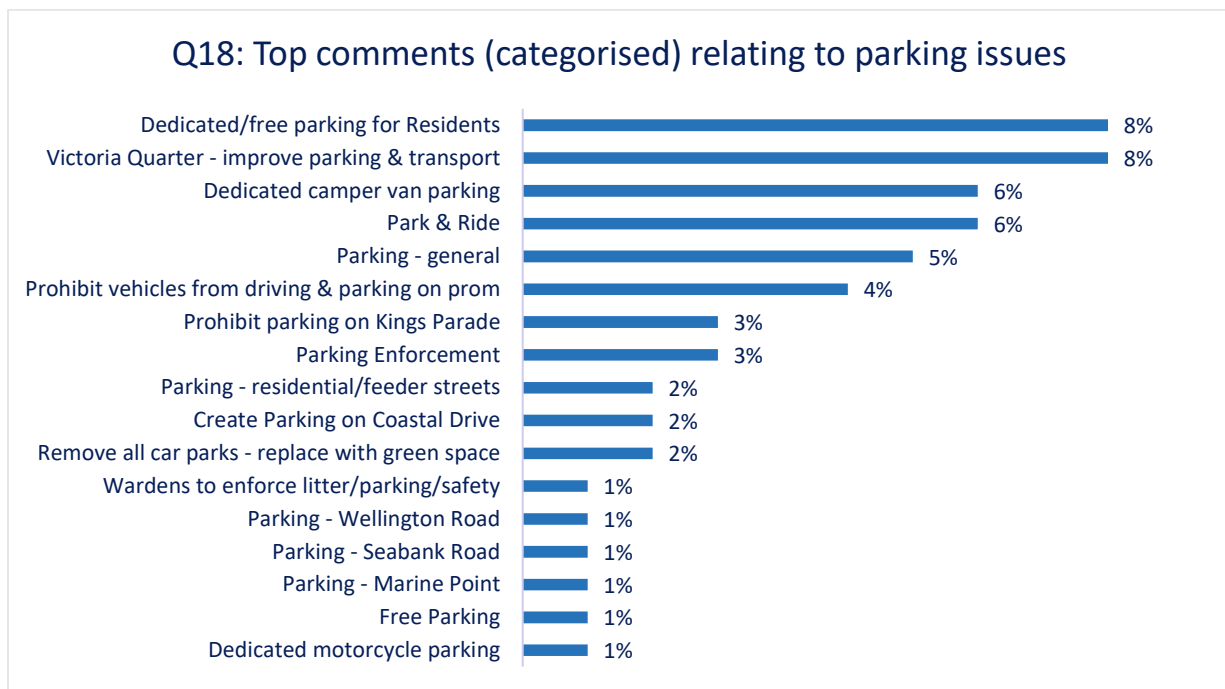


Figure 22: Chart illustrating top types of comments about parking issues in New Brighton

Other than parking issues, 16% of respondents identified a need for more frequent and direct public transport that had a wider reach, both within Wirral and beyond (figure

23). Several people pointed to the lack of direct bus to routes to the area, particularly from the West of the peninsula, as well as a lack of direct trains to Birkenhead.

A popular comment (15%) was the need for a hop-on, hop-off mode of transport along the waterfront with various suggestions of what form this may take, including tram, land train and electric bus.

Several people also suggested this should extend to Seacombe, or there should be some other form of direct transport from Seacombe Ferry to take advantage of potential visitors arriving on the ferry.

As raised in Q16, the reinstatement of the temporary Covid cycle lane was also raised as a potential area for improvement here.

