

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 18 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF  
CORPORATE SERVICES

**LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL - CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION ON REVISED PREFERRED OPTIONS**

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**Executive Summary**

Liverpool City Council has issued a Revised Preferred Options Report for its Local Development Framework Core Strategy. This sets out the strategic planning context for development in the City to 2026. The deadline for comments is 15 March 2010. Members are therefore being asked to endorse comments (set out in section 3 of this report) that have already been submitted, as it was not possible to report to Cabinet before the consultation deadline.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Liverpool Core Strategy is to provide a long term spatial strategy for the City drawing upon the Sustainable Community Strategy – Liverpool 2024: A Thriving International City, adopted in March 2009. Once adopted the Core Strategy will replace the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan, adopted in November 2002.
- 1.2 Liverpool first consulted on preferred options in March 2008. Cabinet agreed a response to these initial preferred options on 12 June 2008 (Minute 70 refers). As no conflict with Wirral's interests was identified, the Council's response was to support the policy options in their entirety.
- 1.3 Liverpool has now re-published their preferred options for a second time. This has been due to criticism, particularly from GONW, on the limited use of alternative options and supporting evidence, the need to make greater reference to other plans projects and programmes across the City Region and the need to make more use of the sustainability appraisal in selecting the most reasonable options. Additional factors included the new plan-making requirements introduced in June 2008 which seek a greater focus on delivery, the publication of the new Regional Spatial Strategy in September 2008 and revised Government Guidance on the assessment of housing land supply.
- 1.4 A copy of the Revised Report can be viewed and commented on at [http://consult.liverpool.gov.uk/portal/planning/csrpo\\_consultation/csrpo](http://consult.liverpool.gov.uk/portal/planning/csrpo_consultation/csrpo)  
The deadline for comments to be submitted is 15 March 2010.

## 2. Summary of the Revised Preferred Options Report

- 2.1 The Revised Preferred Options Report now concentrates on the key choices available for the location of land for new homes and employment within Liverpool and identifies a preferred delivery strategy selected from three alternatives, all of which would be capable of achieving the vision and objectives of the plan.

### Spatial Portrait

- 2.2 The Revised Preferred Options Report sets out a lengthy spatial portrait of the City (pages 22 to 77 refer). The City is divided into three Strategic Sub-Areas:

- The **City Centre** includes the retail area including Liverpool One, the office and commercial districts, the most central residential areas and the Universities;
- The **Inner Area** contains the remaining parts of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder outside the City Centre and includes the area of North Liverpool now covered by the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point;
- The **Outer Area** covers the remainder of the City to the City boundary which is predominantly residential but which also includes significant employment areas at Speke/Garston and Gillmoss/Fazakerly and a number of Regeneration Fringes - mainly former Council housing estates which have similar characteristics to parts of the Inner Area and City Centre.

- 2.3 A summary of the key issues facing each area is identified (Page 57 for the City Centre, page 65 for the Inner Area and page 74 for the Outer Area).

### Spatial Vision

- 2.4 The Revised Preferred Options report sets out a Spatial Vision of a thriving international city at the heart of the sub-region with an outstanding urban environment (page 80 refers). The Spatial Vision is supplemented by seven Strategic Objectives relating to the economy, housing, shopping centres and a series of environmental and sustainability issues (pages 82 to 85 refer).

### Delivery Strategy Options

- 2.5 Three alternative Delivery Strategy Options are identified. There are a number of features common to all the Options – delivering Liverpool’s housing requirement; maximising economic growth, especially within the City Centre, Northshore and the Eastern Gateway; support for housing in HMR Zones of Opportunity, North Liverpool and the Regeneration Fringes; prioritising district and local centres for investment in shops and services; ensuring high quality green

infrastructure; and protecting the City's heritage assets (pages 93 and 94 refer).

