

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

19 JULY 2012

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL – CORE STRATEGY – PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | ALL |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | COUNCILLOR PAT HACKETT, REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY |
| KEY DECISION? | YES |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the policy direction to be contained within a Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy before the final suite of documents are prepared for publication and submission to Secretary of State for public examination by an independent Planning Inspector.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy will assist in the delivery of corporate priorities related to Your Neighbourhood and Your Economy. Once adopted, the Core Strategy will replace the strategic policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development adopted in October 2005, following the proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy by the Secretary of State.
- 1.3 This report sets out the findings of public consultation approved by Cabinet on 21 July 2011 (Minute 80 refers) on draft Settlement Area Policies; recommends that the policy direction indicated in the draft Core Strategy attached to this report is approved in principle to allow the necessary assessments and appraisals to be completed before the final documents are presented to the Council for approval for publication and submission to the Secretary of State; that the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Panel is involved in the preparation of the final statutory sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy; that the statutory assessment of the Core Strategy under the Habitats Regulations is undertaken by independent specialist consultants under an existing sub-regional contract with the Merseyside districts; that the findings of the remaining evidence base reports on employment, housing, retail, open space and recreation, water and transport are reported back alongside the finalised Core Strategy; and that further internal and external liaison is undertaken to confirm the soundness of the plan and compliance with the newly introduced duty to co-operate.
- 1.4 This report also recommends that the Council responds to a request from Sefton Council to indicate that Wirral is unlikely to be able to accommodate additional development to accommodate development needs arising within Sefton (paragraph 8.1 below refers).

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Council's existing Local Plan, the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral, was adopted in February 2000. The Regional Spatial Strategy issued in September 2008 is proposed to be revoked by the Secretary of State. The publication of a new National Planning Policy Framework has introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development, where the development plan for an area is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date (Cabinet, 12 April 2012, Minute 385 refers).
- 2.1 Initial consultation on the content of a Core Strategy to replace the strategic policies in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral began in October 2005. Consultation on Spatial Options took place in January 2010 (Cabinet, 26 November 2009, Minute 200 refers), on Preferred Options in November 2010 (Council, 18 October 2010, Minute 36 refers) and on Draft Settlement Area Policies in January 2012 (Cabinet 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers). Reports of consultation on each stage can be viewed at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>
- 2.2 The next statutory stage is the publication of a Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy, to allow final representations and comments on the soundness of the Strategy, before the Strategy is submitted for independent examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. Copies of any comments received are then submitted alongside the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State, with limited opportunity to make any further changes. The Council will only be able to adopt the Core Strategy if it is found legally compliant and sound by the independent Planning Inspector.
- 2.3 The publication of a Proposed Submission Draft is the last chance for people to comment on the content of the Core Strategy and the Core Strategy must be as the Council would wish to see it adopted before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 2.4 The Proposed Submission Draft must also be accompanied by a suite of supporting documents including: a consultation statement, to show how the Strategy has been prepared, who has been involved, the issues raised and how they have been addressed; a statutory sustainability appraisal, to show that the Strategy is the most sustainable option available; a Habitats Regulations Assessment, to show that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on European Sites; as well as any other supporting documents relevant to the preparation of the Core Strategy, such as any accompanying evidence base reports.
- 2.5 As any further changes to the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy and its supporting documents would at this stage need to be subject to a further round of consultation before it could be submitted to the Secretary of State, a draft Core Strategy has been prepared for Cabinet approval of the overall policy direction, before additional resources are committed to the preparation of the final documentation, including taking account of the updated evidence base studies detailed in section 5 below. It is, therefore, envisaged that the final documents will be reported to Cabinet in September with a view to seeking approval by Full Council on 15 October 2012.
- 2.6 Members should note that all the documents appended to this report (including the draft Core Strategy) can be found in the Council's web library under "Information Items" and then "Core Strategy - Proposed Submission Draft July 2012"

