



**WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SECTION 35**

**PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL**

**ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

**DECEMBER 2008**

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# **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report is a statutory document setting out progress on the delivery of the Council's Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved.
- 1.2 This is the fourth Annual Monitoring Report for Wirral, covering the period of twelve months ending on 31 March 2008.

## **Context**

- 1.3 The main challenges identified for Wirral are to promote economic revitalisation, tackle deprivation and inequality, progress urban regeneration, improve and maintain environmental standards, reduce dependence on the private car, improve public transport, minimise anti-social behaviour and provide for more sustainable development. Public consultation has confirmed these issues as local priorities.
- 1.4 There is a need to amend the Local Development Scheme to accommodate the recent changes to national legislation governing the preparation of Local Development Frameworks.

## **Monitoring Plan Preparation**

- 1.5 The first Local Development Scheme for Wirral provided for the preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement; a Core Strategy; three site-specific Development Plan Documents; and four Supplementary Planning Documents to address urgent local issues related to the control of new flat development; food and drink uses in town centres; and telecommunications; and to guide the potential re-development of the former Cammell Lairds shipyard.
- 1.6 The first review of the Local Development Scheme brought forward proposals to prepare a joint Waste Development Plan Document and a further Supplementary Planning Document to provide up-to-date guidance on parking requirements. It also withdrew the proposal to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for Cammell Lairds.
- 1.7 The Statement of Community Involvement and the Supplementary Planning Documents for new flat development, food and drink in town centres, telecommunications and parking have already been adopted.
- 1.8 Work on the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document began in December 2006. Consultation on Issues and Options took place in March 2007. The future timetable will need to be amended to accommodate additional consultation on a Spatial Strategy and Sites Report in November 2008 and the need to publish a draft Development

Plan Document for formal consultation in accordance with the new Regulations.

- 1.9 The Core Strategy has been delayed to focus on the delivery of an appropriate evidence base. Consultation on the results will be completed during the first half of 2009, alongside the finalisation of issues and objectives and the consideration of spatial options. The timetable for future stages will need to be contained within a review of the Local Development Scheme.
- 1.10 The timetable for the three site-specific Development Plan Documents for Housing; Employment; and Town Centres, Retail and Leisure, which should have commenced in March 2008, will need to be re-considered pending the completion of the evidence base and a review of the scope and timetable of the Core Strategy.
- 1.11 The Local Development Scheme will also need to consider the need to prepare Area Action Plans to facilitate the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.
- 1.12 There were no Local Development Orders in force in Wirral during 2007/08.

### **Monitoring Policy Implementation**

- 1.13 Revised national Output Indicators were published in July 2008. Amended data has been included wherever possible but information to the new format will not be available until next year's Annual Monitoring Report.
- 1.14 Economic indicators, in terms of business densities, wealth creation and benefit dependency, still show cause for significant concern. The population is continuing to decline. The latest migration estimates show the annual loss has increased to 900 people. The greatest decline is in people of working age.
- 1.15 The amount of completed employment floorspace has continued to fall and was 40% lower than that completed in 2005/06. The amount of completed new office floorspace has halved since 2006/07. The overall area of land available for new employment development represents approximately a fifth of the total amount of land set aside for employment uses in the UDP. By contrast, the amount of employment development completed on brownfield land rose to 70%.
- 1.16 The amount of completed retail floorspace rose significantly in 2007/08, to almost double the previous highest recorded annual figure in 2005/06. The proportion located within an existing centre reached 66%, the highest since 2004/05. The proportion of new office floorspace located within an existing centre also increased, for the first time, to 27%.

- 1.17 Gross housing completions have now exceeded 700 dwellings for the second year running. There is still a high dependency on flat developments. The Borough will need to build at an annual average rate of 555 net new dwellings to reach the new RSS target of 9,000 new homes by 2021.
- 1.18 The proportion of completed dwellings on previously developed land continues to exceed regional targets, which have now been raised to 80%. The number of completions has continued to rise in east Wirral and the number of completions within the Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area has almost trebled since 2004/05. Only 6% of gross completions are now in west Wirral.
- 1.19 While the majority of completed dwellings continued to be within 30 minutes public transport time of essential services such as a doctor's surgery, school, retail centre or employment area, a third of new homes were in locations which were further than 30 minutes away from a hospital by public transport.
- 1.20 The new recycling and composting facilities at Bidston have continued to have a positive influence on the proportion of waste managed by management type. The amount of waste sent to landfill had reduced by a third since 2005/06 and the proportion recycled and composted had increased to 32%.

### **Summary of Emerging Issues**

- 1.21 The principal issues that will need to be considered as part of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document will include:
- building sustainable communities;
  - a stronger economy, through the delivery of the Council's Investment Strategy;
  - an inclusive society;
  - a decent and affordable home;
  - an accessible Borough; and
  - a protected environment.
- 1.22 Consultation to confirm the issues, objectives and spatial vision for the Core Strategy will take place in early 2009.

### **Summary of Changes Necessary to the Local Development Scheme**

- 1.23 The Local Development Scheme will need to be reviewed to:
- (i) reflect the most recent changes to national legislation;
  - (ii) update the position with regard to the Regional Spatial Strategy;
  - (iii) reflect progress on the completion of the evidence base studies necessary to underpin the emerging Core Strategy;

- (iv) provide for consultation on the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy during early 2009 and the consideration of strategic options later in the year;
- (v) re-assess the need for any additional site-specific Development Plan Documents;
- (vi) reflect progress on the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and the need for Area Action Plans for the neighbourhoods affected; and
- (vii) reflect the revised timetable for the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document.

### **Questions and Comments**

- 1.24 Any questions and comments on the data or analysis provided in this AMR should be directed to Andrew Fraser, Principal Forward Planning Officer, Corporate Services Department, Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED who can be contacted on 0151 691 8218 or at [andrewfraser@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:andrewfraser@wirral.gov.uk).
- 1.25 The Council is keen to identify ways to improve the range and quality of the information provided in its AMR and would encourage approaches to provide regular, up-to-date data sets for relevant indicators.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

- 2.1 This document is the fourth Annual Monitoring Report for Wirral (AMR) prepared under Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2.2 The AMR is a statutory document setting out progress on the delivery of the Council's Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved.
- 2.3 This AMR principally covers the period of twelve months ending on 31 March 2008 but also includes more up-to-date information where this is available.

### **Contents**

- 2.4 Section 3 of the AMR provides an overview of the main characteristics of the Borough and provides an explanation of the context for the policies and proposals that will emerge as part of the Local Development Framework for Wirral.
- 2.5 Section 4 of the AMR sets out the latest position with regard to the existing Development Plans and Local Development Documents in force within the area and other Council initiatives.
- 2.6 Section 5 of the AMR sets out progress on the delivery of the Council's Local Development Scheme under the heading of monitoring plan preparation.
- 2.7 Section 6 of the AMR sets out the extent to which the policy priorities for the area are being achieved under the heading of monitoring policy implementation.
- 2.8 Section 7 provides a summary of the principal issues emerging from this analysis.
- 2.9 Section 8 provides a glossary of the terms and abbreviations used throughout the AMR.

### **Background Documents**

- 2.10 As anticipated in the previous AMR, the current year has seen a number of changes designed to further improve the system brought in by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. These changes have included amendments to the national Regulations; a review of the national policies contained within PPS12; revisions to the national Output Indicators; and the replacement of Creating Local Development

Frameworks with an on-line manual. The Planning Bill is still proceeding through Parliament.

- 2.11 The following documents now provide the national background to the preparation of the Local Development Framework and the preparation of AMRs:

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)

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)

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)

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

The Plan Making Manual can be viewed at <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=51391>

Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide (ODPM, 2005) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/localdevelopmentframework>

Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators (Update 2/2008) (CLG, July 2008) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/coreoutputindicators2.pdf>

The emerging Planning Bill can be viewed at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/planning.html>

### **3 CONTEXT**

- 3.1 This section of the AMR seeks to provide an overview of the main characteristics of the Borough. It attempts to set the context against which the preparation of Local Development Documents and the monitoring of development trends can be better understood.
- 3.2 This section of the AMR will be progressively up-dated as each AMR is prepared and additional information becomes available.

#### **Social Context**

- 3.3 Wirral's population has declined from over 355,000 during the 1970s to 310,200 in mid-2007<sup>1</sup>. The population structure is skewed towards older age groups, with a lower proportion of younger adults and a higher proportion of older people than the averages for the rest of England and the North West. The greatest decline is in the younger age groups. While the number of households continues to rise, household densities are average for Greater Merseyside.
- 3.4 The principal flows of population are out of Wirral to Denbighshire, Flintshire and Chester and into Wirral from Liverpool and from the rest of Greater Merseyside. The largest flows are between Wirral and Liverpool.
- 3.5 Although average household incomes are among the highest in Merseyside, the Borough has a high number of localities falling within the most deprived in England, mainly concentrated in the older urban areas in the east of the Borough. Almost a quarter of the Wirral population fall within the bottom 10% of most deprived Super Output Areas. These localities score poorly across the full range of indicators for income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training; living environment; and crime and disorder.
- 3.6 Areas of Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Leasowe and Woodchurch qualify for the national allocation of Working Neighbourhoods Fund directed towards localities with conditions falling within the worst 3% of England.
- 3.7 Wirral has a higher than average proportion of the working age population on key benefits and a quarter of all school children in Wirral qualify for free school meals.

#### **Economic Context**

- 3.8 Key sectors in the local economy include retail and distribution, public administration, education and health. In manufacturing, the Borough is strongest in chemicals and food and drink. The number of tourism-

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<sup>1</sup> Office of National Statistics (ONS) Mid-Year Estimates

related jobs and spending is also significant. The historical dominance of the port and shipbuilding sectors in the east of the Borough is much reduced, although both have experienced a revival in recent years. Further investment is expected at Eastham in response to proposals to reconfigure the facilities at Ellesmere Port.

- 3.9 The North West Development Agency has designated two strategic regional sites in Wirral: at Twelve Quays, Birkenhead and at the Wirral International Business Park, Bromborough. The Birkenhead docks system, part of the Port of Liverpool, including the Twelve Quays roll-on-roll-off ferry terminal; and the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal, are key regional facilities, providing up to 3,800 jobs<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.10 Birkenhead Docks and the Wirral International Business Park are also identified as Regional Strategic Sites in the North West Competitiveness and Employment ERDF Operational Programme 2007-13.
- 3.11 The Wirral Investment Strategy, nevertheless, recognises that the Borough's economic performance continues to be a major concern.
- 3.12 Output per head of population remains below NW and UK averages and is the lowest on Merseyside. Economic activity rates are lower than national and regional benchmarks and levels of worklessness are higher. Wirral also has fewer VAT registered businesses. The stock of modern business premises is also comparatively low.
- 3.13 The total number of jobs in Wirral is not sufficient to employ the resident population of working age. Average earnings for jobs located in Wirral are lower than the average earnings of Wirral residents as a whole, leading to a high number of journeys to work to Liverpool, Chester and beyond. Journeys to work appear to be lengthening over time.
- 3.14 Large areas of the Borough to the east of the M53 Motorway, plus the communities of Leasowe, Upton and Woodchurch, retained Assisted Area status in the national review announced in December 2006<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.15 Birkenhead Town Centre is the main retail and service centre for the Borough and contains a large covered market and the Grange and Pyramids shopping centres. Responding to changes in the retail sector and to competition from nearby Liverpool and Chester, in addition to out of centre development such as Cheshire Oaks to the south of Ellesmere Port, is a continuing challenge.
- 3.16 In addition to Birkenhead there are a network of district centres in Wallasey, Moreton, Hoylake, West Kirby, Heswall, Bromborough, New

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<sup>2</sup> Maritime Sector on Merseyside Economic Impact Study January 2007

<sup>3</sup> To include the former Electoral Wards of Bidston, Birkenhead, Bromborough, Claughton, Eastham, Egerton, Leasowe, Liscard, New Brighton, Oxtan, Prenton, Seacombe, Tranmere, Upton and Wallasey

Ferry and Prenton, complemented by a number of local shopping centres and parades.

- 3.17 The inner urban area in east Wirral has seen a prolonged programme of public funding on shopfront improvements and more substantial contraction and redevelopment, most recently at Tranmere Urban Village and Church Road. Earlier projects included New Ferry, Rock Ferry, Seacombe, Laird Street, and Victoria Road and Seabank Road in New Brighton.

### **Environmental Context**

- 3.18 Wirral is generally perceived as an area of high environmental quality, especially in the west. The Council's Tourism Strategy emphasises the importance of Wirral's countryside and coast.
- 3.19 Wirral has an extensive network of locally identified non-statutory Sites of Biological Importance, twelve nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, two designated European nature conservation sites and one potential European nature conservation site. There are also twelve locally identified non-statutory sites designated for their importance to earth science.
- 3.20 While these sites cover most of the key habitats identified as priorities within the Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan, there are relatively few within the urban areas of east Wirral and not all aspects of Wirral's biodiversity resource are currently captured by site designations. A biodiversity audit is due for completion by the end of October 2008 along with a review of the guidelines for the selection of local wildlife sites.
- 3.21 The Borough has four Areas of Special Landscape Value and three Areas Requiring Landscape Renewal. Over recent years extensive tree planting by the Forestry Commission and Groundwork has been carried out within the M53 corridor and at Bidston Moss. A Landscape Character Assessment of the Borough is being prepared.
- 3.22 Wirral also has a significant built heritage, with over 1,850 listed structures, twenty-four designated conservation areas, nine scheduled ancient monuments and four sites on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. A series of conservation area appraisals and action plans are being prepared and new conservation areas considered for designation. An Historic Character Assessment of Wirral's rural areas was completed in 2008. An Historic Character Assessment of Wirral's urban areas will report towards the turn of the year.
- 3.23 Wirral has not needed to designate an Air Quality Management Area, although air conditions are continually monitored. Increasing car ownership and the continuing high level of out-commuting could, however, have major implications for travel generation and long-term

air quality. Car ownership is still low in parts of the Borough but increased economic prosperity may see these levels rise. The Merseyside Local Transport Plan sets out measures to promote more sustainable transport choices, supported by initiatives such as Travelwise.

- 3.24 Water quality within the Dee and Mersey Estuaries and inland watercourses has improved substantially over recent years, mainly due to the continuing programme of capital works undertaken by United Utilities. Wirral's beaches are consistently among the cleanest in the North West.
- 3.25 Levels of waste recycling in Wirral have seen significant recent improvement following the introduction of a new waste contract and the newly constructed recycling and composting facility at Bidston. Participation in recycling varies across the Borough, with lower participation in the older, higher density urban areas in east Wirral.
- 3.26 No natural containment sites are currently available in Wirral, following the closure of the existing landfill site at Bromborough Dock. A Joint Waste Development Plan Document is being prepared for Merseyside and Halton to provide facilities to better promote recycling and reprocessing as an alternative to landfill.

### **Natural Resources**

- 3.27 Extensive low-lying areas, especially in the north of the Borough, are protected by defences from both tidal and fluvial (river) flooding.
- 3.28 Much of the coastline is protected from erosion and/or flooding by "hard" defences. Only short stretches of clay cliffs at the Thurstaston and New Ferry shorelines continue to be subject to natural erosion. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is being prepared. The Shoreline Management Plan is also being revised to consider coastal flood and erosion risks.
- 3.29 Land quality is generally good and there are significant areas of high-grade agricultural land, particularly in the south and west of the Borough. While progress on urban land reclamation continues, through the Newheartlands Pathfinder and the development of Strategic Regional Sites, a number of significant sites in the east Wirral can only be brought forward for development once ground condition problems have been addressed. A Brownfield Land Strategy is being prepared alongside the other Merseyside Districts in partnership with English Partnerships.
- 3.30 Much of Wirral is founded on sandstone which is a major aquifer and groundwater provides around 13% of Wirral's water resources. Wirral does not, however, have any significant mineral reserves, apart from small amounts of winnable brick clay. Reserves of aggregates are very limited and constrained by nature conservation or other

considerations. A Merseyside minerals study has been completed to identify areas which may need to be safeguarded for future extraction.

- 3.31 The Government has identified Liverpool Bay for a significant expansion in offshore wind farm development. The construction of twenty-five turbines has been completed off the coastline at New Brighton and the shore connection to the national grid will take place on the north Wirral coast. The provision of onshore renewable energy schemes has, however, been minimal.
- 3.32 A need to enhance the evidence base on the local feasibility and potential for renewable and low-carbon technologies, including microgeneration has been identified.