- 2.6 **Delivery Strategy Option One** - "Intensive Regeneration" (pages 97 to 101 refer) would focus 90% of housing growth on the City Centre and Inner Areas, representing 36,432 dwellings by 2026 (85% of existing planning permissions for housing are currently within these areas). Under this Option, housing provision in the Outer Area would be limited to 4,048 dwellings in the plan period (well below the actual capacity of 10,000 dwellings identified in the Outer Area).
- 2.7 **Delivery Strategy Option Two** - "Focused Regeneration" (pages 102 to 106 refer) would focus only 70% of housing growth on the City Centre and Inner Areas, representing 28,336 dwellings by 2026. The draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) suggests that the pattern of housing land supply is probably best placed to meet this requirement and that the risks and issues identified in relation to the delivery of Option One would therefore be significantly reduced. It is also suggested that this Option would better align with the Regional Spatial Strategy. Under this option, the Outer Area would provide 12,144 dwellings, which would be closer to the draft SHLAA capacity position, which shows a capacity of up to 6,000 dwellings in the Regeneration Fringes alone.
- 2.8 **Delivery Strategy Option Three** - "Dispersed Regeneration" (pages 107 to 111 refer) would focus only 55% of housing growth on the City Centre and Inner Areas, representing 22,264 dwellings over the plan period to 2026. This would require 18,216 dwellings to be built within the Outer Area and a significant change to current strategies. This Option would reduce the pressure to find housing sites in the City Centre and Inner Area but could require housing delivery in these areas to be phased to support the Growth Point up to 2017 with a greater emphasis on the Outer Area thereafter. Concern is expressed over how this change in emphasis could be managed through the LDF.
- 2.9 In relation to employment land it is argued that there are fewer strategic choices open to the City Council. With the focus being retained on the established Strategic Investment Areas, there is unlikely to be a need for new employment areas to be identified (pages 89 and 90 refer).

### **Preferred Delivery Strategy**

- 2.10 Each Delivery Strategy Option has been assessed against the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal, previous consultation responses and an assessment of their likely deliverability, setting out the degree of flexibility and risk associated with the delivery of each Option. Greater account has also been taken of other plans and strategies operating within Liverpool and the wider sub-region.
- 2.11 The initial report in 2008 had previously indicated that an approach closer to Delivery Strategy Option 1 was likely to be preferred. The

City Council now, however, considers that Delivery Strategy Option 2 has clearer advantages (pages 112 and 113 refer), because:

- it is likely to offer a better balance in the delivery of sustainability objectives;
- previous consultation had supported a more flexible approach to accommodating growth;
- the ability to accommodate changing circumstances is better balanced under Option 2, because of the reduced reliance on higher density development at sites such as Liverpool Waters; and
- Option 2 conforms well with strategies and plans such as RSS and the aspirations of the City's Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Proposed Policy Content**

- 2.12 Having identified a preferred Delivery Strategy, the Revised Preferred Options Report then goes on to consider the range and content of the policies that will be needed to implement the Strategy under each of the Strategic Objectives.
- 2.13 Specific issues include Liverpool John Lennon Airport, where expansion in line with the Masterplan is supported, subject to satisfactory measures to address potential environmental issues. A local change to the Green Belt is anticipated to facilitate this expansion (Proposed Policy Approach 6, page 121 refers). This issue has previously been considered in the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Masterplan, which was reported to the Wirral Council Executive Board on 7 September 2006 (Minute 131 refers).
- 2.14 Support is expressed for the continuing development of the Ports of Liverpool and Garston (Proposed Policy Approach 7, page 123 refers).
- 2.15 Proposed Policy Approaches for housing provision and the housing mix within each Strategic Sub-Area are also set out (pages 124 to 133 refer) alongside proposed criteria for the identification of sites for Gypsies and Travellers, based on the existing Liverpool UDP (Proposed Policy Approach 15, page 134).
- 2.16 A proposed hierarchy of shopping centres is set out (Proposed Policy Approach 16, page 136 refers) with the implications for each of the Strategic Sub-Areas again identified (pages 136 to 141 refer). Proposals to modernise and enhance the shopping environment of Edge Lane Retail Park is conditionally supported (Proposed Policy Approach 20, page 141).
- 2.17 Proposed Policy Approaches are also included in relation to urban design (Proposed Policy Approach 22, page 144), green infrastructure (pages 149 to 155), heritage (Proposed Policy Approach 21, page

142), promoting sustainable growth (page 158), improving accessibility (page 161) and managing travel demand (Proposed Policy Approach 31, page 162).

