

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL - CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report sets out the background to progress on the emerging Local Development Framework for Wirral which will replace the Council's Unitary Development Plan as the Council's local strategy for the location and control of new investment and development.

This report seeks approval to undertake public consultation on a draft Issues and Objectives Document as part of the preparation of a Core Strategy for Wirral, which will be the lead document of the Borough's Local Development Framework. It recommends:

- (1) That the proposals for the future preparation of a Core Strategy Development Plan Document set out in this report be approved;
- (2) That the revised proposals for the preparation of the Core Strategy are included within a review of the Local Development Scheme;
- (2) That the Issues and Objectives Document attached to this report is submitted for consideration to the Sustainability Appraisal Panel;
- (3) That the Issues and Objectives Document attached to this report is made subject to an Equality Impact Assessment;
- (4) That the Director of Corporate Services is given delegated authority to make any changes necessary to the Issues and Objectives Document to reflect the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal Panel and the Equality Impact Assessment, before publishing the Document for public consultation;
- (5) That Area Forums be offered the opportunity for a presentation on the Local Development Framework and the emerging Core Strategy;
- (6) That the principle of preparing a renewable energy capacity study be approved, subject to the possibility of joint working with other neighbouring Local Authorities being explored and a further report on costs being brought back for Cabinet approval.

**1 Introduction**

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new system of land use plans known as Local Development Frameworks (LDF); a portfolio of Council prepared Local Development Documents. Local Development Documents can comprise:

- Development Plan Documents including a Core Strategy;
  - Supplementary Planning Documents;
  - a Statement of Community Involvement;
  - a Local Development Scheme; and
  - a series of Annual Monitoring Reports.
- 1.2 The original intention of Government was for a suite of Development Plan Documents to progressively replace “old style” Development Plans such as the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (adopted February 2000).
- 1.3 Two key themes are: ‘front-loaded’ community participation, with a higher level of community involvement in the earlier stages of plan preparation; and the adoption of a spatial planning approach. A spatial planning approach is intended to provide:
- a locally distinctive vision for the future of the area, based on community derived objectives;
  - an set of objectives, priorities and programmes, including policies and land allocations;
  - a framework for the public sector resources necessary to aid delivery;
  - a framework for private sector investment and regeneration;
  - a co-ordinated approach to delivery with other agencies; and
  - measures to tackle climate change and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- 1.4 The vision and evidence base for the Core Strategy should be shared with the Sustainable Community Strategy, which should set the overall direction for the Local Development Framework. All the documents within the Local Development Framework need to be in conformity with each other and with the Core Strategy and with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 1.5 The ambition for a wider “place-shaping” role goes further than the simpler more focused “old style” land use planning documents that were only used to determine planning applications.

### **Preparation Processes**

- 1.6 The new processes introduced by the 2004 Act were complex, involving several stages of preliminary consultation culminating in an independent examination by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to test the “soundness” of the proposals. In practice, these processes have proved to be resource-intensive, time-consuming and process-bound.
- 1.7 The introduction of a new, untested system has also led to considerable uncertainty amongst practitioners, not least in terms of defining what constitutes a “sound” Development Plan Document. The inability to establish this prior to public examination led to a number of early plans prepared by other Local Authorities across the country either being withdrawn or failing at public examination. One of the early lessons has been the need to provide a comprehensive evidence base at the outset of the process.
- 1.8 In most cases, Local Development Documents have had to be prepared in a set order to follow a “chain of conformity” – the Local Development Scheme, to set the

overall programme; the Statement of Community Involvement, to set out the processes for public consultation; the Core Strategy, to set the overall spatial framework; Site Allocations and Area Action Plans, to establish the land allocations necessary to deliver the Core Strategy; followed by supporting Supplementary Planning Documents to provide additional guidance.