3.0 CONSULTATION ON SETTLEMENT AREA POLICIES

- 3.1 Consultation on draft Settlement Area Policies for inclusion in the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy took place between January and March 2012. A copy of the draft report of consultation is Appendix 5 to this report in the web library. A copy of the documents that were consulted on and the comments received can still be viewed at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>.
- 3.2 The majority of comments received followed similar lines to that already raised at earlier stages in the process, with local residents and amenity bodies seeking additional environmental protections and developers seeking greater flexibility for new development, including urban expansion sites in the Green Belt and a wider range of uses on employment sites. Concern has continued to be expressed at the implications of accommodating increased housing numbers within the urban areas; on a perceived over-reliance on Wirral Waters; the impact of continued housing restrictions on the local economy; and the identification of Hoylake as a district rather than higher level centre.
- 3.3 Newer items included more detailed comments on the implications for flood risk, with regard to employment sites in Wallasey and Moreton, and dock and waterfront sites in Birkenhead; requests to consider the impact of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on level crossings and the potential future designation of additional historic gardens; and further information on the ability of existing water supply and waste water treatment infrastructure to accommodate new development, which is considered in further detail in paragraph 5.15 below.
- 3.4 A summary of the responses recommended is set out in Appendix 1 to this report which can be found in the Council's web library. The changes recommended have already been included in draft Core Strategy attached to this report. Text that had previously been included within the consultation documents to provide additional local context on the choices facing each area has now been removed. The revised Settlement Area policies are now contained within section 8 of the draft Core Strategy.

4.0 PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 A copy of the latest draft Core Strategy is provided as Appendix 4 to this report in the Council's web library. A briefer summary of the main contents of the document is set out in Appendix 2 to this report in the Council's web library. Members should note that the Delivery Framework and the appendices are still to be completed and there may be consequential amendments arising from the completion of the evidence base studies, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessments.
- 4.2 A summary of the most important changes that have occurred since the Council last considered the emerging content of the Core Strategy is set out below, alongside a summary of the main requirements that are still to be completed:

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 A new National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Government in March 2012 (Cabinet, 12 April 2012, Minute 385 refers), has introduced a significant change in the approach to the planning system, including a presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF, paragraph 14 refers) and a more relaxed approach

to the re-use of previously developed sites in the Green Belt (NPPF, paragraph 89 refers). Development that is in accord with the Framework is considered to be sustainable development, which should be permitted without delay.

- 4.4 The Planning Inspectorate is now expecting Councils to include a commitment to the presumption in their Local Plans through the inclusion of a model policy. This policy is now proposed to be included as Policy CS1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development in section 5 of the draft Core Strategy.
- 4.5 The presumption means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or unless specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted, such as sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt or as Local Green Space; designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion (NPPF, paragraph 14 refers).
- 4.6 The implications of other changes are set out elsewhere within this report.

Spatial Priorities

- 4.7 The Secretary of State originally announced the intention to revoke regional strategies in July 2010. The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West issued by the Secretary of State in September 2008 is, however, still awaiting the outcome of environmental assessments, which were subject to consultation in October 2011.
- 4.8 Until the Regional Spatial Strategy is formally revoked, Core Strategies are still legally required to have regard to the Regional Spatial Strategy. The draft Core Strategy, attached to this report has, however, been prepared on the basis that the Regional Spatial Strategy will have been revoked by the time the Core Strategy has been submitted for public examination.
- 4.9 The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy will remove the statutory basis for the spatial priorities focused around urban regeneration which had previously formed the focus of the Council's emerging policies, including the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development. The retention of this earlier spatial focus has also been undermined by the closure of the national Housing Market Renewal and Growth Point programmes, in March 2011, which sought to focus public and private sector investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area on the basis of nationally agreed designations supported by the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 4.10 In the absence of the Regional Spatial Strategy and these nationally designated priorities, the spatial priorities in the Core Strategy need to be justified in their own right, supported by an appropriate evidence base. The spatial priorities in the Draft Core Strategy, therefore focus on those areas of the Borough falling within the lowest 20 per cent of scores within the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England. This would include a wider range of communities than the current definition of regeneration priority areas, by including Woodchurch, parts of Moreton and some of

the outlying social housing estates at Bromborough, Eastham, Noctorum, Prenton and West Kirby. While previous consultation has questioned the ability to deliver the scale of development required to meet the Borough's needs within these areas, it has not questioned the principle of basing a spatial priority on worst 20 per cent of IMD scores. These areas are termed "areas of greatest need" in Policy CS2 - Broad Spatial Strategy in section 6 of the draft Core Strategy.