### **Quality of Life**

- 3.33 Wirral is generally seen as offering a high quality of life but there are marked contrasts between different parts of the Borough.
- 3.34 Over 40% of the Borough is open countryside, with much of high landscape quality. The 41km coastline is a special feature, high in value for recreation, nature conservation and tourism. There are also a significant number of leisure and cultural facilities in both urban and rural areas, including areas such as New Brighton, West Kirby, Port Sunlight, the facilities in and around Birkenhead and the Borough's Country Parks.
- 3.35 There is a need to maintain local character and distinctiveness in both east and west Wirral, especially in the lower density residential areas built during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Although not an environmental protection designation, the Green Belt continues to make an important contribution to Wirral's environmental quality as well as continuing to promote urban regeneration.
- 3.36 Some of the other older urban areas continue to be the subject of a variety of regeneration initiatives. Symptoms of low demand, including high levels of vacancy and unfit housing, led to the designation of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area in parts of Birkenhead, Bidston, Seacombe, Tranmere and Liscard in April 2002. Additional funding has now been secured to 2010. Action has included Neighbourhood Management and an Empty Property Strategy as well as large scale clearance and re-development.
- 3.37 The key housing challenges facing Wirral over the next few years include increasing homelessness and the condition of homes occupied by some of the more vulnerable members of the community. The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment also found issues of affordability in both east and west Wirral. In west Wirral, property prices are in excess of four times the average house price for the Borough. In the east, the impact of housing market renewal has also resulted in house prices increasing at a faster rate than household

incomes. The Assessment concluded that the majority of demand was for two and four-bed accommodation in all tenures. The Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Assessment suggests a potential need for pitches in Wirral.

- 3.38 The Council has for some years sought to restrict house building in west Wirral to support regeneration and development in the east. The requirement for new house building set at regional level has now increased from 160 net new dwellings to 500 dwellings per annum. The Core Strategy will need to show how to accommodate this higher figure while retaining regeneration in the east and restraint in the west. A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will need to be prepared to identify the capacity of the Borough to satisfy these requirements.
- 3.39 Disparities in health are closely associated with income and employment based deprivation. There is a significant gap in life expectancy between the poorest and most affluent areas. ONS data suggests that there is an 11 year gap in average life expectancy between Birkenhead and Heswall. Wirral has a high number of admissions to hospital for alcohol related conditions. Rates of mental health, drug misuse, diabetes, healthy eating and physically active adults are all poorer than national and regional averages<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.40 While educational attainment figures are just above the national average, with 61% of children achieving five or more A-C GCSEs (the national average is 59%), a disparity persists between east and west with children in Birkenhead achieving 50% compared with 75% for west Wirral.
- 3.41 Wirral has the lowest rate of recorded crime on Merseyside and rates of burglaries, violent crimes, robberies and vehicle crimes continue to fall and are among the lowest in the country. Crime levels are, however, disproportionately higher in the most deprived Wards with 10% of the Borough accounting for a third of the crime.
- 3.42 The promotion of sustainable travel can also have a significant impact on local quality of life. The majority of Wirral's residential areas are within 400 metres of a bus stop or railway station and most new housing continues to be built within 30 minutes public transport time of key facilities such as hospitals and schools. The continued dependency on the car for journeys to work suggests that this is likely to be an issue of lifestyle choice rather than accessibility.
- 3.43 Traffic levels have the greatest impact on communities along the busiest routes, particularly along routes to and from the Motorway and Birkenhead.

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<sup>4</sup> National Health Service - Wirral Health Profile 2008

## Results of Public Consultation

3.44 Public consultation carried out as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document has identified the following key issues:

*Table 1 – Summary of SWOT Analysis*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local history and heritage and the Victorian and Edwardian legacy;</li> <li>• peninsula coastline and scenery;</li> <li>• other aspects of the natural environment, including the Green Belt, open countryside, open space, parks, green spaces and gardens; and</li> <li>• access to national transport networks</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inequalities in health, housing, education and environment and the polarisation between east and west;</li> <li>• jobs and investment, loss of young people and graduates, alongside an ageing population;</li> <li>• poor image of the urban environment and town centres and the failure to grasp development opportunities such as New Brighton, Cammell Lairds, Hind Street and Housing Market Renewal;</li> <li>• pollution, particularly from traffic and aircraft; and</li> <li>• lack of maintenance and cuts in funding especially for recreation and open space</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the promotion of more sustainable development, including issues such as waste minimisation, recycling, renewable energy, energy and water conservation and eco-homes;</li> <li>• brownfield re-development, to protect the Green Belt, the countryside and other green sites;</li> <li>• the promotion of leisure, tourism, coastal recreation and watersports;</li> <li>• re-development in and around Birkenhead, including the Town Centre, Cammell Lairds, Housing Market Renewal and the Docks, including the re-use of the docks rail link; and</li> <li>• improved public transport, tackling the impact of car use and parking, including improvements to the Bidston-Wrexham line.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the loss of local character and distinctiveness, including heritage and open land;</li> <li>• over-development, over-loading local infrastructure, particularly related to the increasing number of flat developments;</li> <li>• anti-social behaviour, mainly drink-related;</li> <li>• climate change and flood risk; and</li> <li>• the impact of traffic growth</li> </ul>   |

3.45 The principal needs of the Borough were considered to be:

- inward investment, local enterprise and jobs;
- better public transport, especially in the evening, across the Borough between the radial routes to Birkenhead and along the Bidston-Wrexham railway line;
- a greater emphasis on the conversion and re-use of existing buildings and the protection of local character and heritage; and
- the control of anti-social behaviour.

3.46 Better provision for local services and community facilities, affordable family housing, public toilets and recreation facilities for young people, were also identified as significant needs.

3.47 Subsequent consultation with under-represented groups confirmed many of the comments already submitted but also identified the following additional issues:

*Table 2 – Summary of Consultation with Under-Represented Groups*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessibility within Birkenhead Town Centre</li> </ul>                               | <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• design of housing developments</li> <li>• physical accessibility of public transport, rail stations and terminals</li> <li>• need for improvement in pavement finishes</li> <li>• need for improvement in youth engagement</li> <li>• need for improvement in leisure facilities</li> <li>• need for improvement in local play areas and youth facilities</li> <li>• lack of good quality hotels</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more cycle paths with better linkages</li> <li>• events and festivals</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shop closures in local estates</li> <li>• poor relationships with police</li> <li>• pressures on budgets and services</li> <li>• further out-of-town developments</li> <li>• school closures</li> <li>• flooding in Leasowe</li> <li>• immigrant labour</li> <li>• drugs, teen pregnancy, sexual infections</li> </ul>   |

3.48 The principal additional needs of the Borough were considered to be:

- affordable, social and special needs housing in local estates;
- multicultural activities and facilities; and
- a secondary school in Greasby.

3.49 A full report of Initial Consultation will be published alongside the Issues and Objectives for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

### **Spatial Vision**

3.50 Participants were also asked about what they thought should be included in a spatial vision for the Borough. The general consensus was that Wirral should seek to be different from Liverpool.

3.51 Participants considered that any new vision for Wirral should focus on promoting jobs, leisure and tourism alongside the protection of unique features such as the natural environment, coastline and heritage. Less emphasis should be placed on addressing east-west divisions, with a greater concentration on local distinctiveness, care over the design of new development and meeting identified local needs.

3.52 The main priorities identified were jobs, affordable family housing, meeting local needs, improved design quality, brownfield development, the reuse of existing buildings, improvements to the waterfront and the protection of heritage and open countryside. Continued regeneration in and around Birkenhead and the Docks was strongly supported to assist with addressing the underlying problems of the surrounding areas and to improve quality of life.

3.53 Formal consultation on the emerging Spatial Vision will be undertaken early in 2009.

## **4 EXISTING PLANS AND PROGRAMMES**

- 4.1 This section of the AMR seeks to set out the latest position with regard to existing Development Plans, Local Development Documents and other Council initiatives.

### **The Development Plan for Wirral**

- 4.2 The statutory Development Plan for the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral currently comprises:

- the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West, issued by the Secretary of State in September 2008<sup>5</sup>; and
- the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral, adopted by the Council in February 2000.

### **Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 4.3 The latest Regional Planning Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.gos.gov.uk/497468/docs/248821/476846/NorthWestEnglandRSS>.
- 4.4 In policy terms, the new RSS divides Wirral into three:
- The Inner Area – the first priority for investment in Wirral – defined by the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area;
  - The Outer Area – the second priority for investment in Wirral – includes the remainder of the eastern area of Wirral to the east of the M53 Motorway; and
  - The Rural Areas – the lowest priority for investment in Wirral – includes the remainder of Wirral to the west of the M53 Motorway.
- 4.5 The boundaries to these areas are illustrated in Appendix 2.
- 4.6 The regional priorities for the sub-region are clearly focussed on the Regional Centre of Liverpool and the surrounding Inner Area.
- 4.7 The focus on the Inner Area, as the second priority within the sub-region outside Liverpool City Centre and the first priority within Wirral, means that major regeneration schemes at the heart of the urban area, including Housing Market Renewal are given a very high level of support.
- 4.8 The objectives for the Outer Area include economic development, maximising the employment potential of the Strategic Investment Areas, addressing worklessness, expanding the quality and choice of housing and enhancing the role of existing centres.
- 4.9 The objectives for the Rural Areas include focussing development in accessible locations in and around key service centres to address barriers to affordability and to meet identified local needs.

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<sup>5</sup> 18 months later than originally envisaged

- 4.10 The objectives for the Outer Area and the Rural Areas include support for wider regeneration programmes.
- 4.11 A Partial Review of RSS is currently being undertaken to consider additional issues related to gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople and regional parking standards.
- 4.12 In the longer term, RSS is expected to be replaced by a Single Regional Strategy (SRS). Consultation on the evidence base for the SRS began in July 2008 with a view to submitting a final document to the Secretary of State by mid-2010. The statutory status of the SRS will need to be clarified by new primary legislation.

### **City Regional Governance**

- 4.13 Greater Merseyside has been working to establish a sub-regional governance structure for the City Region. The latest proposals include a City Region Cabinet with six supporting policy boards, two cross-cutting boards to focus on improvement and efficiency and research and development, and a scrutiny panel. A Housing and Spatial Planning Board is to be established to deal with spatial planning issues.
- 4.14 Sub-regional partners have already established a City Region Action Programme, a City Region Employment Strategy and a City Region Housing Strategy, to establish wider sub-regional priorities.

### **Unitary Development Plan**

- 4.15 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for Wirral can be viewed at [www.wirral.gov.uk/udp](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/udp).
- 4.16 The UDP provides for urban regeneration across the Borough, supported by a tight Green Belt, with priority given to regeneration within the inner urban areas in central and north Birkenhead and south Wallasey and the outer Council estates including Leasowe and Woodchurch.
- 4.17 The UDP is an old-style Development Plan that will be progressively replaced by the Development Plan Documents contained within the Council's Local Development Framework. The programme for the preparation of Development Plan Documents is set out in Section 5 below.
- 4.18 A review of the policies set out in the UDP was undertaken during 2007. The Direction issued by the Secretary of State in September 2007, listing the policies that are still in force, can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/SavingDirectionFinalWirral.pdf>.
- 4.19 Appendix 1 lists the policies and proposals that are no longer in force.

## Local Development Framework

- 4.20 The following new-style Local Development Documents are now in force within the area:

*Table 3 – Local Development Documents*

| Document  | Date of Adoption |
|---|------------------|
| Local Development Scheme (Second Review)                                  | July 2007        |
| Statement of Community Involvement  | December 2006    |
| SPD1 – Designing for Development by Mobile Phone Mast Operators           | October 2006     |
| SPD2 – Designing for Self-Contained Flat Development and Conversions      | October 2006     |
| SPD3 – Hot Food Takeaways, Restaurants, Cafes and Drinking Establishments | October 2006     |
| SPD4 - Parking Standards  | June 2007        |

- 4.21 Copies of these documents are available for inspection on the Council's website at [www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk); at the Technical Services Department at Canning Street, Birkenhead, CH41 1ND; and at public libraries throughout the Borough, during normal opening times.
- 4.22 The Local Development Scheme will be reviewed in early 2009, following the publication of this Annual Monitoring Report.

## Other Plans and Programmes

### *Corporate Plan*

- 4.23 The latest revision to the Council's Corporate Plan sets out the following local priorities:
- to create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral;
  - to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment;
  - to improve health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society;
  - to raise the aspirations of young people; and
  - to create an excellent Council.

### *Sustainable Community Strategy*

- 4.24 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is being revised alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document on the basis of a shared evidence base.
- 4.25 The Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to establish a long term vision for the Borough that will set out how statutory agencies, the private sector and the community and voluntary sectors will work collectively to improve the quality of life within Wirral.

- 4.26 The review of the Sustainable Community Strategy identifies six strategic aims to underpin this vision;
- a strong local economy;
  - safer, stronger communities in all parts of the Borough;
  - the best possible health and well-being for all families and individuals;
  - excellent life chances for children and young people
  - a high quality living and working environment;
  - sustainable, affordable housing for all.
- 4.27 The Sustainable Community Strategy will particularly focus on actions that will narrow the gap between Wirral's most affluent and most deprived communities in relation to issues such as health, educational attainment and crime.
- 4.28 Consultation on the emerging SCS will take place towards the end of 2008. A copy of the consultation document can be viewed at [http://active.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/content\\_0002538.html](http://active.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/content_0002538.html)

#### *Local Area Agreement*

- 4.29 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets out the delivery plan for key elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The latest Partnership Agreement for Wirral was submitted to the Government in May 2008.
- 4.30 The Partnership Agreement restates that preventing and tackling worklessness and related deprivation (including child poverty) are cross cutting priorities requiring a multi agency approach.

#### *Wirral Investment Strategy*

- 4.31 The Council first commissioned a wide-ranging review of existing strategies and policies to ensure a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the future economic development of the Borough in 2004, informed by research undertaken by consultants GVA Grimley and KPMG. Consultation with more than 170 business representatives secured support for an Investment Strategy, which was published in March 2007.
- 4.32 The first priority of the Investment Strategy is to grow the local economy. Key targets include:
- raising productivity;
  - increasing the number of higher value jobs in the Borough;
  - encouraging innovation and enterprise;
  - tackling disparities in skills and employment;
  - developing and improving infrastructure;
  - developing the future viability of existing employment space; and
  - improving the availability of sites and premises for new investment.
- 4.33 Priority projects include the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park; Brand New Brighton; West Wirral Developments; Wirral Docklands and

Woodside; the Wirral Strategic Investment Area; Wirral Strategic Rail and Road Transport and Infrastructure; and Birkenhead Town Centre.

#### *Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development*

- 4.34 The Council adopted an Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development in October 2005 in response to Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, March 2003). The text of the Policy and a map of the areas affected can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/485/content\\_000039.html](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/485/content_000039.html)
- 4.35 The Council will review the Interim Planning Policy to respond to the new Regional Spatial Strategy. Public consultation on the content of the revised Policy is expected to take place in early 2009. The findings of the review will be used to inform the content of the Core Strategy and the Housing Allocations DPD.

#### **Regeneration Initiatives**

- 4.36 The Council continues to be active in a number of other significant regeneration and investment programmes which will continue to influence the future pattern of development within the area:

#### *Newheartlands*

- 4.37 The Merseyside Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder – Newheartlands, is a long term regeneration project, to tackle the causes and symptoms of housing market failure, vacancy and decline at the heart of the conurbation. In Wirral, the boundary designated by the Government, in April 2002, includes parts of Bidston, Birkenhead, Liscard, Tranmere and Seacombe<sup>6</sup>.
- 4.38 A Strategy for Inner Wirral was originally published by the Council in January 2004, to inform the initial Prospectus for the Newheartlands Pathfinder, as a guide to local priorities for action. The Strategy was followed by a series of non-statutory master plans: for North Birkenhead; Church Road, Tranmere; and Fiveways, Rock Ferry, which were adopted by the Council in 2005.
- 4.39 Since 2003, a £43million programme has been delivered, involving targeted acquisition and clearance and large scale refurbishment and the objectives of the programme continue to have a major influence on policy development across the Borough. The latest Business Plan provides for a further £29.5 million programme to 2011 alongside an additional £45.5 million from other sources. The objectives of this and later programmes will need to inform the content of the Core Strategy DPD and the site-specific Allocation DPDs.