- 1.9 In practice, delays in preparing the Regional Spatial Strategy (reported to Cabinet, 6th November 2008), which in most places is needed before a conforming Core Strategy can be prepared, have led to further delays in preparing the following documents.
- 1.10 By the end of April 2008 (the most recently available information) only 29 Core Strategies in England had been found sound and adopted. Of these, only 3 were in metropolitan boroughs. At the time of writing, Lancaster City Council is the only district in the north west of England with a sound, adopted Core Strategy.
- 1.11 Wirral has to date adopted a Local Development Scheme (the latest revision came into force in July 2007), a Statement of Community Involvement (adopted December 2006) and four Supplementary Planning Documents (adopted in October 2006 and June 2007), following on from work initiated under the pre-existing Unitary Development Plan. Work is also underway on a joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document, led by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, which has now reached the Spatial Strategy and Sites Report and will be subject to public consultation at the end of 2008.

## **2 Changes to the Development Plans System**

- 2.1 The Secretary of State published proposals to reform the new system during 2007. Amendments were proposed to the Regulations and to the national policies in Planning Policy Statement 12 (Cabinet, 23 January 2008, Minute 453 refers). The revised PPS12 was issued on 4 June 2008 and the new Regulations came into force on 27 June 2008.
- 2.2 The main changes:
  - replace the requirement to undertake a number of prescribed formal stages early in the process with a single requirement to engage, to consider who should be involved and to take appropriate steps to engage them, dependent on the scale and type of the plan being prepared (Regulation 25);
  - introduce a new pre-submission stage, requiring the publication of a draft Plan to enable the Council to address potential issues relating to soundness before submitting the final Document to an Inspector (Regulation 27);
  - simplify PPS12 to concentrate on the principles of spatial planning rather than the detail of the plan preparation process, which is now set out in a separate but still lengthy online Plan Making Manual;
  - summarise the nine tests of soundness presented in the previous PPS12 under 3 simpler headings - a plan must now be “justified”, “effective” and “consistent with national policy”;

- widen the scope of core strategies, to enable them to specifically allocate strategic sites and deal with local infrastructure requirements;
- extend the duration of core strategies from ten to fifteen years from the date of adoption;
- indicate that many, more detailed, site allocation documents may no longer be necessary, if enough detail is included within the core strategy on which to base appropriate decisions.

- 2.3 While these changes are to be welcomed, plan preparation is still a highly complex, lengthy process with numerous stages and assessments, often to satisfy cross cutting legislation, in addition to compiling and maintaining a detailed evidence base, which must be carried out openly and transparently, subject to public consultation.
- 2.4 Despite these changes, the Government and the Planning Inspectorate have already made clear that the standard of “soundness” remains the same and that the rigour of the examination process will remain unchanged.
- 2.5 By way of example, the Inspectorate has still identified 30 separate issues which a local authority will have to address under the simpler “three” tests of soundness and the need to demonstrate that alternative options have been properly evaluated means that there will remain a need numerous rounds of initial public consultation before a full draft plan can be prepared. The requirement for an extensive, detailed evidence base also remains.
- 2.6 The Planning Bill is expected to make further changes to the development plans system early in the New Year.

### **3 The Core Strategy for Wirral**

- 3.1 The Core Strategy is a “new-style” Development Plan Document that will replace the majority of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral. It is a key document, intended to set the overall framework for future development in the Borough, to which other Documents within the Framework will be required to conform. The Core Strategy must, however, be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 3.2 National advice indicates the Core Strategy should include:
- an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop over the coming years;
  - the strategic objectives for the area, focusing on the key issues to be addressed;
  - a delivery strategy for achieving these objectives, which should set out the scale of development intended and how, where, when, and by whom it will be delivered;
  - broad locations for strategic development, indicated on a key diagram; and
  - clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy, including the delivery of any necessary infrastructure.
- 3.3 The time horizon must be at least 15 years from the date of adoption.