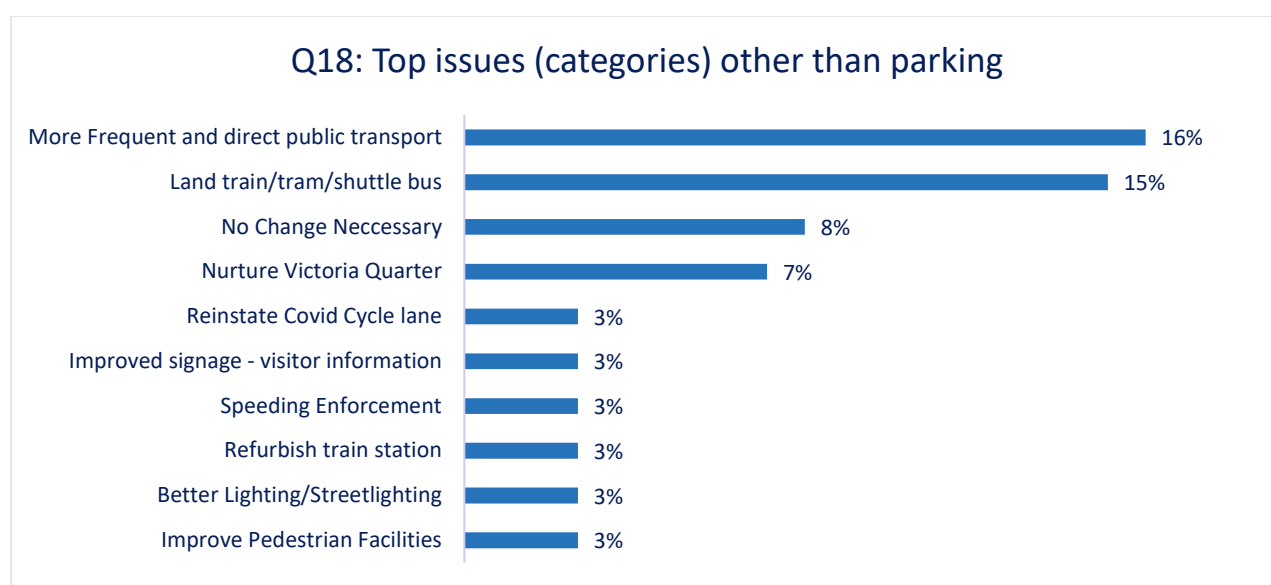


Figure 23: Chart to illustrate the top types of comments, other than parking, in New Brighton

Comment	Frequency
More Frequent and direct public transport to wider Wirral and Liverpool	18
Land train/tram/shuttle bus along prom and/or to Seacombe Ferry	13
Dedicated/free parking for Residents	9
No Change necessary	9
Victoria Quarter - improve parking provision & public transport reach to support this area	9
Nurture Victoria Quarter	8
Park & Ride	7
Dedicated camper van parking	7
Prohibit vehicles from driving & parking on prom alongside enforcement	5

Comment	Frequency
Parking (general)	6
Direct transport from Seacombe Ferry	4
Improve Pedestrian Facilities	3
Better Lighting/Streetlighting	3
Refurbish train station	3
Speeding Enforcement	3
Parking Enforcement	3
Improved signage - visitor information	3
Prohibit parking on Kings Parade	3
Reinstate Covid Cycle lane	3
Parking - residential/feeder streets	2
Create more space for both cyclists and pedestrians	2
Increased traffic calming on feeder streets	2
EV charge points	2
Pedestrianise	2
Create Parking on Coastal Drive	2
Traffic management	2
Parking - Marine Point	1
Parking - Seabank Road	1
Ferry to Liverpool	1
Secure Bicycle Storage	1
Free Parking	1
Traffic management - Harrison Drive	1
Tunnel tolls	1
Sustainable/green infrastructure	1
Dropped kerbs	1
Improved signage - traffic	1
Pedestrian crossing between Station & Morrison's	1
Parking - Wellington Road	1
Discourage vehicle use	1
Cycle infrastructure	1

Comment (continued)	Frequency
Remove cycle lanes	1
Re-introduce 4 wheeled social cycles	1
One-way system around Vale Park	1
Reduce Speed Limit to 20mph	1
Remove speed bumps	1
Confusing traffic lights	1
Prioritise cycle/pedestrian & public transport infrastructure over vehicles	1
Dedicated motorcycle parking	1
Vehicle speed enforcement	1
Wardens to enforce litter/parking/safety	1
Traffic management - Seabank Road	1
Traffic management - Dips	1
No more cycle lanes	1
Ablutions block for beach/water sports users	1
Bike hire	1
Improve road surfacing	1
Total	163

Table 15: Categorized data table of traffic or transport matters that could be improved.

Q19 – Q21 The Lido (outdoor pool) proposal

The majority of respondents, 90%, either strongly agreed or agreed that a lido was generally a good idea for the masterplan. Only 3% disagreed. (figure 24)

Q19: The lido is generally a good idea for the masterplan

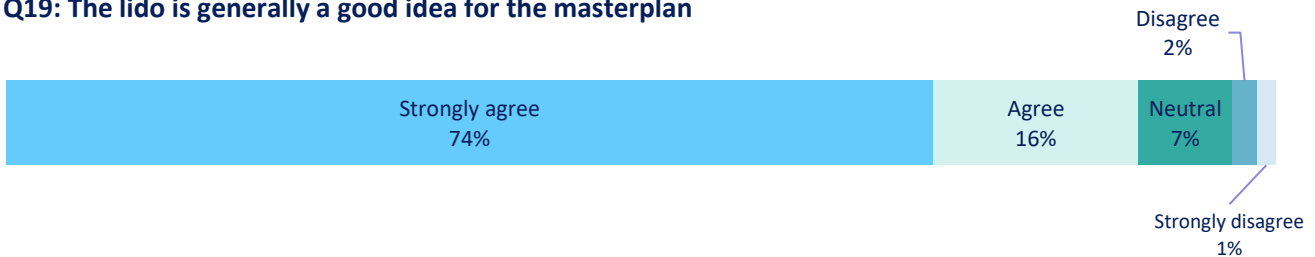


Figure 24: chart to show the proportion of people who agree or disagree that the lido is a good idea.

