

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL - CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PREFERRED OPTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is preparing a Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The Core Strategy is a statutory document that will set the local policy context for the determination of planning applications and for major regeneration schemes such as Housing Market Renewal and Wirral Waters and for setting policies for housing, employment, open space and other matters. The Core Strategy will replace parts of the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000, which no longer fully reflect the Council's more recent aspirations.

Cabinet approved the preparation of a Preferred Options Report for public consultation in July 2010 (Cabinet, 22 July 2010, Minute 89 refers). This report recommends that Cabinet recommends to Council that the draft Preferred Options Report attached to this report and its associated accompanying documents are now published for public consultation.

1 Background

- 1.1 The statutory Development Plan for Wirral, which guides decisions on individual planning applications and other decisions under the Planning Acts, currently comprises the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral, which was adopted by the Council in February 2000.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy is a “new-style” Development Plan Document that will replace the strategic policy elements of the Unitary Development Plan. The Core Strategy is a key document, intended to set the overall framework for future development in the Borough, to which other “new-style” Development Plan Documents, such as site-specific land allocations, Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, will be required to conform. The preparation of the Core Strategy must comply with a statutory process set out in national Regulations.
- 1.3 National policy currently indicates that a Core Strategy should include:
 - an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop;
 - strategic objectives for the area focusing on the key issues to be addressed;
 - a delivery strategy for achieving these objectives, which should set out how much development is intended to happen, where, when, and by what means it will be delivered;
 - locations for strategic development indicated on a key diagram; and
 - clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy must be justified, effective and consistent with national policy but must not, however, repeat or reformulate national policy.
- 1.5 The time horizon for the Core Strategy must be at least 15 years from the date of adoption.

- 1.6 Once adopted, the Core Strategy will provide the spatial blueprint for the social, economic, and environmental regeneration of the Borough, to support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the aims and objectives of the Council's Investment Strategy.
- 1.7 The Council consulted on the Issues, Vision and Objectives for the Core Strategy in February 2009 (Cabinet, 27 November 2008, Minute 274 refers) and on the Spatial Options for the Core Strategy in January 2010 (Cabinet, 26 November 2009, Minute 200 refers). The next stage in the process is the publication of the Council's Preferred Options, which will enable the Council to confirm the future direction for the final Core Strategy.
- 1.8 Cabinet approved the preparation of a Preferred Options Report in July 2010 (Cabinet, 22 July 2010, Minute 89 refers). A draft Preferred Options Report is now attached to this report, which must be approved by Full Council before being published for public consultation.
- 1.9 The Preferred Options Report is also accompanied by:
- A revised **Spatial Portrait** – which provides a description of the Borough including a series of Settlement Area profiles which set out the background to the Council's assessment of the key issues facing the Borough over the next 15 years and beyond, amended in response to previous public consultation;
 - A **Preferred Options Assessment Report** – which sets out the background to the Council's assessment of the various alternative options, amended in response to previous consultation;
 - A **Report of Consultation on Spatial Options** – a statutory report which records the findings of previous consultation on the available spatial options and how the Council has responded to the comments received;
 - A **Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report** – a statutory report which considers the performance of each of the Preferred Options against 25 local sustainability objectives, amended in response to previous consultation – a summary of the sustainability appraisal findings is also set out within the Preferred Options Report at relevant points;
 - A **Draft Habitat Regulations Assessment** – a statutory report which considers the potential impact of the emerging Core Strategy on designated European Sites;
 - A **Report of UDP Implications** - a report which considers the potential impact of the emerging Preferred Options on the saved policies of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000;
 - A **Revised Equality and Diversity Statement** – a Corporate requirement, which has been approved by the Council's Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator; and
 - The series of **Evidence Base** studies – that the Council is relying on as the background to the analysis and decisions now set out in the Preferred Options Report.
- 1.10 A copy of these accompanying documents can be viewed at the on-line library at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?bcr=1&sch=doc>

2 Public Consultation

- 2.1 Public consultation on the Preferred Options Report will be carried out in compliance with the standards set out in the Statement of Community Involvement, adopted by the Council in December 2006.

- 2.2 Copies of the Preferred Options Report and its accompanying documents will be placed for inspection, free of charge, in public libraries throughout the Borough; at the public counter of the Technical Services Department; and at One-Stop Shops. The documents will also be made available for comment on-line, free of charge, through the Council's on-line consultation portal at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>.
- 2.3 Notification letters will be sent to all previous respondents, to statutory consultees, to all the contacts on the Council's Local Development Framework database, to members of the Area Forums and to members of the Local Strategic Partnership. The public will be able to comment on any part of the documents provided.
- 2.4 It will not be possible to offer presentations to the Area Forums as the October cycle of meetings will largely have been completed prior to Full Council's consideration of the Preferred Options Report. An Open Day will however be held during the consultation period to which all Area Forum members will be invited, similar to the Open Day held to consult on the Spatial Options Report on 22 January 2010.
- 2.5 A series of consultation questions have been included in the Preferred Options Report to direct respondents to areas where comments would be particularly valuable. Non-technical summary material will also be made available to make it easier to comment on key aspects of the Report.
- 2.6 The results of consultation on the Preferred Options Report will be used to confirm that the Preferred Options have been correctly evaluated and that the Council's final decisions have been soundly based.