- 3.4 Once adopted, the Core Strategy will provide the blueprint for the social, economic, and environmental regeneration of the Borough, taking forward the vision of the Investment Strategy for Wirral and providing the framework for implementing the aims and objectives of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

### Initial Consultation

- 3.5 Initial consultation on the scope of the Core Strategy began in October 2005, to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs of the Borough. A report of Initial Consultation, which can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/execcs060712rep3a\\_20917.pdf](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/execcs060712rep3a_20917.pdf), was published in July 2006.
- 3.6 A further round of initial consultation was undertaken to test and prioritise the earlier results through public workshops in November 2006. A draft Second Report of Initial Consultation was sent to participants for comment in January 2007.
- 3.7 The draft Second Report identified that comments had not been received from a number of important groups, including people representing the mid-Wirral settlements, younger people, BME groups and disabled people. Additional work to fill these gaps was completed during summer 2007.
- 3.8 Work since summer 2007 has been concentrated on securing an appropriate evidence base.

### Evidence Base

- 3.9 Early experience from elsewhere in the country and strong advice from Government Office North West, indicates that a comprehensive evidence base needs to be in place in advance of the Core Strategy, rather than as originally anticipated as part of the preparation of later site-specific DPDs. The level of detail now considered necessary far exceeds that previously required for a Unitary Development Plan.
- 3.10 Cabinet agreed the funding necessary to bring forward a series of evidence base studies in January and March 2007 (Cabinet 24th January 2007, Minute 232 and 15th March 2007, Minute 284 refers).
- 3.11 The table below lists the studies identified and their current progress:

Study	Progress
Cultural Services Forward Plan (including PPG17-based Open Space and Recreation Audit) ( <i>produced by Strategic Leisure Limited</i> )	Commissioned July 2007 – Initial report to Cabinet October 2008. PPG17 issues to be reported separately
Employment Land and Premises ( <i>produced by BE Group</i> )	Commissioned September 2007 - About to report
Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment ( <i>produced by Fordham Research</i> )	Completed September 2007 - Reported to Cabinet February 2008
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment ( <i>produced by</i>	Commissioned October 2007 - About to report

Study	Progress
<i>Faber Maunsell</i> )	
Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (Produced by Salford HUSU)	Completed February 2008 – Not yet reported
Retail and Town Centres (produced by Roger Tym and Partners)	Commissioned March 2008 – About to report
Biodiversity Audit (produced by Penny Anderson Associates)	Commissioned April 2008 – About to report
Social Infrastructure Study (produced in-house)	Commenced May 2008 – Ongoing
Landscape Character Assessment (produced by The Environment Partnership)	Commissioned June 2008 – Due to report February 2009
Wirral Waters evidence base (produced by Peel Holdings)	Reported to Cabinet July 2008 - Public consultation pending
Settlement Level Profiles (produced in-house)	Initial data compiled August 2008 - Ongoing
Merseyside Minerals Study (produced by Urban Vision - managed by MEAS)	Completed September 2008 - About to report
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Development (produced by Wirral Council, Liverpool City Council and Peel Holdings)	Reported to Cabinet October 2008
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	Pending tender - Joint study with Liverpool subject to Cabinet approval on 6 November 2008

- 3.12 The findings of each study will be reported to Cabinet and published for public consultation before being fed into the plan making process.
- 3.13 The only outstanding piece of evidence, not so far provided, which has been identified during the preparation of the Issues and Objectives Document reported below, relates to the capacity of the Borough to generate renewable energy, which may be needed in support of any future policy that the Council may wish to promote to support sustainable development. This study could be progressed as part of joint sub-regional working, subject to the agreement of other districts.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 3.14 The emerging Core Strategy must be subject to a statutory sustainability appraisal.
- 3.15 Consultation on the scope of the appraisal for the Core Strategy was undertaken during 2006 and the final scoping report, which can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewagenda.asp?mtg=2266#11> (Item 11 refers), was confirmed in July 2007 (Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007, Minute 144 refers).
- 3.16 The stages required as part of the sustainability appraisal of the emerging Core Strategy, which are set out in more detail within the final Scoping Report, require a

written report to be prepared to demonstrate that the social, economic and environmental consequences of any future decisions have been properly considered.