### **Appendices (page 165 and following)**

- 2.18 **Appendix 1** critically reviews the plans and strategies of neighbouring local authorities in terms of their likely impact on the delivery of the vision and objectives for the Liverpool Core Strategy.
- 2.19 In relation to Wirral, it notes a highly polarised housing market, a low level of compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, a requirement for 1,767 affordable homes per annum and Wirral Waters making a contribution of up to 15,000 new residential units. Of particular concern is the suggestion that the retail and leisure proposals at Wirral Waters (reported as 53,000 sqm) “could have a severe adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Liverpool City Centre and its role as the first priority for growth in the North West” alongside the statement that “it is difficult to see how these proposals conform with RSS.” In terms of employment it notes that Wirral Waters could also be a key economic driver with an estimated 25,000+ jobs created.
- 2.20 Appendix 1 also identifies Cheshire Oaks as a threat to Liverpool’s role as the key retail driver for the City Region.
- 2.21 **Appendix 2** sets out a summary of issues raised raised in the 2008 consultation alongside an explanation of the City Council’s response.
- 2.22 **Appendix 3** discusses infrastructure requirements and delivery options for matters such as transport, health education, and water and energy supply.

### **3. Directors Comments**

#### **Preferred Delivery Strategy (page 112)**

- 3.1 The Revised Preferred Options Report’s conclusions on the strategic choices for housing appears to be largely driven by issues related to the pattern of land supply following the publication of the draft SHLAA for the City which suggests that only 71% of the deliverable housing supply is likely to come from the City Centre and Inner Areas.
- 3.2 The Intensive Regeneration approach under Delivery Strategy Option 1 would seek to concentrate 90% of housing growth within the City Centre and Inner Area. The City Council is particularly concerned that this could make the Core Strategy too reliant on the delivery of housing within the central docks and Liverpool Waters; raising housing densities on identified sites; a revival of market interest in flatted development; increased pressure on employment land for housing; and the need to consider developing some low quality/low value greenspaces for housing. There is also a concern that development

within the Regeneration Fringes may not be adequately supported under Option 1

- 3.3 While the preferred Delivery Strategy (Delivery Strategy Option 2) could be interpreted as a lessening of the focus on urban regeneration within the core area of Liverpool, 70% of new housing development is still a significant focus on the City Centre and Inner Areas, given the competing pressure of increasing economic development. Support for Liverpool's Option 2 would not be inconsistent with the Council's own stated preference for a Broad Spatial Option based on "Focused Regeneration", set out within the Wirral Core Strategy Spatial Options Report which was considered by Cabinet on 26 November 2009 and published for public consultation on 11 January 2010 (Minute 200 refers). The comments on the Wirral Spatial Options will be reported to Cabinet following the expiry the deadline for comments on 5 March 2010.
- 3.4 In light of the above, it is therefore recommended that the Council submits the following comment to Liverpool City Council on the preferred delivery strategy for the Liverpool Core Strategy:

*Wirral Council supports a preference for the delivery of a strategy of "Focused Regeneration" based on Delivery Strategy Option 2 because of its continued emphasis on promoting regeneration, housing market renewal and housing growth at the heart of the conurbation, which the Council believes are the key priorities for the sub-region.*

**Proposed Policy Approach 6 - Liverpool John Lennon Airport (page 121)**

- 3.5 The potential future expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport has previously raised concerns over potential noise impacts, particularly in the south of the Borough. Support for the economic activity generated and sustained by Liverpool John Lennon Airport is, however, already expressed in RSS Policy RT5 and the principle of expanding into the Green Belt is specifically provided for within RSS Policy RDF4.
- 3.6 While the City Council's support for the expansion of the Airport is qualified in the Revised Preferred Options Report, subject to environmental issues, it is recommended that the Council submits the following comment to Liverpool City Council:

*Wirral Council requests that the second bullet point in Proposed Policy Approach 6 – Liverpool Airport related to the impact on "adjacent residents" should be amended to read:*