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<sup>6</sup> The Newheartlands Pathfinder also includes parts of neighbouring local authorities in Sefton and Liverpool

### *Mersey Heartlands Growth Point*

- 4.40 The Mersey Heartlands Growth Point is a major urban regeneration opportunity, at the heart of the Newheartlands Pathfinder, based around the extensive Birkenhead Dock Estate, to the north and west of Birkenhead Town Centre. The proposed Growth Point includes the area previously identified as Wirral Waters, which has the potential to deliver up to 27,000 new jobs and up to 25,000 new dwellings over a thirty year period.
- 4.41 The original bid for New Growth Point status was submitted in partnership with Peel Holdings and Liverpool City Council in October 2007<sup>7</sup>. The project was short-listed in July 2008 and a Programme of Development was submitted to the Government in October 2008. The Growth Point, if accepted, will raise Wirral's annual average housing requirement to 600 net new dwellings each year. The Mersey Heartlands Growth Point could accommodate an annual average of up to 400 dwellings per annum to 2017.
- 4.42 The Council, in partnership with Peel Holdings, has sought to establish a Strategic Regeneration Framework for the emerging proposals, based around a series of neighbourhood master plans, which may need to be formalised into statutory Area Action Plans. A substantial evidence base has been prepared, which was made subject to public consultation in October 2008. The evidence base can now be viewed at <http://www.peelwaters.co.uk/wirralwaters.html>
- 4.43 The Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework will be used to inform the content of the Core Strategy DPD and the site-specific Allocation DPDs.

### *Birkenhead Town Centre*

- 4.44 Birkenhead has seen significant public investment in new public transport infrastructure, for example, at the new central bus station at Europa Square and the new Merseyrail station at Conway Park. The removal of the Conway Street flyover and associated environmental improvements were funded as part of the Government's City Challenge programme.
- 4.45 The Grange and Pyramids shopping centres are now both owned by Warner Estates. Recent investment has created a new Food Court in the Pyramids. Proposals for leisure-based development on Europa Boulevard have recently secured planning permission.
- 4.46 The Council is working with a developer to bring forward the development of a food superstore on part of the Oliver Street Car Parks to address the need for a large supermarket in the Town Centre since the closure of the Asda store in the 1990s. It is hoped that the

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<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 5.60 below refers

new development will also provide an uplift to the Grange Road end of the shopping centre.

- 4.47 There has been success in attracting new office development to the Town Centre in and around Europa Boulevard. A new build scheme close to the Birkenhead Tunnel entrance is now also nearing completion. On the edge of the Town Centre, long-standing proposals to regenerate the Woodside and Hind Street areas are also moving forward (see below).
- 4.48 The Core Strategy DPD and the Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Allocations DPD will need to take account of these proposals.

#### *Woodside Regeneration Area*

- 4.49 The Woodside Regeneration Area is another significant regeneration opportunity at the heart of the Newheartlands Pathfinder, based around the waterfront adjacent to Birkenhead Town Centre, between Priory Wharf and Woodside Business Park. A non-statutory master plan for a mixed-use redevelopment was approved by the Council in August 2005.
- 4.50 Further work, to undertake a Technical Appendix and a Conservation Area Appraisal, was commissioned in October 2005. Public consultation was undertaken during March 2007. The results of these further studies and of public consultation are expected to be reported early in 2009.
- 4.51 The Woodside Master Plan will be used to inform the content of the Core Strategy DPD and the site-specific Allocation DPDs.

#### *Hind Street Regeneration Area*

- 4.52 The Hind Street Regeneration Area also lies at the heart of the Newheartlands Pathfinder, based upon the redundant land around the gasholders at Hind Street and the former railway land reclaimed and serviced by the Merseyside Development Corporation in the late 1990s, to the south of Birkenhead Town Centre, in Tranmere.
- 4.53 The Council jointly commissioned a regeneration strategy for the Hind Street Regeneration Area in 2001.
- 4.54 Outline planning consent for non-food retail, office, trade sales, restaurant/public house, car showroom and crèche, was recommended for approval July 2007, subject to notification to the Secretary of State and a legal agreement to secure a revised road link to Birkenhead Town Centre from the A41. The development is expected to be a partnership between the Council, English Partnerships and National Grid.
- 4.55 The Core Strategy DPD and the Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Allocations DPD will need to take account of these proposals.

### *Neptune, New Brighton*

- 4.56 Planning permission for a major mixed-use, leisure-based re-development on the waterfront at New Brighton was approved, following notification to the Secretary of State, in November 2007. The redevelopment and extension of the Floral Pavilion is now almost complete. Planning applications for Phase 2, to the north of Marine Promenade, are expected to be submitted in early 2009.
- 4.57 The Core Strategy DPD and the Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Allocations DPD will need to take account of these proposals.

### *West Kirby/Hoylake Master Plan*

- 4.58 A non-statutory master plan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby was approved by the Council in November 2004, as part of the build up to the return of the Open Championship. An initial package of improvements was delivered prior to the Championship in 2006. Further projects, including re-developments at West Kirby Concourse, West Kirby Sailing School, Thurstaston Visitor Centre and other environmental improvements to the public realm, promenades and open spaces, are ongoing.
- 4.59 The Council has also been investigating the concept of providing a Golf Resort linked to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course, in the area of open land to the east of the railway. The concept is supported by the North West Development Agency. Further technical work, to identify the optimum location for such a facility, has been completed and expressions of interest are now being sought from the market. The findings will be used to inform the content of the Core Strategy DPD.

## **5 MONITORING PLAN PREPARATION**

- 5.1 This section of the AMR compares the progress achieved in the preparation of individual Local Development Documents against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme for Wirral. It identifies the changes that may be needed to keep the Local Development Scheme up-to-date.

### **Local Development Scheme**

- 5.2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a statutory document setting out the Council's programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents. The LDS for Wirral is normally reviewed annually, following the submission of the AMR.
- 5.3 The first LDS for Wirral, approved by the Secretary of State in March 2005, came into effect in May 2005. The first Scheme provided for the preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement, four Development Plan Documents and four Supplementary Planning Documents. It also indicated the intention to include a joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document and a further Supplementary Planning Document for parking, once further preparatory work had been completed.
- 5.4 The first review of the LDS, approved in May 2006, brought forward the proposals to prepare the Joint Waste Development Plan Document and the Supplementary Planning Document for parking but withdrew the intention to prepare the SPD for Cammell Lairds<sup>8</sup>. Further amendments to the LDS were approved in December 2006, to allow for the inclusion of Halton in the joint Waste Development Plan Document, before formal work began.
- 5.5 The latest review, approved in April 2007, can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/LDSReviewFinalJuly07.pdf>
- 5.6 The LDS was not reviewed during 2008 because of the changes being introduced in response to the Planning White Paper – Planning for a Sustainable Future, which has led to changes in national policy and legislation; and the Housing Green Paper – Homes for the Future, which has revised the national approach to housing provision, including the Growth Point and Eco-Towns programmes. The Planning Bill is expected to obtain Royal Assent in December 2008.
- 5.7 The LDS will be reviewed following the publication of this Annual Monitoring Report to take these changes into account.

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<sup>8</sup> The Cammell Lairds Shipyard in Tranmere has now been acquired by Peel Holdings and is likely to remain in employment based, port-related uses

- 5.8 The current LDS provides for the preparation of five Development Plan Documents and progress on each of these items is set out below. The purpose of the revised Scheme was to prioritise the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

- 5.9 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document that sets out local standards for community involvement in planning decisions, both as part of the Local Development Framework and in making decisions on individual planning applications.
- 5.10 The SCI for Wirral was adopted in December 2006.
- 5.11 The changes set out in national Regulations mean that the SCI will need to be reviewed, which will need to be brought forward in a future review of the LDS.

### **Development Plan Documents**

- 5.12 A Development Plan Document (DPD) is a statutory document that will become part of the Development Plan for the Borough.
- 5.13 The LDS for Wirral provides for the preparation of a Core Strategy DPD; three site-specific DPDs for Housing Allocations; Employment Allocations; and Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Allocations; and for the Council's ongoing involvement in the preparation of a Joint Merseyside Waste DPD:

### **Core Strategy DPD**

- 5.14 The Core Strategy DPD will set the overall planning framework for future development in the Borough for the next 15 to 20 years. It will include the vision for the area, strategic objectives, core policies and a framework for monitoring and implementation.
- 5.15 The Core Strategy will replace the strategic and generic criteria based policies in the UDP. A list of the policies likely to be affected is set out in an Annex to the LDS, which can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/LDSAnnexFinalJuly07.pdf>
- 5.16 Following good early progress, the preparation of the Core Strategy has been delayed by the need to meet evidence requirements which were initially expected to apply to the later site-allocations stages of the Local Development Framework.
- 5.17 Table 4 sets out progress against the milestones set out in the current LDS:

*Table 4 – Core Strategy Development Plan Document*

| Stage                                   | Target Milestone | Delivery   |
|---|------------------|--|
| Commenced                               | July 2005        | SEA consultation letters sent August 2005  |
| Initial Consultation                    | October 2005     | SWOT Analysis - October to December 2005<br>Public Workshops - November 2006<br>Additional consultation with under-represented groups – June to September 2007 |
| Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report | July 2006        | SEA determination July 2006<br>Consultation on draft SA Scoping Report July 2006<br>Cabinet approval of revised SA Scoping Report July 2007                    |
| Consultation on Issues and Objectives   | n/a              | Now expected January 2009  |
| Consultation on Spatial Options         | n/a              | Now expected July 2009   |
| Consultation on Preferred Options       | March 2008       | To be confirmed in the forthcoming review of the Local Development Scheme  |
| Publication of Draft Strategy           | n/a              |  |
| Submission to Secretary of State        | October 2008     |  |
| Pre-Examination Hearing                 | February 2009    |  |
| Examination Hearing                     | April 2009       |  |
| Inspectors Report                       | September 2009   |  |
| Adoption                                | October 2009     |  |

5.18 While indicative dates have been shown for the next two stages in the preparation of the Core Strategy, revised dates have not been shown for future stages to adoption pending the outcome of the review of the Local Development Scheme. Project management support is being received from the Planning Advisory Service to map out these future stages in more detail.

*Initial Consultation*

5.19 Initial consultation to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs was carried out in October 2005. A report of Initial Consultation was published in July 2006. A further round of consultation was undertaken to test and prioritise these results. Public

workshops were undertaken in November 2006 and a draft Second Report of Initial Consultation was sent to participants for comment in January 2007. Further work to include people representing the mid-Wirral settlements, younger people, BME groups and disabled people, who had not previously commented at the earlier stages, was completed during summer 2007.

- 5.20 The next stage of public consultation will confirm the issues that will be covered in the Core Strategy and the objectives that should be pursued. This will be followed by consultation on the spatial options for the emerging Strategy.

*Evidence Base*

- 5.21 The majority of the current monitoring year has been involved in progressing the additional studies necessary to ensure that Core Strategy could be declared sound at the end of the plan preparation process.
- 5.22 The need to expand the evidence base in advance of the Core Strategy DPD was identified in the previous AMR, in response to the early experience of other authorities attempting to move through the new Development Plans system to public examination. Cabinet agreed funding to bring forward a series of studies in January and March 2007. Key stakeholders were notified in April 2007 and initial consultation on the sites and information to be considered was completed during May 2007.
- 5.23 Table 5 sets out progress so far and the documents that are likely to be affected by their findings:

*Table 5 – Evidence Base*

| <b>Study</b>  | <b>Commissioned</b> | <b>Current Status</b>   | <b>Documents Affected</b>   |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Strategic Housing Needs Assessment  | March 2006          | Reported February 2008  | UDP Section 6<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>Housing DPD                             |
| Merseyside Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment                    | June 2007           | Completed February 2008   | UDP Section 6<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>Housing DPD                             |
| Cultural Services Forward Plan (including Open Spaces and Recreation Audit) | July 2007           | Reported October 2008<br><br>Open Space Audit to be reported separately | UDP Sections 8,9 & 10<br>Core Strategy DPD                                    |
| Employment Land and Premises  | September 2007      | Final report expected early 2009  | UDP Sections 5 & 16<br>Core Strategy<br>Employment DPD<br>Town Centres &c DPD |

| Study  | Commissioned  | Current Status  | Documents Affected  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Strategic Flood Risk Assessment                | October 2007  | Final report expected early 2009  | UDP Sections 19 & 20<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>All Allocations DPDs       |
| Merseyside Minerals Study                      | February 2008   | Completed September 2008  | UDP Section 18<br>Core Strategy DPD                                     |
| Town Centres, Retail and Leisure               | March 2008  | Final report expected early 2009  | UDP Sections 9, 10 & 16<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>Town Centres &c DPD     |
| Wildlife Sites and Biodiversity Audit          | April 2008  | Final report expected early 2009  | UDP Section 13<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>All Allocations DPDs             |
| Social and Community Infrastructure            | May 2008  | Ongoing   | UDP Sections 9, 10 & 16<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>Town Centres &c DPD     |
| Landscape Character Assessment                 | June 2008   | Final report expected early 2009  | UDP Sections 7, 8, 12 & 14<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>All Allocations DPDs |
| Habitats Regulation Assessment (AA)            |   | Expressions of Interest invited November 2007<br><br>Brief in preparation | UDP Section 13<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>All Allocations DPDs             |
| Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment | To be jointly commissioned with Liverpool City Council and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point | Brief in preparation  | UDP Section 6<br>Core Strategy DPD<br>Housing DPD                       |

5.24 The findings of each study will be reported to Cabinet and published for public consultation before being included within the emerging Core Strategy DPD. Consultation on the results of the studies is expected to be completed by mid-2009.

5.25 Cabinet on 27 November 2008 will consider the principle of preparing an additional study to assess the capacity of the Borough to generate renewable energy.

#### *Implications*

5.26 The advanced preparation of a site-specific evidence base has significantly delayed progress on the Core Strategy DPD.

5.27 The timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD will need to be revised, to reflect the timetable for the completion of the evidence base, establish issues and objectives, assess alternative spatial

options and accommodate the additional pre-submission publication of a draft Core Strategy in line with the 2008 Regulations.

- 5.28 The programme for the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD is now 15 months later than envisaged in the last review of the LDS approved in April 2007.

### **Housing Allocations; Town Centres, Retail & Leisure Allocations; and Employment Allocations DPDs**

- 5.29 Site-specific DPDs are intended to set out the allocations of land for future development necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. The three DPDs programmed will up-date and replace the allocations and designations contained within UDP Section 5 – Economy and Employment, UDP Section 6 - Housing, UDP Section 9 – Sport and Recreation, UDP Section 10 –Tourism and Leisure and UDP Section 16 - Shopping.
- 5.30 The timetable for the preparation of these Documents had been set to follow key milestones in the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD.
- 5.31 Formal commencement did not begin in March 2008, as previously scheduled, because of the need to complete the evidence base for the Core Strategy DPD. Work on site allocation DPDs can only be accelerated once this evidence has been received and evaluated.

### *Implications*

- 5.32 National policy requires the Council to reconsider the justification for preparing additional site-specific DPDs in the LDS<sup>9</sup>. The final decision will be influenced by the scope of the newly introduced possibility to include strategic sites within the Core Strategy DPD<sup>10</sup>.
- 5.33 Any revisions will need to be reflected in the review of the LDS.

### **Joint Merseyside Waste DPD**

- 5.34 The Joint Merseyside Waste DPD will replace the policies and proposals contained within UDP Section 17 – Waste Management. Evidence from the Joint Waste DPD will also be used to inform the emerging Core Strategy DPD.
- 5.35 The preparation of the Joint Merseyside Waste DPD is being managed on behalf of the Greater Merseyside districts by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. Formal commencement was initially delayed from April to December 2006, to allow Halton to be included in the Joint DPD.

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<sup>9</sup> PPS12 (2008) paragraph refers

<sup>10</sup> PPS12 (2008) paragraph 4.6 refers

- 5.36 Table 6 sets out progress against the milestones set out in the approved LDS:

*Table 6 – Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document*

| Stage                                   | Target Milestone | Delivery                  |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| Commenced                               | December 2006    | December 2006             |
| Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report | December 2006    | December 2006             |
| Issues and Options Report               | February 2007    | March 2007                |
| Spatial Strategy and Sites Report       | n/a              | November 2008             |
| Consultation on Preferred Options       | January 2008     | Now expected May 2009     |
| Publication of Draft DPD                | n/a              | January 2010              |
| Submission to Secretary of State        | September 2008   | Now expected March 2010   |
| Pre-Hearing Meeting                     | March 2009       | Now expected May 2010     |
| Examination Hearing                     | May 2009         | Now expected July 2010    |
| Inspectors Report                       | November 2009    | Now expected January 2011 |
| Adoption                                | April 2010       | Now expected April 2011   |

- 5.37 Public consultation on the Issues and Options for the Joint Waste DPD was completed in April 2007. Additional consultation on a Spatial Strategy and Sites Report will now take place in November 2008.
- 5.38 A revised timetable, taking account of the changes brought in by the 2008 Regulations, is being considered by the Waste DPD Steering Group. The target date for adoption is now expected to be April 2011.