3 Future Stages

- 3.1 The next stage, following the publication of Preferred Options and the consideration of the comments received, will be to draw up a draft Core Strategy. This will be the first time that the public and other stakeholders will be able to see and comment on a complete, fully drafted Core Strategy for the Borough.
- 3.2 The full draft Core Strategy will need to be published for public consultation for a statutory period of six weeks, accompanied by the evidence base, the results of previous consultations and a full suite of appraisals and assessments, to explain the process carried out and to justify the conclusions included within the draft Strategy.
- 3.3 The comments received on the draft Core Strategy may be used by the Council to make any final changes before submitting the final Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for public examination by an independent Planning Inspector. Assuming the Inspector concludes that the Core Strategy is "sound", on the basis of the evidence submitted and any outstanding representations, the Council would then be able to proceed to adoption. The report of the Inspector will be binding on the Council.
- 3.4 The final procedures could be subject to change, depending on the speed with which the new Coalition Government introduces amendments to the national Development Plans system.

4 Timetable

- 4.1 Subject to approval by Full Council on 18 October 2010, it is expected that public consultation on the Preferred Options Report will take place for six weeks during November and December 2010

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The estimated cost of undertaking public consultation on the Preferred Options Report is £15,000, which can be met from existing resources within Strategic Development.

6 Staffing Implications

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly out of this report.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 There are no implications for equal opportunities arising directly from this report. The Preferred Options Report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment approved by the Council's Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator.

8 Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly out of this report. The Core Strategy is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to protect and improve community safety.

9 Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 9.1 The Council has a legal duty to prepare the Core Strategy with a view to contributing to the promotion of sustainable development. The Preferred Options Report has been subject to a statutory sustainability appraisal including strategic environmental assessment, which has been approved by the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Panel and is accompanied by an interim Habitats Regulations Assessment prepared by nature conservation specialists.

10 Planning Implications

- 10.1 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document, once adopted, will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral alongside the remaining parts of the Council's Unitary Development Plan (which have not been replaced by the Core Strategy) and will have implications for the determination of individual planning applications and other decisions under the Planning Acts.

- 10.2 The Preferred Options Report is accompanied by a separate report that sets out the potential impact of the emerging Core Strategy on the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

11 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 11.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report. The Core Strategy is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to promote opportunities for wealth creation and employment.

12 Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report. The Preferred Options Report does, however, include policies on providing accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

13 Social Inclusion Implications

- 13.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising directly from this report. The Core Strategy is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to support and promote social inclusion.

14 Local Member Support Implications

- 14.1 The Preferred Options Report will have implications for all Ward Members.
- 14.2 An Appendix to this report sets out how the Settlement Areas used throughout the Preferred Options Report relate to the boundaries of individual Electoral Wards.

15 Background Papers

- 15.1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 can be viewed at www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm
- 15.2 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004, No.2204) can be viewed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20042204_en.pdf
- 15.3 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 1371) can be viewed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20081371_en.pdf
- 15.4 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (HMSO, SI 2009, No 401) can be viewed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/pdf/uksi_20090401_en.pdf
- 15.5 Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning (CLG, June 2008) can be viewed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/pps12lsp.pdf>
- 15.6 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 can be viewed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20041633_en.pdf
- 15.7 The Conservation (Natural Habitat &c) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 – Appropriate Assessments for Land Use Plans - can be viewed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/pdf/uksi_20071843_en.pdf
- 15.8 Wirral Council - Local Development Framework for Wirral - Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Public Consultation on Issues and Objectives (Cabinet 27 November 2008) can be viewed at [http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000352/AI00002409/\\$CABCS081127REP5.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000352/AI00002409/$CABCS081127REP5.docA.ps.pdf)
- 15.9 Wirral Council - Local Development Framework for Wirral - Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Public Consultation on Spatial Options (Cabinet 26 November 2009) can be viewed at [http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000732/AI00006824/\\$CABCS091126FraserREP2.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000732/AI00006824/$CABCS091126FraserREP2.docA.ps.pdf)
- 15.10 Wirral Council – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Preferred Options Report (Cabinet 22 July 2010) can be viewed at [http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00003058/AI00009579/\\$LDFDraftPreferredOptionsCabRep22Jul10.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00003058/AI00009579/$LDFDraftPreferredOptionsCabRep22Jul10.docA.ps.pdf)

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet recommends to Council that the draft Preferred Options Report attached to this report and the accompanying documents in the on-line library are approved for public consultation

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Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by the Forward Planning Section who can be contacted on 691 8218.

Appendix 1 – Key to Settlement Areas and Electoral Wards

Electoral Wards fall within the Settlement Areas shown shaded below:

	Settlement Areas							
Electoral Ward	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Bebbington								
Bidston and St. James								
Birkenhead and Tranmere								
Bromborough								
Clatterbridge								
Claughton								
Eastham								
Greasby, Frankby and Irby								
Heswall								
Hoylake and Meols								
Leasowe and Moreton East								
Liscard								
Moreton West and Saughall Massie								
New Brighton								
Oxton								
Pensby and Thingwall								
Prenton								
Rock Ferry								
Seacombe								
Upton								
Wallasey								
West Kirby and Thurstaston								