### **Sustainability Appraisal Panel**

- 3.17 The Council appointed an independent Sustainability Appraisal Panel in October 2006, to oversee the appraisal processes undertaken by the Council (Executive Board 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006, Minute 114 refers).
- 3.18 The appointment of the Panel committed the Council to take draft documents through a formal appraisal process, to be verified by the Panel at each stage of the plan making process, before they are published for public consultation. This report, therefore, recommends that the Issues and Objectives Document attached to this report is referred to the Panel before being published for public consultation.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 3.19 Initial screening for the need to prepare an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Core Strategy was carried out in consultation with the specified consultation bodies in August 2005. The final determination, which can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/CSFinalSEADetermination.pdf>, was approved by Executive Board on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006 (Minute 114 refers).
- 3.20 The requirement to prepare an additional environmental report will normally be undertaken as part of the sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy, with the relevant elements sign-posted within the sustainability appraisal report. It is a particular requirement of the SEA Regulations that the identification and assessment of alternatives must be subject to public consultation.

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment**

- 3.21 An assessment under the Habitat Regulations is required to demonstrate that the emerging Core Strategy will cause no harm to European designated sites. The assessment must also extend to sites outside the Borough boundary.
- 3.22 Expressions of interest to undertake the Habitat Regulations Assessment for the Core Strategy were invited as part of the Request for Quotation for the Biodiversity Audit. Formal work to undertake the Habitat Regulation Assessment is, therefore, still to be formally commissioned.
- 3.23 Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008 (Minute 502 refers) resolved that monies initially set aside for Habitats Regulation Assessment be used to widen the scope of the Biodiversity Audit and to ensure that the commission would be attractive to an appropriate calibre of consultant. Monies to undertake the Habitat Regulation Assessment are, therefore, still to be identified.
- 3.24 Habitat Regulation Assessment requires several stages of preparation, beginning with a screening exercise which identifies whether a more detailed "appropriate assessment" is required to ascertain impacts on European Sites and identify mitigation measures. The key stages for Habitats Regulations Assessment are from the preferred options stage onwards.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.25 There is a corporate commitment to assess the equalities implications of the Council's policies and activities.
- 3.26 An Equality Impact Assessment has not yet been undertaken for the Core Strategy. This report, therefore, recommends that a formal Assessment is carried out prior to the publication of the Issues and Objectives Document for public consultation.

## **4 Future Progress**

- 4.1 Now that Regional Spatial Strategy has been issued (reported to Cabinet 6th November 2008) and the evidence base is nearing completion, it is necessary to return to the core of the plan making process.
- 4.2 Further consultation is needed to confirm the issues to be included within the Core Strategy and to identify the objectives to be pursued. The agreed objectives can then be used to identify the spatial options that will need to be assessed to arrive at the Council's Preferred Options for the Strategy, to demonstrate that the potential alternatives have been appropriately assessed and that the Core Strategy is "sound".
- 4.3 This report recommends a two stage process:

## **5 Issues and Objectives Consultation**

- 5.1 The draft Issues and Objectives Document, attached to this report, is intended to secure agreement on the key spatial planning issues facing the Borough, a proposed spatial vision and a series of strategic policy objectives to address the issues identified. The Document provides:
- A general introduction to the Core Strategy;
  - A spatial portrait of the Borough (covering the economic, social and environmental context);
  - A Summary of the initial consultation findings
  - A Summary of Corporate policy context
  - A Summary of current regeneration activities
  - A Summary of emerging issues and challenges
  - A suggested Spatial Vision for the Borough
  - A series of draft strategic policy objectives
- 5.2 The spatial portrait is a description of the essential characteristics of the Borough, describing its social, economic and environmental conditions. This is the first stage in articulating the issues that Wirral faces and the strategy that may be necessary to respond to them. Consultees will be asked for their views on whether the spatial portrait is an accurate and comprehensive summary.
- 5.3 The summary of emerging issues and challenges attempts to encapsulate the issues that have arisen from initial consultation, the spatial portrait and the existing and emerging evidence base, including the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Council's Corporate Plan. Consultees will be invited to confirm whether the issues, problems and challenges outlined are an accurate reflection of the key issues facing the Borough.