When thinking about a lido (Q20), the thing that people felt was most important to them was that it would provide a facility for local people’s health and wellbeing, 20% of people felt this was important. It was then considered important that it would be an attraction that serves the Liverpool City Region and attracts visitors, with 17% of people feeling this is important. Least important, but not unimportant, was considered to be the lido’s role in creating jobs and business opportunities.

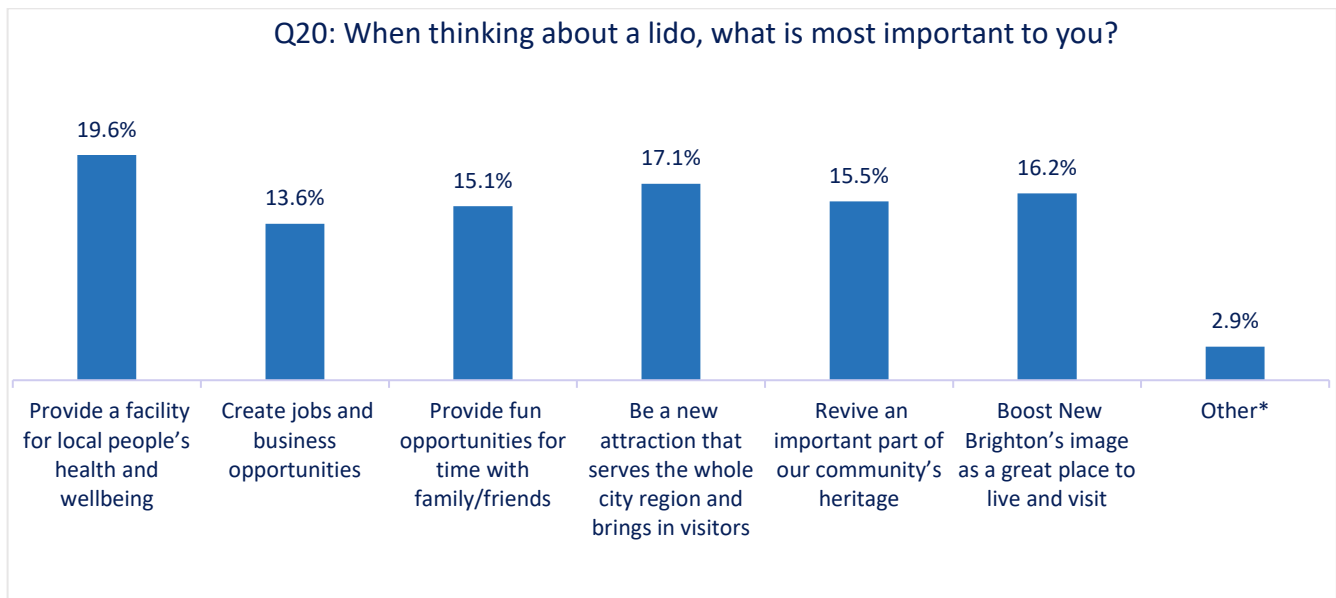


Figure 25: chart to show what is most important to people when thinking about the lido.

*Some of the suggestions indicated in the ‘other’ category responses related to the main selection options. Where this is the case, they have been aggregated into the appropriate category above.

Other things that were felt to be important were for a lido to be usable all seasons and ‘winterproof’ with heating and/or a retractable cover to enable it to be used year-round (table 13). Some people had concerns about the knock-on effects regarding the additional volumes of people and cars that a lido would attract and felt it important that these be mitigated before a lido is considered. Others highlighted the importance of using sustainable energy sources in the construction and operation of the lido, and to ensure that it provided value to the local community during mid-week or off season periods, such as in the form of a community space.

When thinking about a lido, what is most important to you?	Frequency
It will provide a facility for local people’s health and wellbeing	141
It will create jobs and business opportunities (includes x2 from ‘other’)	96
It will provide fun opportunities for time with family/friends	109
It will be a new attraction that serves the whole city region and brings in visitors (Includes x4 from ‘other’ category)	119
It will revive an important part of our community’s heritage	112
It will boost New Brighton’s image as a great place to live and visit	117
Other (please specify)	21
Total	715

Table 16: Data table showing what is important when thinking about a lido.

Other (Categorised)*	Frequency
Winterproof e.g. retractable cover/heating	8
Side effect - excessive cars/pollution	3
Side effect - over crowding	3
Sustainable - renewable energy	2
Value to local people mid-week/off season - community hub	2
Iconic design - architecture	1
New Brighton welcomes innovation and investment from various sources	1
Sufficiently profitable	1
Side effect - loss of green space	1
Side effect - public toilet provision	1
View of coast from pool	1
Year-round facility - convert to ice rink	1
Total	25**

Table 17: Data table showing the type of ‘other’ things that are important when thinking about a lido.