*Implications*

- 5.39 The final revised timetable for the preparation of the Joint Waste DPD will need to be reflected in the review of the LDS.
- 5.40 The target date for adoption is now twelve months later than envisaged in the last review of the LDS in April 2007.

### **Area Action Plans**

- 5.41 No Area Action Plans have yet been identified for preparation in Wirral.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 5.42 A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a statutory document that can be a material consideration in decisions on individual planning applications.
- 5.43 SPDs to provide additional guidance on pressing local issues arising from New Flat Development, Food and Drink in Town Centres, and Telecommunications Apparatus were adopted in October 2006. An additional SPD, to up-date the Borough's maximum standards for car parking, was adopted in June 2007.
- 5.44 Work on additional SPDs has been postponed to allow progress on the Core Strategy DPD.

### **Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

- 5.45 Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents must be made subject to a statutory sustainability appraisal (SA).
- 5.46 A Sustainability Appraisal Framework for Wirral (SAF) was adopted, following public consultation, to ensure a consistent approach to the SA of each individual Document. The July 2006 version of the SAF was used as the basis for the SAs of the first four adopted SPDs. A Sustainability Appraisal Panel was appointed in October 2006, to provide independent scrutiny of the Council's SA processes.
- 5.47 The SAF was amended in July 2007, when the scope of the SA for the Core Strategy DPD was considered, to ensure that a consistent up-to-date approach could be maintained.
- 5.48 The final Scoping Report for the Core Strategy SA can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewagenda.asp?mtg=2266#11>

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 5.49 There is an additional requirement to undertake an appropriate assessment (AA) of proposals to be contained within a DPD or SPD to test their likely impact on sites of international importance for nature conservation, including sites outside the Borough boundary. This is likely to include designated inland and coastal waters in North Wales.
- 5.50 The AA will need to be undertaken as a separate study, alongside each Document, as each Document is prepared, in line with national and European advice.

- 5.51 Expressions of interest to undertake the AA for the Core Strategy DPD were invited in November 2007, as part of the Request for Quotation for the Biodiversity Audit. A separate commissioning process will be undertaken when further progress has been made on the Core Strategy DPD.

#### **Local Development Orders**

- 5.52 The power to make a Local Development Order to extend permitted development rights, introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, was enacted in April 2006.
- 5.53 There were no Local Development Orders in force in Wirral during 2007/08.

## 6 MONITORING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 This section of the AMR sets out the extent to which the policy priorities for the area are being achieved and concentrates on the Borough's performance in terms of the Core Output Indicators set out in national advice, alongside some broader contextual information drawn from nationally published data sets.
- 6.2 The Core Output Indicators are intended to allow for the consistent nation-wide reporting of local performance, using a clearly identified set of definitions over a common timeframe. The broader contextual information has been selected by the Council, based on common and regularly updated datasets, to illustrate the background against which local performance is to be considered.
- 6.3 Information related to national Core Output Indicators is indicated by a footnote in the relevant tables.
- 6.4 A summary of the main implications for future policy development is also provided at the end of each sub-section.
- 6.5 Revisions to the national Core Output Indicators were published by the Government in July 2008<sup>11</sup>, part way through the monitoring year for this AMR. The data provided in this section of the AMR has been re-configured, wherever possible, to comply with the new requirements but a full report to the new format will only be possible in the following AMR.
- 6.6 As this is the fourth AMR published by the Council under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, this AMR has begun to include additional tables illustrating some of the longer term trends operating over the period since 2004/05. This longer-term trend analysis will be further augmented in future AMRs.
- 6.7 Monitoring against the new spatial priority areas identified in the latest Regional Spatial Strategy will not be reported until the next AMR<sup>12</sup>.

### Business Development and Town Centres

- 6.8 The general economic context in Wirral continues to be characterised by poor economic performance:

*Table 7 - Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>13</sup>*

| GVA per Capita (£) | 1995   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005    | Change 2004-2005 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|------------------|
| Wirral             | £6,446 | £9,492 | £9,861 | £10,115 | 2.6%             |

<sup>11</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008)

<sup>12</sup> AMR paragraph 4.4 refers

<sup>13</sup> TMP Merseyside Economic Review 2008

| GVA per Capita (£) | 1995    | 2003    | 2004    | 2005    | Change 2004-2005 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Merseyside         | £7,716  | £11,858 | £12,436 | £12,784 | 2.8%             |
| North West         | £9,891  | £14,368 | £15,109 | £15,571 | 3.1%             |
| UK                 | £11,094 | £16,682 | £17,577 | £18,205 | 3.6%             |

6.9 Growth in GVA per capita in Wirral has continued to be slower than the national, regional and sub-regional averages both between 2004 and 2005 and over the longer term since 1995. GVA per capita for Wirral in 2005 was still over 40% lower than the UK average.

*Table 8 – Total Employees*

| Total Employees (2006) | Change 2005-2006 (percentage) <sup>14</sup> | Part Time <sup>15</sup> (percentage) | Job Density <sup>16</sup> |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wirral                 | - 1.8%                                      | 36.9%                                | 0.68                      |
| Merseyside             | - 0.7%                                      | 33.7%                                | 0.78                      |
| North West             | + 0.8%                                      | 31.1%                                | 0.85                      |
| Great Britain          | - 0.7%                                      | 31.1%                                | 0.88                      |

6.10 There were 96,400 employee jobs in Wirral in 2006, down by almost 2% since 2005. A higher proportion of jobs were part-time, compared with the averages for Merseyside, the North West and Great Britain. The job density in Wirral, the ratio of total jobs to working-age population, also remains lower than national, regional and sub-regional averages.

*Table 9 - Employee Jobs by Industry<sup>17</sup>*

| Percentage of Employee Jobs (2006)     | Wirral | Merseyside | North West | Great Britain |
|--|--------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Manufacturing                          | 11.4%  | 9.2%       | 12.5%      | 10.9%         |
| Construction                           | 4.3%   | 4.2%       | 5.0%       | 4.8%          |
| Services                               | 83.7%  | 86.4%      | 81.7%      | 82.9%         |
| Distribution, hotels, restaurants      | 23.9%  | 22.2%      | 23.9%      | 23.5%         |
| Transport and communications           | 3.4%   | 5.4%       | 6.0%       | 5.9%          |
| Finance, IT, other business activities | 15.7%  | 17.3%      | 19.2%      | 21.2%         |
| Public admin, education, health        | 36.2%  | 36.6%      | 27.8%      | 26.9%         |

<sup>14</sup> Merseyside Economic Review 2008, Data Annex, ONS Annual Business Inquiry, Total Employees

<sup>15</sup> Nomis ONS Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis, Employee Jobs (excluding self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces)

<sup>16</sup> Nomis ONS jobs density, including employees, self employed, Government supported trainees and HM Forces, to the working age population

<sup>17</sup> Nomis ONS Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis (2006)

| Percentage of Employee Jobs (2006) | Wirral | Merseyside | North West | Great Britain |
|------------------------------------|--------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Other services                     | 4.6%   | 4.9%       | 4.7%       | 5.3%          |
| Tourism-related <sup>18</sup>      | 8.8%   | 8.1%       | 8.6%       | 8.3%          |

- 6.11 Wirral has a high proportion of employee jobs in services, in line with national patterns of employment. There is, however, a higher than average proportion of jobs provided in public administration, education and health and a lower representation of jobs in finance, information technology and other business activities.

*Table 10 - VAT Registered Businesses<sup>19</sup>*

| VAT Registrations (end of year 2006) | New Registrations (percentage of end of year stock) | De-Registrations (percentage of end of year stock) | Business Density (per thousand adult population) |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Wirral                               | 9.8%  | 7.3%   | 22.8   |
| Merseyside                           | 10.0%   | 7.8%   | 23.0   |
| North West                           | 9.6%  | 7.3%   | 33.1   |
| Great Britain                        | 9.4%  | 7.4%   | 40.4   |

- 6.12 The number of VAT registered businesses in Wirral at the end of 2006 was 5,835, 5% higher than at the end of 2005. New registrations were slightly ahead of regional and national rates. Overall business densities remain significantly below national and regional levels.

*Table 11 - Economic Activity 2007<sup>20</sup>*

| percentage of working age population | Economically active | In employment (employees) | In employment (self-employed) | Economically inactive |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Wirral                               | 76.4%               | 64.3%                     | 6.5%                          | 23.6%                 |
| Merseyside                           | 73.3%               | 61.1%                     | 6.3%                          | 26.7%                 |
| North West                           | 76.8%               | 64.1%                     | 7.7%                          | 23.2%                 |
| Great Britain                        | 78.6%               | 64.6%                     | 9.3%                          | 21.4%                 |

- 6.13 Economic activity in Wirral rose from 73.9% in 2006 to 76.4% in 2007. 147,300 people from the local working age population were economically active in 2007, with 137,800 people in employment including 12,800 self employed. The number of people who were economically inactive reduced by 9%, from 47,500 in 2006 to 43,100 in 2007<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Tourism consists of industries that are also part of the services industry

<sup>19</sup> Nomis DTI Small Business Service VAT Registered Businesses (2006)

<sup>20</sup> Nomis ONS Annual Population Survey (Jan to Dec 2007)

<sup>21</sup> Nomis ONS Annual Population Survey (Jan to Dec 2007)

*Table 12 - Household Incomes<sup>22</sup>*

| Average Household Income (£) | 2004    | 2005    | 2006    | 2007    |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Wirral                       | £28,034 | £28,326 | £29,800 | £31,232 |
| Sefton                       | £25,839 | £29,018 | £29,500 | £30,932 |
| St Helens                    | £26,821 | £27,868 | £29,100 | £30,795 |
| Liverpool                    | £22,511 | £25,251 | £26,800 | £28,239 |
| Knowsley                     | £22,591 | £25,238 | £26,600 | £28,286 |
| United Kingdom               | £29,374 | £31,000 | £32,342 | £33,706 |

- 6.14 Average household incomes in Wirral continue to be among the highest in Merseyside and rose by 5% in the year to 2007 ahead of UK growth at 4%.

*Table 13 - Average Weekly Earnings<sup>23</sup>*

| Average Weekly Earnings 2007 (£) | Gross Weekly Pay by Workplace (Full-time workers) | Gross Weekly Pay by Residence (Full-time workers) |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Wirral                           | £406.7  | £430.6  |
| Merseyside                       | £426.6  | £425.7  |
| North West                       | £434.2  | £432.7  |
| Great Britain                    | £458.6  | £459.0  |

- 6.15 Average weekly earnings for employees working within Wirral remained below national, regional and sub-regional levels and below the average weekly earnings for employees living in Wirral. This is likely to have a continued impact on journeys to work and on the earning power of less mobile residents.

*Table 14 - Benefit Claimants*

| Claimants (percentage of working age population) | Key Benefit Claimants (May 2008) <sup>24</sup> | JSA Claimants (October 2008) <sup>25</sup> |
|--|--|--|
| Wirral   | 20.8%  | 3.7%                                       |
| Merseyside                                       | 22.5%  | 4.5%                                       |
| North West                                       | 17.3%  | 3.0%                                       |
| Great Britain                                    | 13.9%  | 2.6%                                       |

<sup>22</sup> Pathways Impact Monitoring Report (2007/08)

<sup>23</sup> Nomis ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace and Resident Analyses (2007)

<sup>24</sup> Nomis DWP Benefit Claimants Working Age Client Group (May 2008)

<sup>25</sup> Nomis ONS Jobseekers Allowance Claimants (September 2008)

- 6.16 In May 2008, 38,060 working age residents in Wirral were claiming one or more key DWP benefits, including bereavement benefit, carers allowance, disability living allowance, incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, income support, jobseekers allowance and widows benefit, ahead of national and regional averages.
- 6.17 In October 2008, 6,811 people in Wirral were available for and actively seeking work as claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance, again, ahead of national and regional averages. The highest rates continued to be focussed in the east of the Borough, in the Wards of Birkenhead & Tranmere, Bidston & St James and Seacombe.
- 6.18 The contrast between higher than average benefit dependency and high average household incomes demonstrates the continued range of economic disparity in the Borough.

*Table 15 - Business Floorspace<sup>26</sup>*

| Floorspace<br>(thousand square metres) | April 2005 | April 2006 | April 2007 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Offices                                | 275        | 281        | 283        |
| Industrial                             | 1,170      | 1,070      | 1,070      |
| Warehousing                            | 481        | 476        | 478        |
| Total                                  | 1,827      | 1,827      | 1,831      |

- 6.19 The overall total of business floorspace in Wirral, rose slightly to April 2007. The amount of office floorspace (Use Class B1) has continued to increase, while the amount of industrial floorspace (Use Class B2) remained stable.
- 6.20 The average vacancy rate for industrial property in Wirral has remained at 11% for the year to March 2005, unchanged since March 2001, ahead of averages for the North West (10%) and England (9%)<sup>27</sup>.
- 6.21 Valuation Office Agency (VOA) reported data for Birkenhead shows:
- Industrial land values in Birkenhead ranged from £220k to £300k per hectare compared with Liverpool at £200k to £375k per hectare;
  - Industrial capital values per square metre were ahead of Liverpool for all types of unit, including starter units (at £600 compared with £575 in Liverpool), nursery units (at £500 compared with £400), smaller industrial and warehouse units (at £450 compared with £380) and larger industrial and warehouse units (at £450 compared with £330); and

<sup>26</sup> CLG VOA Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics

<sup>27</sup> TMP Merseyside Economic Review 2007, Figure 8.2b CLG Commercial and Industrial Property Vacancy Statistics 1998/99 to 2004/05

- Industrial rental values were also ahead of Liverpool, for all but starter units (at £60 compared with £63 per square metre in Liverpool)<sup>28</sup>.

6.22 A higher than average proportion of Wirral's factory, office and warehouse stock originates from between 1940 and 1970. While the percentage of stock built since 1990 has begun to draw slightly ahead of national and regional averages, the proportion of stock built between 1971 and 1990 was comparatively low<sup>29</sup>.

### *Local Strategies*

6.23 The Full Employment Strategy for Wirral, adopted in May 2007, seeks to increase the local employment rate to 76% by placing an additional 9,500 people into employment by 2012.

6.24 The Wirral Enterprise Strategy for Wirral, also adopted in May 2007, estimated that up to 2,500 new VAT registered firms would be needed to reach the North West average and that this would require an additional 130,000 square metres of office floorspace (Use Class B1) and an additional 83,600 square metres of industrial floorspace (Use Class B2).

*Table 16 - Amount of Floorspace Developed by Type and Location (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Floorspace (square metres)                         | Use Class B1(a) | Use Class B1(b) | Use Class B1(c) | Use Class B2 | Use Class B8 | Total Floorspace |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Total completed floorspace                         | 3,801           | Nil             | Nil             | 12,797       | Nil          | 16,598           |
| Completed on previously developed land             | 3,801           | Nil             | Nil             | 7,769        | Nil          | 11,570           |
| Percentage on previously developed land            | 100%            | Nil             | Nil             | 61%          | Nil          | 70%              |
| National Core Output Indicators BD1 (part) and BD2 |                 |                 |                 |              |              |                  |

6.25 The total amount of new employment floorspace completed in Wirral during 2007/08 was 16,598 square metres, down by 25% on 2006/07. The amount of completed new office floorspace (Use Class B1(a)) halved, from 8,542 square metres in 2006/07. The proportion of employment development completed on previously developed land, nevertheless, rose to 70%, from 41% in 2006/07.

<sup>28</sup> VOA Property Market Report - Capital and Rental Values at 1 July 2008

<sup>29</sup> TMP Merseyside Economic Review 2007 Data Annex, Section 8, Figure 6

- 6.26 Projects to provide 7,406 square metres of office floorspace (Use Class B1) and 15,450 square metres of industrial floorspace (Use Class B2) had commenced on site during the reporting period.

*Table 17 - Amount of Floorspace Developed by Type and Location (1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008)*

| Completed floorspace (square metres) | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Use Class B1(a)                      | 961     | 4,857   | 8,542   | 3,801   |
| Use Class B1(b)                      | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     |
| Use Class B1(c)                      | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     |
| Use Class B2                         | 23,497  | 24,407  | 13,576  | 12,797  |
| Use Class B8                         | Nil     | Nil     | 53      | Nil     |
| Total Floorspace                     | 24,458  | 29,264  | 22,171  | 16,598  |

- 6.27 Table 17 shows the changing trend over time.