- 5.4 The spatial portrait and the emerging issues and challenges are then used to inform a draft spatial vision, which seeks to establish an agreed picture of what the Borough should be like towards the end of the plan period. The spatial vision is one of the most important components of the Core Strategy as it will set the context for the objectives, priorities, policies and land allocations which will flow from it.
- 5.5 Taking account of this background, a series of emerging strategic policy objectives are suggested. These objectives will form the link between the spatial vision and the series of spatial options that will need to be identified and assessed as part of the next stage of the process.
- 5.6 It is proposed that consultation on the Issues and Objectives Document will take place early in the New Year with the findings expected to be reported to Cabinet around Easter 2009.

## **6 Spatial Options Consultation**

- 6.1 The results of consultation on the Issues and Objectives Document will be used to identify a series of spatial options for the Core Strategy.
- 6.2 The generation of spatial options offers stakeholders the opportunity to influence the key choices about the future development of the Borough, before they are finally confirmed. Consultation will enable the Council to demonstrate that it has identified and evaluated a full range of available potential options and to better assess their likely implications.
- 6.3 The generation and evaluation of spatial options generation will need to comply with national guidance, which indicates that they should represent genuine alternative approaches to governing future development and change in the Borough. Potential options should be “reasonable”, which is generally taken to mean that they should be realistic and genuinely capable of implementation. The spatial options will need to be subject to a full range of appraisals and assessments.
- 6.4 Following Cabinet approval, it is envisaged that a Spatial Options Document, setting out the accompanying appraisals and assessments, would be published for public consultation towards the middle of 2009.

## **7 Future Stages**

- 7.1 Consultation on the Spatial Options Document will enable the Council to decide upon its Preferred Options. The Preferred Options must, again, be published for public consultation to ensure that the alternative options have been correctly evaluated and to confirm that the Council’s final decisions have been soundly based. The results of consultation on the Preferred Options will then be used to draw up a draft Core Strategy. This is the first time that the public and other stakeholders will have be able to see a complete fully drafted Core Strategy for the Borough.
- 7.2 The draft Core Strategy, which may now include strategic site allocations, will need to be formally published for statutory public consultation accompanied by the evidence base and a full suite of appraisals and assessments to explain the processes carried out to arrive at the conclusions now included within the Strategy.

- 7.3 The comments received can be used by the Council to make any final changes before submitting the 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.

## **8 Local Development Scheme**

- 8.1 A timetable for these future stages has not yet been prepared but will be provided as part of the review of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to be submitted to the Secretary of State early in the New Year, following the submission of this year’s Annual Monitoring Report in December 2008.
- 8.2 The review of the LDS will need to re-consider the appropriateness of the subject-level Development Plan Documents originally proposed for housing, employment and retail, leisure and town centres, in light of the amendments to PPS12 and the enhanced role of the Core Strategy.
- 8.3 The review of the LDS will also include a consideration of the resources needed for future stages of work and a risk assessment.
- 8.4 The consideration of future timetabling and resource issues is currently being assisted by the Planning Advisory Service.