**Some responses covered more than one area of importance



In addition to the lido itself, most respondents felt that the proposal should also include a sun terrace and/or space for outdoor events and activities (26%) and a café, bar, or restaurant (24%).

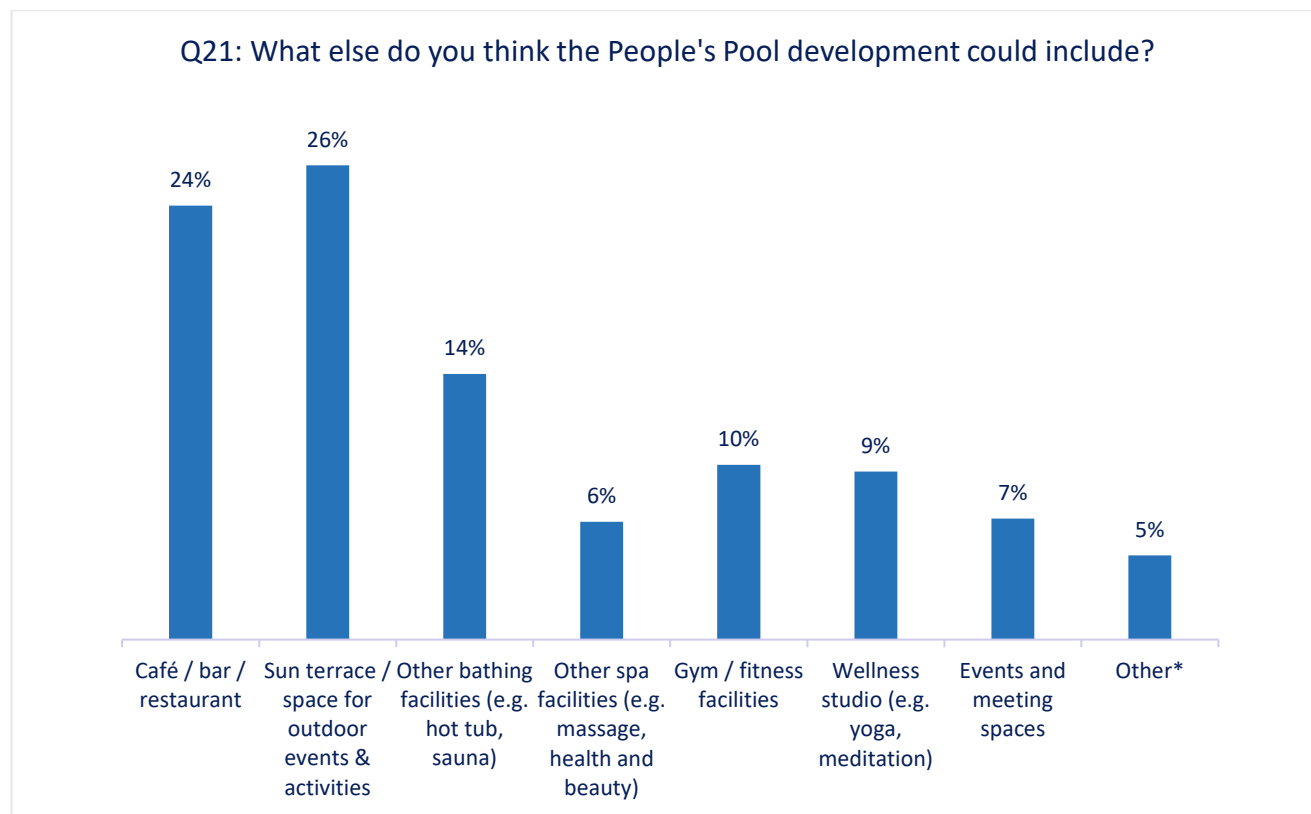


Table 18: Chart to show what else the People's Pool development could include.

*Some of the streets & open spaces indicated in the 'other' category responses related to the main selection options. Where this is the case, they have been aggregated into the appropriate category above.

Other suggestions that the lido development should include were that there should be a diverse programme of aquatic activities. Examples given were family activities, children's swimming lessons, scuba diver training, and provision for clubs to operate at the pool, such as competitive swimming and canoeing. Several people mentioned that the development should use sustainable energy.

Other suggestions that were put forward more than once were the addition of a water park, ice rink and skate park. Some users cautioned against too many extra facilities and felt that the development should focus on simply providing a good quality outdoor pool with a view.



What else do you think the lido development could include (choose up to 3)?	Frequency
Café / bar / restaurant	129
Sun terrace / space for outdoor events & activities	141
Other bathing facilities (e.g. hot tub, sauna)	79
Other spa facilities (e.g. massage, health and beauty)	35
Gym / fitness facilities (includes x2 from 'other' section)	50
Wellness studio (e.g. yoga, meditation) (includes x2 from 'other' section)	48
Events and meeting spaces	36
Other (please specify)	25
Total	543

Table 19: Data table showing what else the lido development could include.