- 6.28 National Core Output Indicator BD1 now requires separate figures for gross and net additional floorspace, including changes from demolitions, conversions and changes of use<sup>30</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

*Table 18 - Employment Land Available by Type (1 April 2008)*

| Land area (hectares)   | Twelve Quays SRS <sup>31</sup> | WIBP SRS <sup>32</sup> | Borough Total |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Allocated for B1 Uses <sup>33</sup>                              | Nil                            | Nil                    | 1.50          |
| Allocated for B1, B2 and B8 Uses <sup>34</sup>                   | 3.29                           | 25.21                  | 87.27         |
| Primarily Industrial Area (Use Classes B1, B2, B8) <sup>35</sup> | 2.05                           | 25.81                  | 64.81         |
| Dock Estate (Use Classes B1, B2, B8) <sup>36</sup>               | 6.05                           | Nil                    | 36.72         |
| Other land with permission for B1, B2 or B8 Uses                 | Nil                            | Nil                    | 0.44          |

<sup>30</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 8)

<sup>31</sup> Birkenhead Twelve Quays Strategic Regional Site

<sup>32</sup> Wirral International Business Park Strategic Regional Site, Bromborough

<sup>33</sup> Land allocated in the UDP under Proposal EM2 - Conway Park, is allocated for uses falling within Use Class B1

<sup>34</sup> Land allocated in the UDP under Proposal EM1 – Former Cammell Laird's Shipyard; Proposal EM3 – Land for General Employment Use; Proposal EM4 – Expansion Land for Existing Businesses; and Proposal EM5 – Land at Dock Road South, Bromborough, is allocated for uses falling within Use Class B1 and/or Use Class B2 and/or Use Class B8.

<sup>35</sup> UDP Policy EM8 provides for uses falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 within Primarily Industrial Areas

<sup>36</sup> Land for port-related uses within the Dock Estates at Birkenhead and Eastham has been identified by Act of Parliament and is subject to permitted development rights. Policy EM10 of the UDP, which provided for uses falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 to be permitted within the Dock Estates, was removed from the Development Plan as a result of the Direction issued by the Secretary of State in September 2007.

| Land area (hectares)               | Twelve Quays SRS <sup>31</sup> | WIBP SRS <sup>32</sup> | Borough Total |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Total                              | 11.39                          | 51.02                  | 190.74        |
| National Core Output Indicator BD3 |                                |                        |               |

6.29 The UDP for Wirral set aside 1120 hectares of land for employment uses across the Borough, with 277 hectares within the Dock Estates, 658 hectares within the Primarily Industrial Areas and 185 hectares on allocated Employment Development Sites, of which just under half still remain undeveloped.

6.30 The amount of employment land available in Wirral at 1 April 2008 amounted to 18% of the total area set aside. The total has gradually reduced from 221.5 hectares in 2004/05.

#### *Policy Implications*

6.31 Planning policy, on its own, is not able to create a thriving economy. Alongside other strategies and initiatives, it can, however, assist in creating the conditions for future growth.

6.32 The Employment Land and Premises Study will play a key role in assessing the attractiveness of the Borough's existing offer, to identify a future supply that will be capable of attracting and retaining new investment and employment and that will assist with the delivery of wider objectives related to social inclusion and sustainable travel.

#### *Town Centres*

6.33 Wirral has nine Key Town Centres and fourteen Traditional Suburban Centres. The principal Town Centre is Birkenhead. There are out-of-centre retail developments at Bidston, Bidston Moss, Tranmere, Upton, Woodchurch and Bromborough. These centres are designated on the UDP Proposals Map.

*Table 19 - Retail, Office and Leisure Development Completions (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Floorspace (square metres)                                    | Use Class B1(a) | Use Class A1 (gross) | Use Class A1 (sales) | Use Class A2 | Use Class D2 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Amount of completed development                               | 3,801           | 10,366               | 7,844                | Nil          | 4,044        |
| Amount of completed development in town centres <sup>37</sup> | 1,042           | 6,821                | 4,534                | Nil          | 585          |

<sup>37</sup> Key Town Centres and Traditional Suburban Centres

| Floorspace (square metres)                          | Use Class B1(a) | Use Class A1 (gross) | Use Class A1 (sales) | Use Class A2 | Use Class D2 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Percentage of completed development in town centres | 27%             | 66%                  | 58%                  | Nil          | 14%          |
| National Core Output Indicator BD4 (part)           |                 |                      |                      |              |              |

- 6.34 There was a significant increase in completed new retail (Use Class A1) and leisure (Use Class D2) floorspace during 2007/08.
- 6.35 The increase in new retail floorspace also saw a significant increase in the proportion of floorspace developed within town centres, with major investments at Tesco Express at Seacombe, Marks and Spencers Simply Food in Heswall and Aldi in Prenton.
- 6.36 The low proportion of new leisure floorspace in town centres was accounted for by the completion of a JJB health and fitness centre, which replaced the nightclubs at the out-of-centre South Wirral Retail and Leisure Park.

*Table 20 - Amount of Floorspace Developed by Type and Location (1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008)*

| Completed floorspace (square metres)                 | 2004/05        | 2005/06        | 2006/07        | 2007/08         |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Use Class A1 (gross)<br>(percentage in town centres) | 4,963<br>(36%) | 5,363<br>(11%) | 2,385<br>(28%) | 10,366<br>(66%) |
| Use Class A1 (sales)<br>(percentage in town centres) | 4,239<br>(28%) | 4,602<br>(8%)  | 1,786<br>(28%) | 7,844<br>(58%)  |
| Use Class A2<br>(percentage in town centres)         | 0<br>(0%)      | 0<br>(0%)      | 0<br>(0%)      | 0<br>(0%)       |
| Use Class B1(a)<br>(percentage in town centres)      | 961<br>(0%)    | 4,857<br>(0%)  | 8,542<br>(0%)  | 3,801<br>(27%)  |
| Use Class D2<br>(percentage in town centres)         | 522<br>(0%)    | 5,594<br>(8%)  | 488<br>(34%)   | 4,044<br>(14%)  |

- 6.37 Table 20 shows the changing trend over time.
- 6.38 National Core Output Indicator BD4 now requires separate figures for gross and net additional floorspace, including changes from demolitions, conversions and changes of use<sup>38</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

### *Policy Implications*

<sup>38</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 11)

- 6.39 The proportion of completed out-of-centre development in Wirral reveals the ongoing tension between the provision of high quality modern facilities and the capacity of older existing centres to accommodate them.
- 6.40 The challenge for the future will be to continue to provide modern facilities to retain local spending, while continuing to support urban renaissance and more sustainable travel patterns. The Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study and the Employment Land and Premises Study, will examine the feasibility of accommodating additional retail, office and leisure uses in town centres.

## Housing

- 6.41 The Wirral population has continued to reduce from 311,200 in mid-2006 to 310,200 by mid-2007<sup>39</sup>. The vast majority of this change is due to migration. The average rate of out-migration of 800 per year between mid-2001 and mid-2006<sup>40</sup> has increased to 900 between mid-2006 and mid-2007<sup>41</sup>.
- 6.42 Previous projections had expected the Wirral population to be 3,800 higher by 2006 and to grow by 3% to 2029:

*Table 21 - Population Projections<sup>42</sup>*

| People (Thousands) | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   | 2014   | 2019   | 2024   | 2029   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Wirral             | 314.0  | 314.3  | 314.5  | 314.7  | 316.5  | 319.1  | 321.7  | 323.4  |
| Merseyside         | 1356.8 | 1355.6 | 1354.1 | 1353.0 | 1349.7 | 1350.4 | 1352.0 | 1351.7 |

- 6.43 The long term trend, since 1995, has been for the number of retired people in Wirral to increase, while the number of people of working age and the young decline. The Mid-Year Estimates, which were re-based in 2006, show that these trends are continuing:

*Table 22 - Population Change<sup>43</sup>*

| Mid Year Population (People) | Young People (0-15 years) | Working Age (males 16-64 females 16-59) | Retired (males 65 & over females 60 & over) | Non-White British (percentage of total population) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| 2007                         | 59,500                    | 183,300                                 | 67,400                                      | n/a  |
| 2006                         | 60,300                    | 184,200                                 | 66,700                                      | n/a  |
| 2005                         | 56,800                    | 198,500                                 | 57,700                                      | 4.5%   |

<sup>39</sup> ONS Mid Year Estimates

<sup>40</sup> ONS Migration Indicators by Local Authority Areas in England & Wales Mid-2001 to Mid-2006

<sup>41</sup> ONS Components of population change Table 10

<sup>42</sup> ONS Revised 2004-based Sub National Population Projections

<sup>43</sup> ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates

| Mid Year Population (People) | Young People (0-15 years) | Working Age (males 16-64 females 16-59) | Retired (males 65 & over females 60 & over) | Non-White British (percentage of total population) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| 2004                         | 57,600                    | 197,900                                 | 57,600                                      | 4.2%   |
| 2003                         | 58,400                    | 197,900                                 | 57,500                                      | 4.0%   |
| 2002                         | 59,400                    | 197,500                                 | 57,400                                      | 3.7%   |

6.44 The population of non-white British continued to increase slowly in Wirral, to 4.5% in mid-2005, from 4.2% in mid-2004, compared to 15.3% for England as a whole<sup>44</sup>.

6.45 Prior to the Mid-Year Estimate for 2006, the number of households in Wirral had been forecast to grow by 14% or 20,000 households, over the 20 years to 2026, behind the 20% increase expected across the country as a whole. The projections for Wirral have now been revised downwards to grow by only 17,000 households by 2029:

*Total 23 - Household Projections<sup>45</sup>*

| Households (thousands) | 2006   | 2011   | 2016   | 2021   | 2026   | 2029   |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Wirral                 | 137    | 141    | 145    | 150    | 153    | 154    |
| Merseyside             | 591    | 613    | 636    | 657    | 674    | 682    |
| North West             | 2,946  | 3,080  | 3,220  | 3,348  | 3,455  | 3,507  |
| England                | 21,519 | 22,646 | 23,837 | 24,973 | 25,975 | 26,497 |

6.46 Wirral had 144,726 residential properties in April 2008. 85% were privately owned and 15% were owned by registered social landlords. The vacancy rate for 2008 rose slightly from 2005 and 2006, to 5%. The vast majority of vacancy is still within the private sector housing stock (90%). The target in RSS is 3%<sup>46</sup>.

*Total 24 - Dwelling Stock 2008<sup>47</sup>*

| Dwelling Stock by Sector 2008 (number of dwellings) | Total Stock | Vacant | Vacant (Percentage) |
|---|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| Registered Social Landlord                          | 22,193      | 708    | 3.2%                |
| Other Public Sector                                 | 9           | 4      | 44%                 |
| Private Sector                                      | 122,524     | 6,471  | 5.3%                |

6.47 The Housing Stock Options Report for Wirral for 2006 estimated that up to 43% of owner occupied and private rented property was unlikely

<sup>44</sup> ONS Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (2004 and 2005)

<sup>45</sup> ODPM 2004-based Sub Regional Household Projections (February 2008)

<sup>46</sup> RSS Policy L3 (September 2008)

<sup>47</sup> Wirral Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (2008)

to meet the new Decent Homes Standard, compared with national estimates of 37% of private sector dwellings and the estimate for the region of 36% of occupied dwellings. The figure for Liverpool was 40% of occupied dwellings<sup>48</sup>.

*Table 25 - Average House Prices<sup>49</sup>*

| Average House Prices (October to December 2007) | Wirral   | Merseyside | North West |
|---|----------|------------|------------|
| Overall   | £160,995 | £148,281   | £137,987   |
| Detached  | £298,930 | £277,483   | £268,108   |
| Semi-detached                                   | £166,400 | £158,890   | £140,766   |
| Terraced  | £111,603 | £107,290   | £83,090    |
| Flat/Maisonette                                 | £129,452 | £134,797   | £131,050   |

- 6.48 Average house prices appeared to stop growing overall in Wirral between 2006 and 2007 but remained higher than the average for Merseyside for all but flats.

*Table 26 - Changes in House Prices<sup>50</sup>*

| Average House Prices (percentage change 2006-2007) | Wirral | Merseyside | North West |
|--|--------|------------|------------|
| Overall  | -0.6%  | -1.2%      | -9.9%      |
| Detached   | -4.5%  | +0.5%      | -2.7%      |
| Semi-detached                                      | +2.9%  | -3.3%      | -10.3%     |
| Terraced   | +2.3%  | -5.7%      | -22.7%     |
| Flat/Maisonette                                    | +12.0% | +1.0%      | -3.0%      |

- 6.49 Below this overall analysis, the average price of terraced and semi-detached properties had nevertheless, continued to grow in Wirral, albeit slowly, while detached properties had dropped in value. By contrast, the local growth in flat prices continued to be strong. These changes were contrary to the wider trend within Merseyside, which saw declining average prices for all but flats.

<sup>48</sup> Liverpool House Condition and Energy Survey

<sup>49</sup> Land Registry House Prices (October to December 2007)

<sup>50</sup> Land Registry House Prices (October to December 2006 and 2007)

*Table 27 - New Dwelling Requirements April 2008*

| Net Annual Average Dwelling Requirements | Total Net Housing Provision 2003-2021 | Annual Average (number of net dwellings) | Net Completions (2003/04 - 2007/08) | Remaining | Implied Annual Average 2008/09 – 2020/21) <sup>51</sup> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| RSS (September 2008) Table 7.1           | 9,000                                 | 500                                      | 1,786                               | 7,214     | 555   |
| National Core Output Indicator H1        |                                       |  |                                     |           |   |

6.50 Completions between April 2003 and March 2008 amounted to 3,235 new dwellings (gross) or 1,786 dwellings (net). This represents an annual average since April 2003 of 357 net new dwellings, 29% behind the RSS rate of housing provision for Wirral. This will require an annual average completion rate of 555 net new dwellings over the next thirteen years to deliver the RSS target of 9,000 net new homes by 2021.

6.51 Table 28 sets out the pattern of housing delivery in Wirral over the preceding five years and the most recent monitoring year:

*Table 28 – Housing Delivery to 31 March 2008*

| Total Dwellings (number of dwellings)                  | 2002/03           | 2003/04           | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Gross New Build  | 591               | 581               | 440     | 442     | 606     | 639     |
| Demolitions  | 450               | 212               | 419     | 277     | 215     | 230     |
| Net New Build  | 141               | 369               | 21      | 165     | 391     | 409     |
| Gross Conversions <sup>52</sup>                        | 54                | 105               | 91      | 69      | 130     | 132     |
| Net Conversions <sup>53</sup>                          | 43                | 74                | 81      | 55      | 115     | 106     |
| Total Gross Additional                                 | 645               | 686               | 531     | 511     | 736     | 771     |
| Total Net Additional                                   | 184               | 443               | 102     | 220     | 506     | 515     |
| Annual Average Net Additional Requirement              | 160 <sup>54</sup> | 500 <sup>55</sup> | 500     | 500     | 500     | 500     |
| Difference from Net Additional Requirement             | +24               | -57               | -398    | -280    | +6      | +15     |
| National Core Output Indicators H2(a) and H2(b) (part) |                   |                   |         |         |         |         |

<sup>51</sup> Based on the assumption that all the identified supply at March 2007 will come forward to development

<sup>52</sup> Includes conversions and changes of use

<sup>53</sup> Includes conversions and changes of use

<sup>54</sup> RPG13 Table 5.1

<sup>55</sup> RSS September 2008 Table 7.1

- 6.52 National Core Output Indicator H2(b) now requires separate figures for changes of use and conversions<sup>56</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.
- 6.53 The Council introduced restrictions on planning permissions for new housing outside the NWMA<sup>57</sup> in December 2003. The area subject to restrictions was extended in October 2005, following public consultation, to focus investment into identified regeneration priority areas<sup>58</sup>. The Council's Interim Planning Policy can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/485/content\\_0000039.html](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/485/content_0000039.html)
- 6.54 Gross new build completions initially reduced but had risen again in 2006/07 and 2007/08, to over 600 units per annum, as development interests began to adjust to the restrictions. The Borough has, therefore, exceeded the new RSS requirement figure in two years since 2006/07, with these restrictions in place. Development on previously developed land continued to exceed the RSS target, which has now been raised to 80%.
- 6.55 The majority of demolitions in 2007/08 continued to occur within the HMRI Pathfinder Area (90%).