*"Impact on residents and other uses (including outside the City in the vicinity of flight paths) from any increases in traffic, noise and air pollution, including those generated by construction activity"*

## **Proposed Policy Approach 17 – City Centre Shops and Services**

- 3.7 Proposed Policy Approach 17 (page 137) states that “The Main Retail Area including Liverpool One will be the primary location for major comparison goods retail development within the City and City Region, its vitality and viability will be protected and no other retail proposal within the City and Sub-region should have an adverse impact on it...”
- 3.8 It is considered however that Policy Approach 17 could be better aligned with PPS4 and RSS Policy W5. It is therefore recommended that the Council submits the following comment to Liverpool City Council:

*“Wirral Council agrees that Liverpool is the regional centre for the City Region. However, Policy Approach 17 could be better aligned with the requirements of PPS4 and RSS in respect of comparison retailing. “Major comparison goods retail development” needs to be more clearly defined” and the policy approach should not result in an over-concentration of growth, adversely affect the vitality and viability of any other centre or result in the creation of unsustainable shopping patterns (RSS Policy W5 and PPS4 Policy EC3 1b(i) refers). RSS Policy W5 identifies three centres within the Liverpool City Region (Birkenhead, Southport and St Helens) within which comparison retailing facilities should be enhanced and encouraged to ensure a sustainable distribution of high quality retail facilities. Policy Approach 17 should acknowledge that an appropriate level of provision can be made for comparison retail development within the City Region in locations outside the city centre.”*

## **Appendix 1 – Wirral Waters**

- 3.9 Appendix 1 of the Revised Preferred Options Report, refers to the impact of the retail and leisure elements of Wirral Waters. There is ongoing dialogue between officers in Wirral and Liverpool in relation to Peel’s proposals on both sides of the Mersey with the objective of maximising regeneration benefits to the City Region. It is my view that the Wirral Waters proposals in the round are supportive of the RSS objectives. It is therefore recommended that the Council submits the following comment to Liverpool City Council:

*In relation to the comments set out in Appendix 1 to the Revised Preferred Options Report about the retail (and leisure) elements of Wirral Waters in terms of their impact on and conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, Wirral Council believes that the Wirral Waters proposals can be brought forward in an appropriately controlled manner without detriment to the objectives of the Liverpool City Council Core Strategy and the RSS.*

## **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**5. Staffing implications**

5.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**6. Equal Opportunities/Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**7. Community Safety implications**

7.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**8. Local Agenda 21 implications**

8.1 The Revised Preferred Options for the Liverpool Core Strategy have been subject to a statutory sustainability appraisal

**9. Planning implications**

9.1 The planning implications are set out in the main body of the report

**10. Anti-poverty implications**

10.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**11. Human Rights implications**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**12. Social Inclusion implications**

12.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**13. Local Member Support implications**

13.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**14. Background Papers**

14.1 The Liverpool Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report 2010 can be viewed at  
[http://consult.liverpool.gov.uk/portal/planning/csrpo\\_consultation/csrpo](http://consult.liverpool.gov.uk/portal/planning/csrpo_consultation/csrpo)

14.2 Cabinet Report 12 June 2008 - Liverpool City Council - Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Preferred Options can be viewed at  
[http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/cabcs080612rep1\\_27356.pdf](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/cabcs080612rep1_27356.pdf)

14.3 Executive Board Report 7 September 2006 – Liverpool John Lennon Airport – Draft Master Plan – Consultation can be viewed at  
[http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/execcs060907rep4\\_21340\\_21346.pdf](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/execcs060907rep4_21340_21346.pdf)



- 14.4 Cabinet Report 26 November 2009 – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Public Consultation on Spatial Options can be viewed at [http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000732/AI00006824/\\$CABCS091126FraserREP2.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000732/AI00006824/$CABCS091126FraserREP2.docA.ps.pdf)
- 14.5 The Wirral Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Spatial Options Report can be viewed at [http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/cs\\_dpd/cs\\_soreport](http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/cs_dpd/cs_soreport)
- 14.6 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 can be viewed at <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the comments already submitted by officers as the Council's response to the Revised Preferred Options Report as set out in section 3 of this report be endorsed as the Council's formal response.**

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