Other (Categorised)	Frequency
Programme of aquatic activities/classes/clubs/naturist session	7
Sustainable energy	3
Pop up café encouraging diverse businesses	2
Skate Park	2
Ice rink	2
No extra facilities	2
Water park	2
Live music venue	1
Affordable/Value for Money	1
Grassed area	1
Autism friendly sessions	1
Adequate parking	1
Children's playground	1
Dog friendly area	1
Separate lane and leisure pools	1
Band stand - encourage buskers	1
Total	29

Table 20: Data table showing the type of 'other' things that the lido development could include.

Places tool responses

Users were invited to place pins on a map show where they believe New Brighton's opportunities, assets and issue lie, as well as the best potential site for a lido. Users could choose one or more pins for each category, and had the option to add a comment associated to each pin.

Assets

Figure 27 illustrates where most pins were placed to highlight New Brighton's assets.

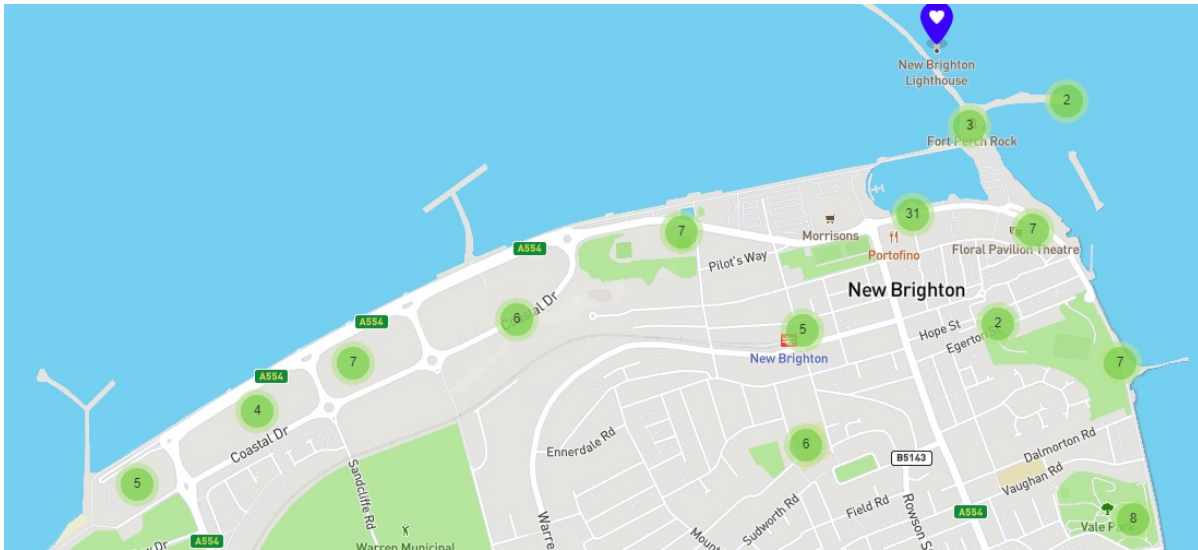


Figure 26: Map showing the locations of New Brighton's assets

The assets most highlighted are:

Marine Promenade 31 pins: This takes in several assets – the top five being, in order of number of pins assigned:

1. The Marine Lake (x10)
2. The Queen's Royal Hotel (x6)
3. The New Palace Amusement Arcade and funfair (x5)
4. The Floral Pavilion (x4)
5. Fort Perch Rock (x3)

Other areas considered to be an asset are:

The Dips 16 pins

Tower Grounds including the Black Pearl (8 pins) and Vale Park (8 pins)

St Peter and Paul Catholic Church (6 pins)

The boating lake on Kings Parade (4 pins).

Issues

Figure 29 illustrates where most pins were placed to highlight New Brighton's issues:

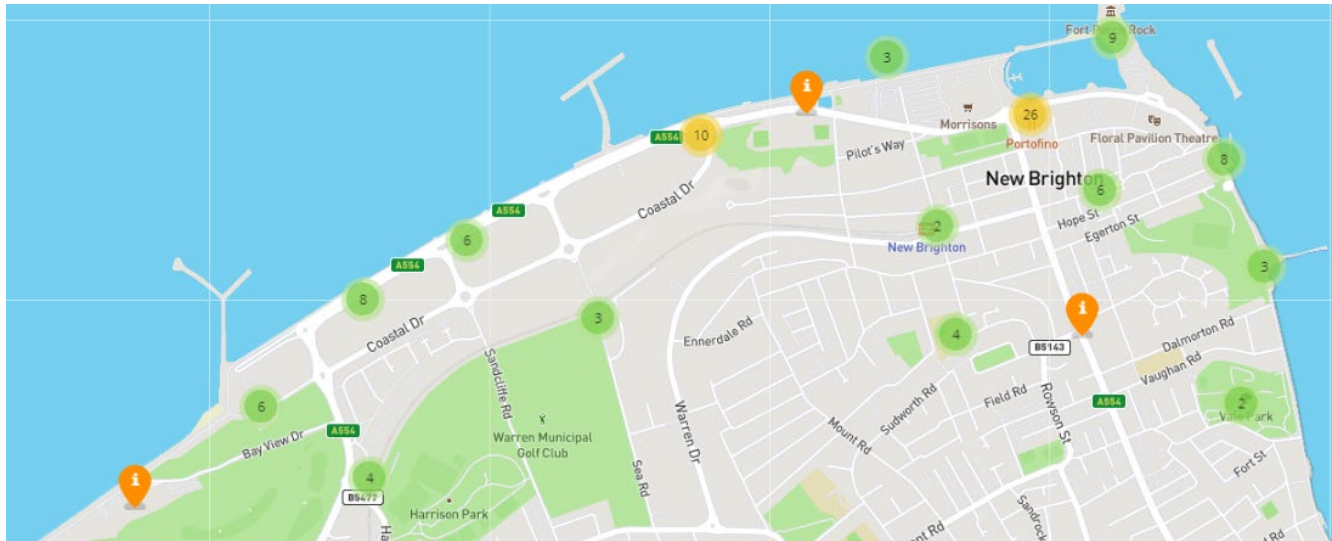


Figure 27: Map showing locations of issues in New Brighton.

- **Marine Promenade** – 25 pins main issues are:

Union Terrace/Lacey's/Queen's Royal hotel Site – These derelict buildings and surrounding land are eyesores. Most believe the Queen's Royal building should be rescued and redeveloped rather than demolished.

Litter problems due to wind, seagulls, fast food packaging. Make businesses accountable. Victorian shelters are in need of renovation.

- **Coastal Drive junction with King's Parade** 10 pins – main issue is **Clown sculpture**; replace with something iconic that recognisably represents New Brighton.
- **Victoria Road** 6 pins – main issue is that there is **insufficient parking** here creating congestion. Pedestrianise and utilise co-op site for parking.
- **Western end of King's Parade** 6 pins - The cycle path is covered in sand and unusable, motorhomes parked improperly

Opportunities

The below map illustrates where most pins were placed to highlight New Brighton's opportunities:

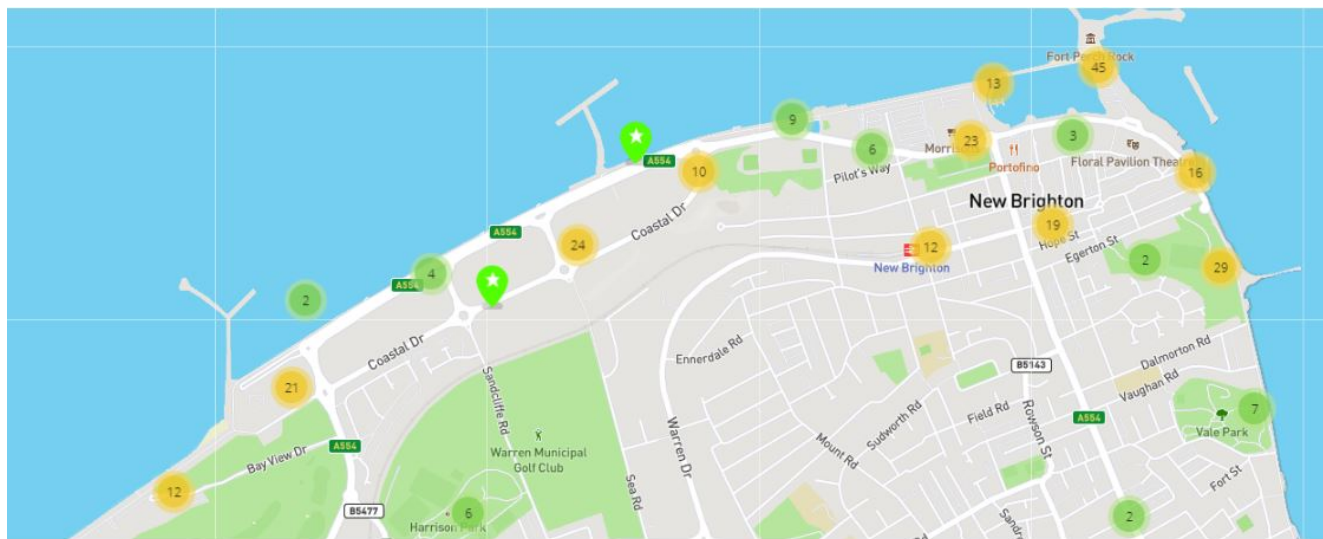


Figure 28: Map showing locations of potential opportunities in New Brighton.