*Table 29 - Dwellings Completed (1 April 2006 to 31 March 2008)*

|  | NWMA <sup>59</sup> | IHPA <sup>60</sup> | HMRI <sup>61</sup> | Borough |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Total completed dwellings (gross)  | 723<br>(94%)       | 460<br>(60%)       | 140<br>(18%)       | 771     |
| Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land           | 99%                | 100%               | 100%               | 99%     |
| Percentage of new dwellings completed at less than 30 dwellings per hectare      | 7%                 | 3%                 | 1%                 | 9%      |
| Percentage of new dwellings completed at between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare | 12%                | 12%                | 1%                 | 13%     |
| Percentage of new dwellings completed above 50 dwellings per hectare             | 81%                | 85%                | 98%                | 78%     |
| National Core Output Indicators H3 (part)  |                    |                    |                    |         |

- 6.56 The proportion of development taking place at densities below 30 dwellings per hectare continued to reduce, to 9% overall compared

<sup>56</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 13)

<sup>57</sup> The North West Metropolitan Area, a regeneration priority area defined in RPG13, Policy SD1

<sup>58</sup> under the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005)

<sup>59</sup> The North West Metropolitan Area, a regeneration priority area defined in RPG13, Policy SD1

<sup>60</sup> The Interim Housing Policy Area, a regeneration priority area introduced by the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005)

<sup>61</sup> Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area – a regeneration priority area designated by the Secretary of State in April 2002

with 51% during 2004/05. The proportion at densities over 50 dwellings per hectare, now at 78% overall, compares with 40% in 2004/05 and 69% in 2005/06.

- 6.57 Two-thirds (67%) of gross completions in Wirral during 2007/08 were flats, a slightly higher proportion than the previous year.
- 6.58 National Core Output Indicator H3 now requires separate figures for gross new build, changes of use and conversions<sup>62</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR. The percentage of dwellings provided at different densities is no longer a national Core Output Indicator.

*Table 30 – Trend in Dwellings Completed (1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008)*

| Total completed dwellings (gross)          | 2004/05      | 2005/06      | 2006/07      | 2007/08      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Housing Market Renewal Area <sup>63</sup>  | 50<br>(9%)   | 72<br>(14%)  | 177<br>(24%) | 140<br>(18%) |
| Interim Planning Policy Area <sup>64</sup> | 101<br>(19%) | 248<br>(49%) | 354<br>(48%) | 460<br>(60%) |
| North West Metropolitan Area <sup>65</sup> | 260<br>(49%) | 396<br>(77%) | 652<br>(89%) | 723<br>(94%) |
| West Wirral (Outside NWMA)                 | 271<br>(51%) | 115<br>(23%) | 84<br>(11%)  | 48<br>(6%)   |
| Total Borough                              | 531          | 511          | 736          | 771          |

- 6.59 Table 30 shows how the pattern of development has changed across the Borough since April 2004.

#### *Housing Land Supply*

- 6.60 At 31 March 2008 the Borough's gross housing land supply was 3,494 units, down from 3,549 units at March 2007<sup>66</sup>. The proportion on previously developed land remained stable at 97%. Planning permission for 1,890 dwellings (gross) had been granted during 2007/08, up from 1,331 dwellings in 2006/07<sup>67</sup>.
- 6.61 A summary of the land supply position at April 2008, including data on demolitions, net change and windfall generation, can be viewed at

<sup>62</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 16)

<sup>63</sup> Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area – a regeneration priority area designated by the Secretary of State in April 2002

<sup>64</sup> The Interim Housing Policy Area, a regeneration priority area introduced by the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005)

<sup>65</sup> The North West Metropolitan Area, a regeneration priority area defined in RPG13, Policy SD1

<sup>66</sup> The dwelling capacity of new build sites under construction (1,512 units) and sites with planning permission but not started (1,732 units) plus future net gain from conversions at 50 units per year for five years (250 units).

<sup>67</sup> This figure does not differentiate between repeat applications and applications for variations of numbers and house types

[http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/\\$CABCS081106REP1C.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/$CABCS081106REP1C.docA.ps.pdf)

### *Housing Trajectory*

- 6.62 The Programme of Development submitted to the Government in October 2008 as part of the bid for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, included a revised housing trajectory for Wirral to 2017. A copy of the trajectory is provided at Appendix 3<sup>68</sup>.
- 6.63 The trajectory shows housing supply in balance to 2017 with shortfalls in early years compensated by a higher rate of development in Wirral Waters towards the end of the period. The trajectory assumes an annual average rate of development over the period from Wirral Waters of 400 net new dwellings.
- 6.64 National Core Output Indicator H2(c) now requires figures to be provided for 15 years or to the end of the plan period, whichever is the longer<sup>69</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

### *Gypsies and Travellers*

- 6.65 A new national Core Output Indicator has been introduced by the Government, to record the number of pitches provided for gypsies and travellers. The figures provided should include the number of new pitches completed and any existing pitches lost as a result of development or closure<sup>70</sup>.
- 6.66 Wirral does not have any existing pitches for gypsies or travellers.

*Table 31 – Net Additional Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Number  | Permanent Pitches | Transit Pitches |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Number of pitches provided for gypsies and travellers | 0                 | 0               |
| National Core Output Indicator H4                     |                   |                 |

- 6.67 The Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, which was completed in February 2008, can be viewed at [http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/resources/231065/qtaa\\_report.pdf](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/resources/231065/qtaa_report.pdf).
- 6.68 The findings show a potential shortfall across Merseyside of up to 45 residential pitches and 10 transit pitches to 2016. A strategic approach to future provision was recommended. Wirral may need to

<sup>68</sup> National Core Output Indicators H2(c) (part) and H2(d)

<sup>69</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 14)

<sup>70</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 17)

accommodate up to 10 residential pitches. No accommodation needs were identified for travelling showpeople.

*Table 32 - Affordable Housing Completions  
(1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Affordable Housing<br>(number of dwellings) | Gross completions | Net change |
|---|-------------------|------------|
| Number of new social rented dwellings       | 34                | -17        |
| Number of new intermediate dwellings        | Nil               | Nil        |
| Total number of new affordable dwellings    | 34                | n/a        |
| National Core Output Indicator H5 (part)    |                   |            |

- 6.69 The number of affordable housing completions has reduced from 170 new units in 2006/07. These dwellings were located in Beechwood (11 units), Moreton (10 units) and Spital (13 units).
- 6.70 The latest housing needs assessment, published by the Council in December 2007, indicated a larger than average population with needs for adapted, supported and extra care housing, emerging affordability issues in both east and west Wirral and an increasing demand for social housing. A 40% target for the provision of affordable housing in new housing development was recommended.
- 6.71 A full copy of the latest assessment can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100007/Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report.pdf](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100007/Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Final_Report.pdf). The Technical Appendix can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100007/Strategic Housing Market Assessment Technical Appendix.pdf](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100007/Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Technical_Appendix.pdf)
- 6.72 National Core Output Indicator H5 has been re-cast to include the number of dwellings provided through acquisitions as well as new development. Figures for net change are no longer required<sup>71</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

### *Housing Quality*

- 6.73 A new national Core Output Indicator has been introduced to show the level of quality of new housing development based on ratings against the Building for Life criteria developed by CABI<sup>72</sup>. Information for this Indicator will not be available until next year's AMR.

<sup>71</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 18)

<sup>72</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 19) Indicator H6

*Policy Implications*

- 6.74 The Interim Housing Policy has succeeded in focusing new homes into priority locations in Wirral. The reliance on brownfield windfalls has continued to prevent the need for the allocation of greenfield sites.
- 6.75 The principal challenge for the future will be how to deliver an increased level of building in Wirral without harming Housing Market Renewal, the character of established residential areas and travel patterns. The Core Strategy DPD and Housing Allocations DPD will need to ensure that new housing takes place in the most accessible locations, with a greater mix and type of specialist, affordable and market housing, to meet identified local needs.
- 6.76 Emerging policies will need to promote housing quality through the application of Building for Life criteria.

**Environmental Quality**

*Flood Protection and Water Quality*

- 6.77 Wirral has 31km of river. Data on water quality has not been up-dated since 2006:

*Table 33 - River Water Quality in Wirral<sup>73</sup>*

| Quality Assessment 2006<br>(percentage of river length) | Good | Fair  | Poor  | Bad   |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Chemical Quality  | 0%   | 13.5% | 61.2% | 25.3% |
| Biological Quality                                      | 0%   | 34.9% | 65.1% | 0%    |

- 6.78 The proportion of river classified as bad or poor for chemical quality had remained unchanged since 2005. The proportion classified as good in 2005 (8%) had, however, worsened to fair. The length of river classified as fair for biological quality had also worsened, from 69% in 2005 and the length classified as poor had increased from 31% in 2005.

*Table 34 – Consultations with the Environment Agency  
(1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|  | Flood defence | Water quality |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Number of unresolved objections to planning applications | Nil           | Nil           |
| National Core Output Indicator E1                        |               |               |

<sup>73</sup> DEFRA River Water Quality North West Local Authorities 1990 to 2006 (August 2007)

6.79 The Environment Agency did not submit any objections to planning applications in Wirral on water quality grounds during 2007/08 but submitted five objections to issues related to flooding<sup>74</sup>. The Council did not grant any planning permissions contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency during 2007/08.

6.80 UDP Policy WA7 – Heswall Drainage Catchment Area, which restricted development likely to generate additional sewage within a defined area, has not been implemented since the completion of the improvements to the Target Road Waste Water Treatment Works.

*Policy Implications*

6.81 The main requirement for future policy development in Wirral is the completion of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Further implications will only be known when this study has been completed.

6.82 No information is currently available on the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems in Wirral. Anecdotal evidence suggests that difficulties in securing appropriate aftercare and maintenance agreements are continuing to discourage their use.

*Biodiversity*

6.83 Wirral contains a large number of international, national and local designations. Information on areas of particular significance for nature conservation in Wirral can be viewed at [http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200029/745/content\\_0000586.html](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200029/745/content_0000586.html)

*Table 35 - Changes in Priority Habitats and Species (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Priority habitats and species by type | Impact of completed development | Impact of management programmes | Impact of planning agreements |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| National                              | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Regional                              | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Local                                 | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |

6.84 The change in priority habitats is no longer a national Core Output Indicator.

6.85 The Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan (WBAP) was adopted in February 2003. Action Plans have been completed for 9 of the 11 priority habitats identified and for 16 of the 19 priority species. Active management is ongoing, with a particular emphasis on improving habitat and site conditions, rather than expanding site areas.

<sup>74</sup> Environment Agency - Objections to Planning Applications 2007/08

Monitoring is not yet comprehensive enough to measure changes in the number of species or the extent and quality of habitats in Wirral, in part due to a lack of baseline information.

*Table 36 - Changes In Areas Designated for Biodiversity Importance (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|   | Impact of completed development | Impact of management programmes | Impact of planning agreements |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Change in areas designated for international significance | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Change in areas designated for national significance      | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Change in areas designated for regional significance      | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Change in areas designated for sub-regional significance  | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| Change in areas designated for local significance         | None reported                   | None reported                   | None reported                 |
| National Core Indicator E2 (part)                         |                                 |                                 |                               |

- 6.86 The Council is not aware of any changes in the area of designated sites during the reporting period.
- 6.87 National Core Output Indicator E2 has been re-cast to show only losses or additions to biodiversity habitat<sup>75</sup>. The Council is not aware of any gains or losses in habitat during 2007/08.

*Policy Implications*

- 6.88 The Wirral Local Wildlife Sites Partnership has now been established to address the requirements of DEFRA guidance on the identification, selection and management of local wildlife sites. The Biodiversity Audit will provide additional baseline information.

*Public Open Space*

- 6.89 Eight sites have obtained Green Flag Awards, with Coronation Gardens (0.86ha), Royden Park (29.34 ha), Wirral Country Park (36.08 ha) and Eastham Country Park (40.38 ha) being added in 2008. The final percentage of land managed to Green Flag Award Standard has, therefore, progressively increased from 1% in 2005/06 to 6% in 2006/07 to 15% in 2007/08.

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<sup>75</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 20)

*Table 37 - Public Open Space Managed to Green Flag Standard  
(1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Total publicly accessible open space <sup>76</sup> | 1,192 hectares  |
| Amount managed to Green Flag Award standard        | 177.76 hectares |
| Percentage managed to Green Flag Award standard    | 15%             |

6.90 The amount of public open space managed to Green Flag status is no longer a national Core Output Indicator.

*Policy Implications*

6.91 The Open Space and Recreation Audit will determine whether Green Flag standards are being met in parks which have not yet been submitted for formal assessment.

6.92 A review of the LDS will need to consider the merit of including any revised standards and/or designations within a site-specific Development Plan Document for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, in addition to any policies that may be contained within the Core Strategy DPD.

*Tourism*

6.93 Tourism accounts for almost 9% of employee jobs in Wirral, in line with national employment levels<sup>77</sup>.

*Table 38 - Tourism Spending<sup>78</sup>*

| Tourism Revenue Generated (£ million) | 2004    | 2005    | 2006    | Change 2005/2006 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Wirral                                | £168.10 | £186.27 | £194.09 | 4%               |
| St Helens                             | £116.53 | £128.91 | £131.55 | 2%               |
| Sefton                                | £255.08 | £281.34 | n/a     | -                |
| Liverpool                             | £381.50 | £411.73 | £424.66 | 3%               |
| Halton                                | £85.58  | £91.05  | £96.85  | 6%               |
| Knowsley                              | £77.05  | £77.16  | £80.99  | 5%               |

6.94 While growth in tourism spending has slowed across the sub-region since 2005, Wirral remains in the top three in terms of market share, behind Liverpool and probably Sefton.

<sup>76</sup> includes sites in the Green Belt

<sup>77</sup> The contextual information provided in Table 9 refers

<sup>78</sup> STEAM 2006

### *Policy Implications*

- 6.95 The Council adopted a revised Tourism Strategy and Action Plan in October 2003. Additional research, amongst visitors and potential visitors, was completed in December 2006, underlining the importance of Wirral's countryside and coast. The findings will be used to inform the content of the Core Strategy DPD.

### *Renewable Energy*

- 6.96 Wirral is estimated to have consumed 6,868 GWh of energy in 2006, down 14% from 8,021 GWh in 2003. The majority is taken up for domestic needs. The proportion taken up by industry and commerce has continued to drop (by 770 GWh), from 35% in 2003. Total energy consumption for the North West has reduced by 7% since 2003<sup>79</sup>.

*Table 39 - Energy Consumption by Sector<sup>80</sup>*

| Total Final Energy Consumption by Sector 2006 (percentages) | Industry and Commerce | Domestic | Transport |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Wirral  | 30.1%                 | 46.5%    | 23.4%     |
| North West  | 39.3%                 | 33.4%    | 27.3%     |
| Great Britain   | 38.8%                 | 32.7%    | 28.5%     |

- 6.97 Average total domestic energy consumption per household in Wirral was estimated at 24,160 kWh in 2005, down by 1% since 2004, compared with 23,500 kWh for the North West as a whole, down by 2% since 2004<sup>81</sup>.

*Table 40 - Renewable Energy Consumption<sup>82</sup>*

| Energy Consumption from Renewables and Waste (percentage of total energy consumption) | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Wirral  | 0.1% | 1.5% | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| North West  | 0.3% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.4% |
| Great Britain   | 0.4% | 0.8% | 0.4% | 0.4% |

- 6.98 A very small percentage of the total energy consumed comes for energy generated from renewables and waste. The consumption of renewable energy in Wirral has remained stable at 8.2GWh since 2005.