## **9 Public Consultation**

- 9.1 Public consultation on the Issues and Objectives Document will be carried out in compliance with the standards set out in the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by the Council in December 2006.
- 9.2 Copies of the Document will be placed for inspection, free of charge, in public libraries throughout the Borough and at the public counter of the Technical Services Department, as well as on the internet through the Council’s website, and notification letters will be sent to all the contacts on the Council’s Local Development Framework database.
- 9.3 The Member Training Working Party on 6 October 2008 requested that a report on the Local Development Framework setting out the processes to be undertaken be presented to each of the Area Forums to enable the public to better understand how they can become involved.

## **10 Financial Implications**

- 10.1 Public consultation on the Issues and Objectives Document can be undertaken from within existing resources.
- 10.2 The resources necessary for future stages of plan preparation will be considered alongside the review of the Local Development Scheme to be submitted to the Secretary of State early in the New Year.
- 10.3 The cost of preparing a Renewable Energy Capacity Study will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

10.4 The cost of preparing a Habitat Regulation Assessment will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

10.5 The annual award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant to the Council is now directly linked to progress on the delivery of the Local Development Framework (Cabinet 25 September 2008, Minute 202 refers).

## **11 Staffing Implications**

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

## **12 Equal Opportunities Implications**

12.1 There are no implications for equal opportunities arising directly from this report.

12.2 The publication of Issues and Objectives for the Core Strategy was originally held back to allow additional consultation with under-represented groups.

12.3 The preparation of the Core Strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

## **13 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly out of this report. The Local Development Framework for Wirral is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to protect and improve community safety.

## **14 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

14.1 The Council has a legal duty to prepare the Local Development Framework with a view to contributing to the promotion of sustainable development.

14.2 Documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework must be subject to a statutory sustainability appraisal including strategic environmental assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

## **15 Planning Implications**

15.1 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document, once adopted, will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Council's Unitary Development Plan and will have implications for the determination of individual planning applications and other decisions under the Planning Acts.

## **16 Anti-Poverty Implications**

16.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report. The Local Development Framework is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to promote opportunities for wealth creation.

## **17 Human Rights Implications**

17.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

## **18 Social Inclusion Implications**

18.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising directly from this report. The Local Development Framework is, however, expected to include policies that will seek to support and promote social inclusion.

## **19 Local Member Support Implications**

19.1 There are no Ward specific implications arising from this report.

19.2 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will set the overall spatial framework for development and investment across the whole Borough over the next fifteen to twenty years.

## **20 Background Papers**

20.1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 can be viewed at [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm)

20.2 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004, No.2204) can be viewed at [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20042204.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20042204.htm)

20.3 The Planning White Paper - Planning for a Sustainable Future (HM Government, May 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/320546>

20.4 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](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20081371_en.pdf)

20.5 Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning (June 2008) can be viewed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/pps12lsp.pdf>

20.6 The SEA Regulations can be viewed at [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi\\_20041633\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20041633_en.pdf)

20.7 The Habitat Regulations can be viewed at [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/pdf/uksi\\_20071843\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/pdf/uksi_20071843_en.pdf)

20.8 Local Development Scheme for Wirral (July 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/LDSReviewFinalJuly07.pdf>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That**

- (1) the proposals for the future preparation of a Core Strategy Development Plan Document set out in this report be approved;**
- (2) the revised proposals for the preparation of the Core Strategy be included within a review of the Local Development Scheme;**
- (3) the Issues and Objectives Document attached to the report be submitted for consideration to the Sustainability Appraisal Panel;**
- (4) the Issues and Objectives Document attached to the report be made subject to an Equality Impact Assessment;**
- (5) the Director of Corporate Services be given delegated authority to make any changes necessary to the Issues and Objectives Document to reflect the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal Panel and the Equality Impact Assessment before publishing the Document for public consultation;**
- (5) Area Forums be offered the opportunity for a presentation on the Local Development Framework and the emerging Core Strategy; and**
- (6) the principle of preparing a renewable energy capacity study be approved, subject to the possibility of joint working with other neighbouring Local Authorities being explored and a further report on costs being brought back for Cabinet approval.**

**J. Wilkie**

**Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services**

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