The commonly highlighted areas and their most popular suggestions are:

- **Fort Perch Rock as an attraction** 24 pins
- **The Dips – utilise as open-air arena/event space** 24pins
- **Tower Grounds -skate park/BMX track and/or open-air event space** 22 pins
- **Victoria Quarter – Pedestrianise, utilise co-op site for an artisan market or car parking.** 19 pins
- **Ian Fraser Walk (prom) behind Marine Point is ugly – landscape, add greenery, markets/art exhibits on prom** 18 pins
- **Land between Kings Parade and Coastal drive as camper van/motor home parking with facilities** 13 pins
- **Hop-on hop-off transport along waterfront (tram/land train/shuttle bus)** 12 pins
- **Beach area at Bay View Drive - beach huts and ablution block for beach users** 12 pins
- **Pumping Station as site for a Pier** 8 pins
- **Casino site as a gym –** 7 pins

Lido

57 (10%) of the total pins placed on the map related to the lido. Figure 26 illustrates the area where 'lido' pins were most commonly placed.

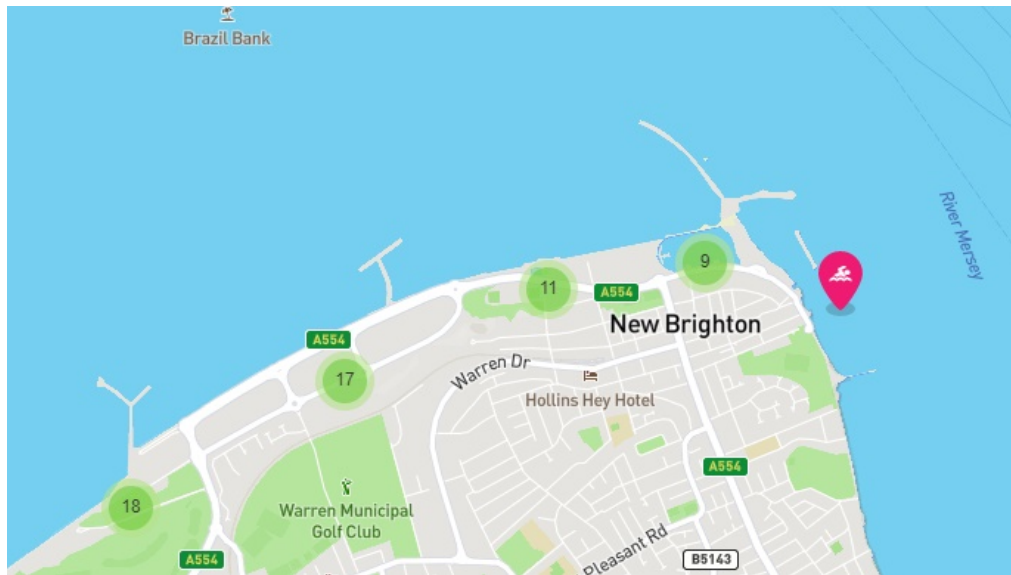


Figure 29: Map illustrating potential lido site locations

Four broad locations have been highlighted by respondents as potentially suitable for a lido:

1. The area around the original Derby Pool (now site of the Derby Pool public house)
2. Coastal Drive around 'The Dips'
3. Kings Parade in the vicinity of Bubbles playcentre
4. The Marine Lake.

The comments submitted alongside the pins have been analysed and common themes identified (figure 30). The top themes are represented in the below chart. 10% of comments concerned the lido, the next most common theme (4%) was to bring Fort Perch Rock as an attraction. A further 4% felt that preservation not development should take place. Of the comments made around the lido, 11% mentioned the need to ‘winterproof’ the pool, so that it can be used all year round, possibly with a retractable roof or heating.