<sup>79</sup> BERR Total Final Energy Consumption at Regional and Local Authority Level 2003 to 2006

<sup>80</sup> BERR Total Final Energy Consumption at Regional and Local Authority Level 2006

<sup>81</sup> BERR High Level Energy Indicators 2005 NUTS4 (October 2008)

<sup>82</sup> BERR Total Final Energy Consumption at Regional and Local Authority Level 2003 to 2006

*Table 41 - Renewable Energy Generation by Installed Capacity and Type (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Megawatts                                | Bio fuels           | Onshore wind      | Water | Solar energy      | Geo-thermal |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------------|
| Granted Planning Permission              | Nil                 | Nil <sup>83</sup> | Nil   | Nil <sup>84</sup> | Nil         |
| Completed Installations                  | 4,336 <sup>85</sup> | Nil <sup>86</sup> | Nil   | Nil <sup>87</sup> | Nil         |
| National Core Output Indicator E3 (part) |                     |                   |       |                   |             |

- 6.99 Twenty-five wind turbines, with a total capacity of up to 90MW, capable of supplying the equivalent of up to 80,000 households, have recently been erected off the Wirral shoreline in Liverpool Bay. By contrast, the take-up of on-shore renewable energy has, so far, been low.
- 6.100 An energy-from-waste (biological process) facility has operated at Bidston Moss since 1985. Initially used to supply the industrial complex at Moreton, the energy generated is now fed directly to the National Grid. Annual output has, however, been reducing over time, from 9,701 MWh in 2003 to 4,336 MWh in 2007.
- 6.101 National Core Output Indicator E3 has been re-cast to include information on a wider range of different types of facility and to exclude developments permitted under a general development order<sup>88</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

#### *Policy Implications*

- 6.102 Care will need to be taken to ensure that economic revitalisation and housing growth will not have negative long term implications for energy consumption and emissions in Wirral.
- 6.103 The Council adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in June 2007. Many of the positive pro-active measures suggested need to be supported by an appropriate policy in an adopted Development Plan Document.
- 6.104 There is still a need to establish a robust evidence base to assess trends in local energy consumption, emissions and the contribution being made by energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

<sup>83</sup> Three wind turbines obtained planning consent during 2007/08 but their operating capacity is unknown

<sup>84</sup> One planning application for solar panels was approved during 2007/08 but the operating capacity is unknown

<sup>85</sup> This figure relates to output from the waste (biological process) facility operating at Bidston Moss.

<sup>86</sup> Four small wind turbines are known to be operating but their contribution cannot currently be measured

<sup>87</sup> An unknown number of small scale solar schemes are thought to be in operation but their contribution cannot currently be measured

<sup>88</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 21)

## Transport

- 6.105 The high dependency on the car for journeys to work has continued. The Countywide Survey for 2005/06 showed 70% of Wirral respondents driving a car or van to work, the highest percentage in Merseyside. The average for Merseyside was 61%.
- 6.106 In 2001, Wirral had one of the highest percentages of households with one or more cars or vans per household in Merseyside (69%, just behind the North West at 70%)<sup>89</sup>. Car ownership has continued to increase. The number of vehicles owned and licensed in Wirral rose from 124,818 in 2001 to 139,082 in 2005, up from 107,883 in 1991, with similar percentage increases to those for Merseyside as a whole<sup>90</sup>. Ownership across Merseyside is forecast to increase further to 2021<sup>91</sup>.
- 6.107 The latest analysis of journey to work information continues to show Wirral as a net exporter of labour. While the number of people who both lived and worked within the Borough increased by 10%, to 84,797 in 2001 from 76,780 in 1991, flows across the boundary, in both directions, also increased:

*Table 42 - Journeys to Work: Change in Principal Flows Out of Wirral<sup>92</sup>*

| Journeys to Work               | Travelling Out of Wirral to Work |        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|
|                                | 1991                             | 2001   |
| Liverpool                      | 18,990                           | 17,549 |
| Ellesmere Port & Neston        | 7,180                            | 6,567  |
| Chester                        | 2,360                            | 3,395  |
| Sefton                         | 2,060                            | 1,815  |
| Wales                          | 1,980                            | 2,986  |
| Rest of Cheshire <sup>93</sup> | 1,670                            | 2,384  |
| Greater Manchester             | 1,570                            | 1,978  |
| Rest of England                | 1,370                            | 2,117  |
| Knowsley                       | 760                              | 1,151  |
| Total Flow Out                 | 38,580                           | 40,828 |

- 6.108 The number of people travelling out of Wirral to find work elsewhere increased by 6% between 1991 and 2001. While there were declining

<sup>89</sup> Travel in Merseyside (Merseyside LTP Partnership, 2006) Table 4.41

<sup>90</sup> Travel in Merseyside (Merseyside LTP Partnership, 2006) Table 4.23

<sup>91</sup> Travel in Merseyside (Merseyside LTP Partnership, 2006) Tables 4.44 (2001 base) and 4.45 (2005 base)

<sup>92</sup> MIS ONS Census 1991 and 2001

<sup>93</sup> Including Halton and Warrington

links with Liverpool, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Sefton, there were increasing links with Chester, Wales, the rest of Cheshire, the rest of England, Greater Manchester, and Knowsley.

*Table 43 - Journeys to Work: Change in Principal Flows Into Wirral<sup>94</sup>*

| Journeys to Work               | Travelling Into Wirral to Work |        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
|                                | 1991                           | 2001   |
| Origins & Destinations         |                                |        |
| Ellesmere Port & Neston        | 3,910                          | 4,349  |
| Liverpool                      | 2,180                          | 2,866  |
| Wales                          | 1,070                          | 1,690  |
| Sefton                         | 1,020                          | 1,189  |
| Chester                        | 840                            | 1,492  |
| Rest of Cheshire <sup>95</sup> | 720                            | 1,318  |
| Total Flow In                  | 11,420                         | 15,777 |

6.109 The number of people travelling into Wirral to find work increased by 38% between 1991 and 2001. The largest flows were from people who lived in Ellesmere Port & Neston, Liverpool, Wales, Chester, the rest of Cheshire, and Sefton.

6.110 These trends are also reflected in the increased distances travelled to work over time<sup>96</sup>.

*Table 44 - Accessibility of New Residential Development (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

| Accessibility   | A doctor's surgery | A hospital | A primary school | A secondary school | Areas of employment <sup>97</sup> | A major retail centre |
|---|--------------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Number of new dwellings within 30 minutes public transport time     | 771                | 508        | 771              | 771                | 771                               | 771                   |
| Percentage of new dwellings within 30 minutes public transport time | 100%               | 66%        | 100%             | 100%               | 100%                              | 100%                  |

6.111 The accessibility of new residential development completed during 2007/08 has been calculated using Accession software for bus and train travel times in Wirral. The majority of new dwellings were within

<sup>94</sup> MIS ONS Census 1991 and 2001

<sup>95</sup> Including Halton and Warrington

<sup>96</sup> Travel in Merseyside (Merseyside LTP Partnership, 2006) Tables 4.2 (2001), 4.3 (1991) & 4.4 (1981)

<sup>97</sup> Super Output Areas with 500 or more jobs within them

30 minutes public transport time of essential local services, except for a hospital.

- 6.112 Accessibility by public transport and compliance with parking standards are no longer national Core Output Indicators.

*Policy Implications*

- 6.113 Planning policies have so far been unable to address ongoing trends in car ownership and use or to resolve the tension between increasing the pace of urban regeneration and transport impacts. Higher densities of development in Wirral have further heightened concerns about local traffic levels. The key challenge is to ensure that the majority of future development occurs in the most accessible locations and that these locations are served by an effective choice of means of transport.

- 6.114 Further measures, developed under the auspices of the Local Transport Plan, are being prepared as part of a Merseyside SPD but cannot be adopted until a suitable policy is included within an appropriate Development Plan Document.

**Minerals**

- 6.115 Wirral is not a significant source for land-won minerals. The latest available figures for the Region estimate a landbank of 15.5 years for crushed rock in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Warrington and Halton and of 33 years for the Region as a whole. The landbank of sand and gravel in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Warrington and Halton is estimated at 38 years but is only 12.5 years for the Region as a whole<sup>98</sup>.

*Table 45 - Production of Primary Land Won Aggregates (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Crushed Rock                      | Nil |
| Sand and Gravel                   | Nil |
| National Core Output Indicator M1 |     |

- 6.116 No reliable figures are yet available for secondary or recycled aggregate production, which includes construction, demolition and excavation wastes recycled for use as aggregate.

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<sup>98</sup> North West Region Aggregates Working Party Annual Report (February 2007, Table 3)

*Table 46 - Production of Secondary Aggregates (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Production of secondary aggregates | Not Available |
| Production of recycled aggregates  | Not Available |
| National Core Output Indicator M2  |               |

6.117 Marine-won sand and gravel, landed at Eastham, rose from 43,046 tonnes in 2000 to 124,506 tonnes in 2005, to 20% of the Regional total but fell back to 111,687 tonnes in 2006, to 17% of the Regional total<sup>99</sup>. A new, replacement facility for the landing of marine-won sand came into operation in Bromborough during early 2007.

*Policy implications*

6.118 The primary issue for local minerals planning is the absence of reliable data. A North West Study of recycled aggregate production is currently underway. The results of the Merseyside Minerals Study will be reported early in the New Year.

**Waste**

6.119 The amount of household waste collected per head in Wirral reduced to 436kg in 2007/08, slightly ahead of the average for England of 430kg<sup>100</sup>. The proportion of municipal waste sent to landfill reduced to 54% for England and to 62% for the North West in 2007/08. The combined recycling and composting rate for England was 34% and for the North West was 36%<sup>101</sup>.

*Table 47 – Capacity of New Waste Management Facilities by Type (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|  | Landfill | Recycling | Composting | Total |
|--|----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Capacity of completed waste management facilities                    | Nil      | Nil       | Nil        | Nil   |
| Capacity of new waste management facilities with planning permission | Nil      | Nil       | Nil        | Nil   |
| National Core Output Indicator W1 (part)                             |          |           |            |       |

6.120 The landfill site at Bromborough Dock closed in August 2005.

<sup>99</sup> North West Region Aggregates Working Party Annual Report (February 2007, Table 4). Landings at Liverpool also declined from 428,842 tonnes in 2005 to 373,812 tonnes in 2006

<sup>100</sup> DEFRA Waste Data Flow 2007/08

<sup>101</sup> DEFRA Municipal Waste Management Statistics 2007/08, Table 2

- 6.121 A new waste transfer station for refuse collection vehicles, to allow for the additional bulking of waste prior to landfill in North Wales (capacity 200,000 tonnes) and an upgraded household waste reception centre (capacity 22,000 tonnes) were completed at Bidston in August 2005. A new materials recycling facility (capacity 30,000 tonnes) was added in March 2006 and a new in-vessel composting facility (capacity 10,400 tonnes) in April 2006.
- 6.122 A planning application for a waste to energy facility with an operational capacity of up to 400,000 tonnes was approved in Eastham in January 2008.
- 6.123 National Core Output Indicator W1 has been re-cast to require separate figures for total capacity and annual throughput for twenty-one different types of waste management facility<sup>102</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

*Table 48 – Municipal Waste Management by Management Type (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008)*

|  | Landfill      | Recycled      | Composted     | Total          |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Amount of municipal waste arising and managed by management type     | 93,655 tonnes | 28,448 tonnes | 14,727 tonnes | 136,820 tonnes |
| Percentage of municipal waste arising and managed by management type | 68%           | 21%           | 11%           | 100%           |
| National Core Output Indicator W2 (part)                             |               |               |               |                |

- 6.124 The overall pattern of management by type in Wirral has begun to change markedly over recent years. The amount of waste going to landfill has fallen by a quarter since 2004/05 and the amount recycled and composted has more than doubled. Table 49 shows the trend over time.

*Table 49 – Municipal Waste Management by Type (1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008)*

| Amount of municipal waste managed by type (tonnes) | 2004/05       | 2005/06       | 2006/07       | 2007/08      |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Landfill (percentage of total arisings)            | 125,440 (90%) | 137,097 (89%) | 121,693 (86%) | 93,655 (68%) |
| Recycled (percentage of total arisings)            | 11,065 (8%)   | 10,784 (7%)   | 12,794 (9%)   | 28,448 (21%) |

<sup>102</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 24)

| <b>Amount of municipal waste managed by type (tonnes)</b> | <b>2004/05</b> | <b>2005/06</b> | <b>2006/07</b> | <b>2007/08</b>  |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Composted<br>(percentage of total arisings)               | 2,789<br>(2%)  | 6,175<br>(4%)  | 7,095<br>(5%)  | 14,727<br>(11%) |
| Total Arisings  | 139,294        | 154,056        | 141,519        | 136,820         |

6.125 National Core Output Indicator W2 has been re-cast to take account of incineration, energy from waste and other forms of treatment and to combine recycling and composting under a single heading<sup>103</sup>. Information to the new format will not be available until next year's AMR.

#### *Policy Implications*

6.126 Existing policies have not prevented the adjustment to more sustainable waste management. Effective delivery is now a matter for day-to-day collection and management regimes. Appropriate locations for any additional waste treatment facilities will now be identified through the preparation of the Joint Merseyside Waste DPD.

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<sup>103</sup> Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (CLG, July 2008, page 24)

## 7 SUMMARY OF EMERGING ISSUES

- 7.1 This section of the AMR seeks to summarise the issues that have been emerging from public consultation, from the analysis presented in this and previous AMRs and from the initial results of some of the emerging evidence base studies for the Core Strategy DPD.

### Emerging Issues

- 7.2 The previous AMR sought to summarise the emerging issues under the following headings:

*Table 49 – Emerging Issues*

| Policy Theme                            | Illustrative Content   |
|---|--|
| <b>Building Sustainable Communities</b> | Getting the vision right   |
|   | Contributing to the transformation of the wider City Region  |
|   | Providing for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Investment Strategy                           |
|   | Stabilising the population and reversing the loss of the working age population, especially within the inner urban areas         |
| <b>A Stronger Economy</b>               | Revitalising the economy and reversing poor economic performance by providing for growth in local wealth creation and employment |
|   | Promoting tourism by enhancing the Borough's assets of culture and heritage, coast and countryside for leisure and recreation    |
| <b>An Inclusive Society</b>             | Providing for everyone   |
|   | Closing the gap in opportunity, income and health between the most and least well off  |
|   | Continuing the focus on physical regeneration and housing market renewal at the heart of the urban area                          |
|   | Providing high quality, accessible, modern services  |
| <b>A Decent and Affordable Home</b>     | Meeting regional requirements while meeting identified local needs through affordable and market housing                         |
| <b>An Accessible Borough</b>            | Ensuring new development for housing, employment and services is located in the most accessible locations                        |
|   | Tackling congestion and providing credible alternatives to journeys by private car   |
| <b>A Protected Environment</b>          | Responding to climate change   |
|   | Protecting local distinctiveness and the character of established residential areas  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Protecting natural resources and biodiversity |
|  | Providing for community safety                |

7.3 These have now been developed into the following list of key issues:

- supporting urban regeneration
- achieving sustainable development
- ensuring high quality development across the Borough
- improving economic performance
- addressing worklessness
- reducing out-commuting
- addressing low paid and low quality employment
- maintaining an adequate supply of immediately available employment land
- promoting and supporting the tourism economy
- supporting the vitality and viability of the Borough's existing town and local centres
- providing a size, type and tenure of housing to meet identified needs.
- delivering appropriate specialist housing
- maintaining a continuous supply of deliverable housing sites
- maximising the use of previously developed land
- securing sustainable design and construction
- creating sustainable communities through Housing Market Renewal
- tackling nationally significant deprivation
- reducing health inequalities and improving life expectancy
- addressing inequalities in skills, education, and training and life chances
- reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- reducing dependency on the private car
- minimising the environmental impact of transport
- supporting the port and maritime industries
- safeguarding and enhancing Wirral's natural environment
- protect and enhancing Wirral's urban environment
- adapting to climate change
- controlling flood risk
- sustainable waste management
- control of pollution and hazards

### **Potential Objectives**

7.4 Potential objectives are likely to include:

- to improve the performance of and diversify Wirral's economy in line with the Investment Strategy
- to reduce levels of unemployment and worklessness in the Borough
- to provide a continuous supply of accessible, high quality and readily available employment sites
- to use local spending and skills to support urban regeneration
- to focus new development within the Borough's existing urban centres
- to develop and support a sustainable tourism and leisure based economy
- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and district centres
- to provide a continuous supply of housing land to meet identified needs

- to focus new investment to deliver housing market renewal and growth to areas of greatest need at the heart of the older urban areas in east Wirral
- to meet proven needs for affordable and specialist housing
- to maximise the use of derelict and vacant previously developed land and buildings while maintaining local character and distinctiveness
- to ensure new housing development incorporates sustainable design and construction principles
- to reduce health inequalities and ensure that new development encourages healthier lifestyle choices
- to reduce inequalities in skills, education and training
- to minimize the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour
- to provide and promote more sustainable, integrated travel options
- to make efficient use of existing transport networks and infrastructure
- to maximize the accessibility of services and jobs especially to areas of greatest need
- to support the movement of freight from road to rail and water
- to minimise the adverse impacts of transport on local communities and the environment
- to support the future of port activity and related maritime sectors
- to provide sufficient opportunities for outdoor recreation, sport and to protect and enhance the Borough's natural environment
- to protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and geological resources
- to protect and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the urban environment
- to protect and enhance the Borough's historic environment
- to ensure that future development is adapted to the impact of climate change
- to minimize the risk of flooding from sea, rivers and rainfall
- to provide for more sustainable waste management
- to maximise public safety and minimise hazards to people and the environment

### **Emerging Spatial Vision**

7.5 The emerging Spatial Vision for the Borough is likely to say:

By 2025 Wirral will be a Borough which offers a high quality of life for all its residents and visitors:

- the Investment Strategy for Wirral will have been implemented;
- Wirral's economy will be strengthened and diversified; there will be a wide range of employment sites and premises attractive to existing businesses and inward investors. The Borough will be an attractive location for higher quality, better paying employers, particularly in the knowledge-based sector;
- the population of Wirral will be growing, out migration will have been reduced and there will be a better balance of age groups;
- levels of unemployment and worklessness in the Borough will have been significantly reduced and the skills base will have been enhanced;
- as a result of Housing Market Renewal and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, all parts of the Borough will be seen as attractive places to live, through the promotion of sustainable, mixed communities and

the provision of high quality, well designed, zero-carbon, affordable, mixed tenure housing, which will meet the needs of all sectors of the community;

- the amount of vacant and derelict land in the older urban areas will have been reduced;
- Birkenhead as the Borough's sub-regional centre will have been enhanced and revitalised as the retail and service centre of choice for all the Borough's residents, supported by a network of vital and viable district and local shopping centres;
- the major regeneration opportunity at Wirral Waters will have successfully transformed surplus docklands in Birkenhead and Wallasey into vibrant thriving mixed communities with a substantial range of jobs, homes and services;
- the Borough will have developed its potential as a tourism destination focusing on the quality of its natural environment, its built heritage and the coastal resorts at New Brighton, West Kirby and Hoylake;
- the high levels of deprivation and social and health inequalities found in parts of east Wirral will have been significantly reduced;
- all new development will be suitably adapted to the potential impacts associated with climate change and flood risk whilst minimising their own carbon emissions and the consumption of water and other resources. All new residential developments will have been zero carbon from 2016 onwards;
- the Borough will have maintained and enhanced a high quality urban and rural environment, including a fully established network of green infrastructure within the urban area and a safeguarded and enhanced biodiversity and geodiversity resource. Maximum use will have been made of previously developed land and buildings and Wirral's built heritage will have been safeguarded and enhanced;
- the quantity of waste generated in the Borough will have been reduced through greater levels of waste reduction, re-use and recycling and a large proportion of the waste still generated will be managed and processed as close as possible to the Borough; and
- transport and land use will be fully co-ordinated, maximising the use of sustainable transport modes, including bus, rail, walking and cycling with the number and length of individual car journeys minimized.

### **Future consultation**

- 7.6 Formal consultation on the emerging issues, objectives and spatial vision will be undertaken early in 2009.

## 8 GLOSSARY

| <i>Terminology</i>                                    | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>   |
|---|---------------------|--|
| A Class Uses  |                     | Uses of land falling within the categories of retailing and financial and professional services.   |
| Accession software                                    |                     | A computer software package designed to calculate the accessibility of local services.   |
| Adoption  |                     | The stage at which the Council formally decides to adopt the final version of a Local Development Document to make it legally operative.   |
| Allocated   |                     | The identification of a specific piece of land for a specific type of development in the Unitary Development Plan.   |
| Allocation  |                     | The identification of a specific piece of land for a specific type of development in a Development Plan Document or the Unitary Development Plan.  |
| Annual Monitoring Report                              | AMR                 | A written report, published by the Council towards the end of each calendar year, setting out progress on the delivery of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved. |
| Appropriate Assessment                                | AA                  | A written report assessing the potential impact of the proposals to be contained within a Local Development Document on designated European Sites.   |
| Area Action Plan                                      | AAP                 | A Development Plan Document setting out detailed proposals for an identified part of the Borough.  |
| B Class Uses  |                     | Uses of land falling within the categories of business, general industry and storage and distribution.   |
| Building for Life                                     |                     | A Government endorsed standard method for assessing the quality of new housing development. Sites are scored against a series of twenty criteria which can be viewed at <a href="http://www.buildingforlife.org/">http://www.buildingforlife.org/</a>  |
| Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform             | BERR                | The Government Department responsible for economic performance, trade promotion and energy.  |
| Cabinet   |                     | A group of Local Councillors appointed by the Council to take executive decisions on behalf of the Council.  |
| Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment | CABE                | The Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space.   |
| Communities and Local Government                      | CLG                 | The Government Department responsible for planning, building and the environment.  |

| <i>Terminology</i>                                 | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>  |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Community Strategy                                 |                     | A strategy setting out the overall vision for the improvement of the area prepared under the Local Government Act 2000, now known as the Sustainable Community Strategy.  |
| Conservation Area                                  | CA                  | An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected.  |
| Core Output Indicators                             |                     | A measure used to determine whether key national policies are being achieved. The Indicators are defined by the Secretary of State and set out in national advice.  |
| Core Strategy                                      |                     | A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and general strategy for the Borough   |
| Corporate Plan                                     |                     | A public document prepared by the Council setting out the Council's main priorities for the future.   |
| D Class Uses                                       |                     | Uses of land falling within the categories of non-residential institutions and assembly and leisure.  |
| Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | DEFRA               | The Government Department responsible for sustainable development, environmental protection and rural policy.   |
| Department for Trade and Industry                  | DTI                 | The Government Department previously responsible for economic performance, trade promotion and energy – now replaced by BERR.   |
| Department for Work and Pensions                   | DWP                 | The Government Department responsible for distributing national benefits and allowances such as jobseekers allowance, child support and pensions.   |
| Development Plan                                   |                     | The statutory Development Plan for the Borough, comprising the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan, until the Unitary Development Plan has been replaced by the Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. Individual planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. |
| Development Plan Document                          | DPD                 | A Local Development Document with status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough.   |
| Dock Estate  |                     | An area of land owned and operated by a port operator and set aside for port-related land uses in the Unitary Development Plan.   |
| Eco Town   |                     | A planned new settlement, identified by the Government, which would be an example of “green development”  |
| Examination in Public                              |                     | The process undertaken to examine the content of a Regional Spatial Strategy before it is issued by the Secretary of State  |

| <i>Terminology</i>   | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>  |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Executive Board  |                     | A group of Local Councillors appointed by the Council's Cabinet to take executive decisions on behalf of the Cabinet.   |
| general development order  |                     | A nationally prepared statutory document setting out the classes of development that do and do not require planning permission.   |
| Greater Merseyside   |                     | The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helen's and Halton.  |
| Green Flag Award   |                     | An annual award based on a national standard for the maintenance of parks and open spaces   |
| Growth Point   |                     | An area identified by the Government in which an accelerated level of housing delivery will be promoted   |
| Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area                  | HMRI                | The area of the Borough defined by the Secretary of State as the focus for public action to restructure the local housing market, also known as the Newheartlands Pathfinder, including parts of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Bidston and Liscard.   |
| Independent Examination  |                     | The process undertaken by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to test the soundness of a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement.  |
| Initial Consultation   |                     | The stage at which the scope and content of an emerging Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document is decided in consultation with stakeholders.  |
| Inspectors Report  |                     | The report prepared by the Inspector following an Independent Examination, the findings of which the Council must comply with before a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement can be adopted.  |
| Interim Housing Policy Area  | IHPA                | The area of the Borough defined in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) as the target area for new housing development, focussed on New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Leasowe, Birkenhead, Beechwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and parts of Bromborough. |
| Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) |                     | A policy document adopted by the Council, following public consultation, which sets out the Council's policies for the location of new housing development until an appropriate Development Plan Document is adopted.   |

| <i>Terminology</i>             | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Issues and Options Report      |                     | A written report published by the Council to invite comments on the issues that need to be addressed in a Development Plan Document and the options that are available for dealing with them. |
| Limehouse software             |                     | An internet-based computer software package designed to aid the more efficient handling of public consultation and the design and publishing of policy documents                              |
| Listed structure               |                     | A building or structure listed by the Secretary of State on the basis of its historic or architectural importance.  |
| Local Area Agreement           | LAA                 | A formal agreement by the Council and other local service providers to meet a set of specific targets for the delivery of selected local services.  |
| Local Development Document     | LDD                 | A document prepared as part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough  |
| Local Development Framework    | LDF                 | The overall name for the collection of adopted Local Development Documents for the Borough.   |
| Local Development Order        |                     | An Order made by the Council to enable a wider range of development to take place without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission.   |
| Local Development Scheme       | LDS                 | A document setting out the Council's proposals for the content of the Local Development Framework and the timetable for the preparation of individual Local Development Documents.            |
| Local Transport Plan           | LTP                 | A strategy for improving local transport services, including roads, public transport, walking and cycling.  |
| LTP Partnership                |                     | The partnership responsible for preparing the Local Transport Plan.   |
| Mersey Heartlands Growth Point |                     | An area in Wirral, in and around the Birkenhead Dock Estate, for which national designation as a Growth Point is being sought   |
| Merseyside                     |                     | The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helen's.  |
| Milestone                      |                     | The date by which a stage or action in the preparation of a Local Development Document must be begun, as set out in the Local Development Scheme.   |
| Mott McDonald MIS              | MIS                 | Consultants providing a statistical collection and analysis service on behalf of the District Councils in Greater Merseyside.   |
| Neighbourhood Renewal Fund     | NRF                 | A national funding programme to support improvements in the most deprived areas in England.   |

| <i>Terminology</i>                            | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>   |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Nomis   |                     | A database of official labour market statistics, run on behalf of the Office for National Statistics.  |
| North West Metropolitan Area                  | NWMA                | The area where a significant proportion of development and urban renaissance resources should be focussed, defined in Policy SD1 of Regional Planning Guidance for the North West as Wirral, east of the M53, plus Woodchurch, Leasowe, Wallasey and New Brighton.   |
| Office of National Statistics                 | ONS                 | The Government Department responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy.  |
| Office of the Deputy Prime Minister           | ODPM                | The Government Department previously responsible for planning, building and the environment – now replaced by CLG.   |
| Permitted Development                         |                     | Development that can be undertaken without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission.   |
| Planning Inspector                            |                     | A person appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out the Independent Examination of a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement.  |
| Preferred Options                             |                     | The stage at which the development options preferred by the Council, for inclusion in a Development Plan Document, are published, alongside an explanation of why they have been chosen.   |
| Previously developed land                     |                     | Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The full definition is set out in national advice published by the Secretary of State.  |
| Primarily Industrial Area                     | PIA                 | An area of land set aside for primarily industrial land uses in the Unitary Development Plan.  |
| Proposals Map                                 |                     | An annotated map showing the areas of land where the policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan or contained within in a Development Plan Document will apply.   |
| Regional Planning Guidance for the North West | RPG13               | An old-style document published by the Secretary of State to guide the preparation of local Development Plans. Regional Planning Guidance is to be replaced by the new-style Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West. Regional Planning Guidance has legal status as the Initial Regional Spatial Strategy until the new-style Regional Spatial Strategy has been issued. |
| Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West  | RSS                 | A statutory document, issued by the Secretary of State, setting out the vision and priorities for future development within the North West Region, which has status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough.   |

| <i>Terminology</i>                  | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Registered Social Landlord          | RSL                 | An organisation registered as a provider of housing to meet the needs of people unable to afford to own their own home.  |
| Scheduled Ancient Monument          | SAM                 | An identified area designated by the Secretary of State on the basis of its national importance for archaeology.   |
| Secretary of State                  |                     | The person appointed by the Prime Minister to have overall responsibility for the operation of the national planning system, currently the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.  |
| Site of Biological Importance       | SBI                 | A site designated in the Unitary Development Plan on the basis of its local importance for nature conservation.  |
| Site of Special Scientific Interest | SSSI                | A site designated by the Secretary of State on the basis of its scientific importance for nature conservation and/or earth science.  |
| Soundness                           |                     | The standard against which a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement will be tested at an Independent Examination. The tests of soundness are set out in national policy published by the Secretary of State.              |
| Stakeholder                         |                     | A person or organisation with an interest in the future planning and development of the Borough  |
| Statement of Community Involvement  | SCI                 | A Local Development Document setting out local standards for community involvement in planning decisions.  |
| Statutory                           |                     | A document or process which has a special legal status, as set out in national law.  |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment  | SEA                 | A written assessment of the potential of the proposals contained within a Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document to have significant effects on the environment, undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process. |
| Strategic Regional Site             | SRS                 | An area of land identified as a priority location for the promotion of the new business development needed by the North West Region.   |
| Submission                          |                     | The stage at which a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement is submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration at an Independent Examination  |
| Super Output Area                   | SOA                 | A geographical unit containing about 1,500 people used as the basis for the collection and analysis of national statistics.  |

| <i>Terminology</i>                            | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>   |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Supplementary Planning Document               | SPD                 | A Local Development Document which provides additional information to assist in the delivery of an adopted policy within a Development Plan Document (or an adopted policy in the Unitary Development Plan until that policy has been replaced). |
| Sustainability Appraisal                      | SA                  | A written appraisal of the likely social, economic and environmental impact of the proposals contained within a Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document.  |
| Sustainability Appraisal Framework for Wirral | SAF                 | A framework for the preparation of sustainability appraisals in Wirral adopted by the Council following public consultation.   |
| Sustainability Appraisal Panel                |                     | A panel of local groups and experts invited to oversee the quality of the local sustainability appraisal process.  |
| Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report       |                     | A document published by the Council for public consultation to seek views on the content of the sustainability appraisal of a Local Development Document.  |
| Sustainable Community Strategy                |                     | See "Community Strategy"   |
| Sustainable Development                       |                     | The idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.  |
| SWOT Analysis                                 |                     | A simple method of identifying the main issues for the Borough by listing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the area.  |
| The Mersey Partnership                        | TMP                 | The Sub Regional Partnership for Merseyside, responsible for the promotion of economic development, inward investment and tourism.   |
| Unitary Development Plan                      | UDP                 | An old-style Development Plan, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework.   |
| Use Class                                     |                     | A category of land use defined in national law.  |
| Use Class A1                                  | A1                  | Land uses falling within the category of shops.  |
| Use Class A2                                  | A2                  | Land uses falling within the category of financial and professional services.  |
| Use Class B1 (a)                              | B1(a)               | Land uses falling within the category of business, as an office which will not be used to provide services to the visiting public.   |

| <i>Terminology</i>              | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Explanation</i>  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Use Class B1 (b)                | B1(b)               | Land uses falling within the category of business, which will be used for research and development.   |
| Use Class B1 (c)                | B1(c)               | Land uses falling within the category of business, for an industrial process that can be carried out with in a residential area without harming the amenity of that area. |
| Use Class B2                    | B2                  | Land uses falling within the category of general industry, which could not be carried out in a residential area without harming the amenity of that area.                 |
| Use Class B8                    | B8                  | Land uses falling within the category of storage and distribution.  |
| Use Class D2                    | D2                  | Land uses falling within the category of assembly and leisure.  |
| Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan | WBAP                | A document setting out local measures to enhance and safeguard Wirral's most important habitats and species.  |
| Workshops                       |                     | A meeting used for the purpose of public consultation to seek peoples views on particular issues related to the preparation of a Local Development Document               |

## **Appendix 1**

### **Unitary Development Plan for Wirral**

#### **Policies and Proposals No Longer in Force**

##### Part One Policies:

Policy HSG1 – New Dwelling Requirement

Policy WMT1 – Landfill Provision

##### Part Two Policies and Proposals:

Policy EM10 – Birkenhead and Eastham Dock Estates

Policy EM11 – Bidston Observatory and the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory

Proposal HS2 – Land at Noctorum Way, Noctorum

Proposal HS3 – Land to the East of Fender Farm, Moreton

Proposal RE3 – New Neighbourhood Indoor Sports Facilities

Proposal RE4 – New Neighbourhood Swimming Pool, Beechwood

Policy RE5 – Criteria for the Protection of Playing Fields

Policy RE7 – Criteria for the Protection of School Playing Fields

Proposal TL3 – Land for Tourism Development at Wirral Waterfront

Policy TL6 – The Control of Tourism in Port Sunlight

Proposal TL8 – Land at the Former Derby Pool, New Brighton

Proposal NC9 – Dibbinsdale Nature Centre

Proposal TR4 – Birkenhead Central Bus Facility

Policy WM10 – Requirements for the Environmental Assessment of Waste Disposal Facilities

Policy WA7 – Heswall Drainage Catchment Area

Policy CO3 – Tourism and Leisure in the Coastal Zone