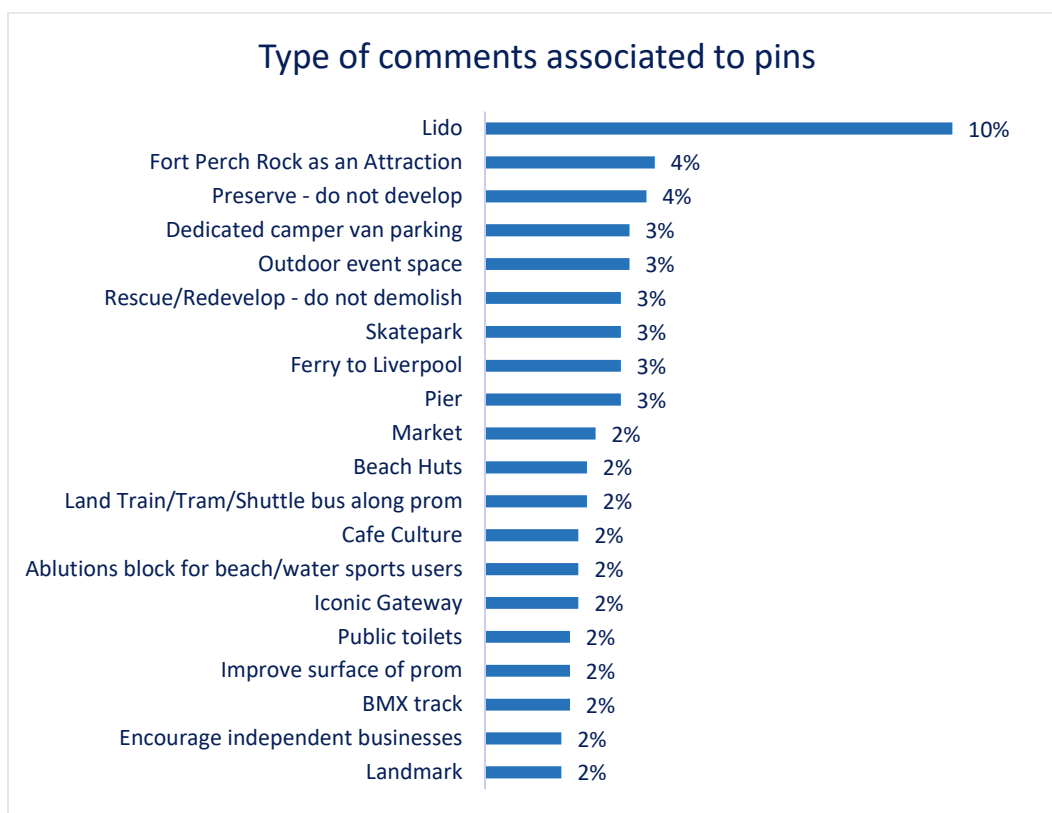


Figure 30: Chart to illustrate the top types of comments associated to the pins.



Demographics and Site Traffic

Demographics

Registration was required to complete the survey, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory. Only the question requesting the participant's postcode was mandatory, the remaining questions users could choose to select 'prefer not to say' or skip the question altogether.

According to postcode, 90% of participants were Wirral based. Of the Wirral based respondents 57% were from New Brighton and 12% from adjacent Wallasey. Responses were also received from Liverpool, Cheshire West, Southport, Loughborough and Leeds. Of those who chose to say, 85% of respondents stated they were local residents.

Most respondents were female, the most common age group was 45-54 years. Only 2% were aged 16-24 years.

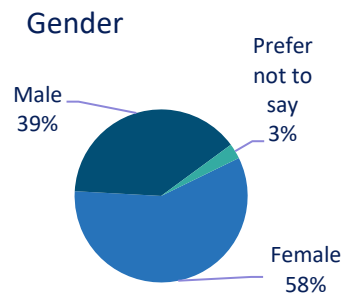


Figure 31: Gender of respondents

93% of respondents were white British. Only 8 (4%) respondents were of a non-white or other ethnicity. 80% were heterosexual.

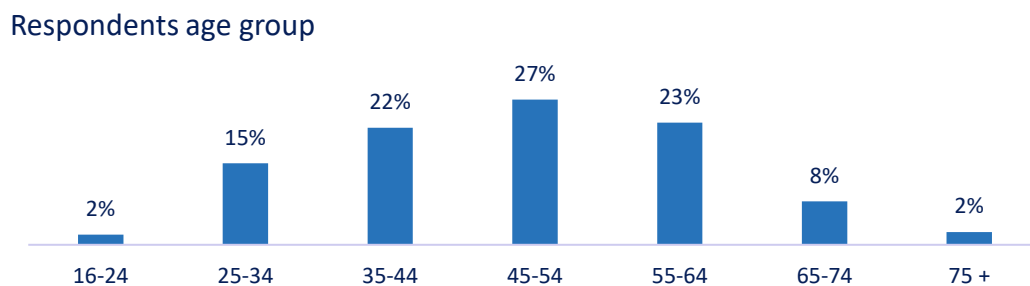


Figure 32: Sexual orientation of respondents



Traffic

A total of 3,891 people visited the New Brighton Masterplan consultation page during the consultation period. Out of these 282 people either took the survey and/or used the places tool. 213 people participated in the survey and 107 people placed 560 pins on the map.

Traffic Source	Page Visits	% of total	Engagement Rate
DIRECT	2954	76%	9.8%
SOCIAL MEDIA	578	15%	1.9%
EMAIL	21	1%	47.6%
SEARCH ENGINE	37	1%	5.4%
REFERRALS	301	8%	6.0%

Table 21: Consultation traffic sources

Most visits to the site were direct visits, and these also generated the highest rate of engagement with 9.8% visits resulted in survey completion. However, a high number of site visits generated by a traffic source does not necessarily always translate into a high engagement rate. Whilst social media accounted for 15% of traffic compared to the 8% generated by referrals (from other websites), the social media visits only generated 1.8% engagement, compared to 6% engagement from referrals.

Of the visits from social media 87% came via Facebook.

64% of referrals to the site came via the People's Pool website peoplespool.co.uk.



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