- 4.11 This revised approach is in line with the approach contained within the Preferred Options Report (Preferred Option 4 – Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy) which sought to focus first on Newheartlands and then on areas of greatest need; and reflects previous consultation responses that indicated that policies for regeneration would otherwise be too narrowly focused. The intention to focus new development towards existing centres and main public transport corridors has also been retained in the Broad Spatial Strategy.
- 4.12 The spatial priorities are now set in terms of the scale and density of development that will be permitted within each type of area (subject to the normal considerations of design, layout, access and so forth), so that medium to high density development will normally be permitted within areas of greatest need, within easy walking distance of an existing centre or a high frequency public transport corridor but only small scale lower density development would normally be allowed elsewhere. References to ceilings and targets have been removed in line with previous consultation responses and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Employment Priorities

- 4.13 The spatial priorities for employment have similarly been affected by the closure of the North West Development Agency, in March 2012, previously responsible for the designation of Strategic Regional Sites at Twelve Quays, Birkenhead Docks and Wirral International Business Park. Responsibility for future strategic sites has now been passed to the Local Enterprise Partnership. No clear statement has yet been made on the future status of these sites.
- 4.14 The draft Core Strategy, attached to this report, seeks to continue the focus on the completion of Wirral International Business Park; to reflect the more recent national designation of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone; and continued port activity at Twelve Quays, West Float, Cammell Lairds and Eastham. It also provides for continued employment at the existing industrial estates at Moreton, Upton and Prenton (Policy CS2, section 6). Policy CS12 sets out a baseline requirement to provide for up to 164 hectares of land to accommodate new employment development between 2012 and 2028, based on the annual average rate of development over the last 15 years of 8.2 hectares, including an additional five year buffer to facilitate an ongoing range and choice of sites.
- 4.15 Wirral's Investment Strategy aims to accelerate economic performance and deliver a significant uplift in the quantity and quality of the Borough's business premises. The Council's Enterprise Strategy (part of the Investment Strategy), which estimated that raising the Borough's economic activity and business stock towards the regional average would require an additional 55 hectares of land to be developed by 2016. The impact of the recession and the recent slow down in the construction of new employment development over recent years, means that the provision of additional business space and economic revitalisation continues as one of the main challenges

facing Wirral. The Investment Strategy includes specific key projects that are taken account of in the latest sub-regional job 'policy on' forecasts produced by The Mersey Partnership (March 2012). The scale of industrial and office floorspace required to meet the 'policy-on' forecast, translated into land requirements, suggests the need to provide a minimum of 64 hectares between 2012 and 2028.

- 4.16 There has been increasing pressure for other uses, including housing, at Moreton and Upton in particular, through consultation on the Settlement Area policies and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (see paragraph 4.24 below), on the basis of current trading conditions and a perceived oversupply of employment land. The National Planning Policy Framework now states that policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose (NPPF, paragraph 22).
- 4.17 Policy CS16 – Protection of Employment Land in section 19 of the draft Core Strategy now, therefore, sets out how employment sites will be considered for other uses including housing, to continue to deliver employment on these sites, wherever possible. Other issues related to the existing supply of employment land are considered at paragraph 5.2 below.

Housing Land Supply

- 4.18 The other principal issue to be addressed in the draft Core Strategy is the future supply of land for housing.
- 4.19 The Regional Spatial Strategy, which was prepared before the onset of the recession, expected new housing in Wirral to be delivered at an annual average rate of 500 net additional dwellings to 2021. In the recent recession, this requirement has not been delivered (resulting in a backlog of housing delivery equivalent to an additional 126 net dwellings per year) and clearly has no support from the market.
- 4.20 The latest 2008-based national household projections appear to indicate that a lower requirement could be supported to meet the needs of the existing population, in the region of an annual average of 400 net additional dwellings. Cabinet has already resolved that a figure based on the household projections should be adopted in the period between the revocation of the Regional Strategy and the adoption of the Core Strategy (Cabinet, 2 February 2012, Minute 284 refers). The 2008-based household projections are, however, based on a continued loss of population from the Borough to 2033. Reducing the loss of population or accommodating population growth, for example to further support economic revitalisation, would both require a higher figure to be provided.
- 4.21 The draft Core Strategy, attached to this report, currently shows an annual average requirement based on the 2008-based household projections of 439 additional dwellings between 2008 and 2028 (Policy CS17 – Housing Requirement, section 20). This incorporates future demolitions of 1,427 units and assumes that the population will continue to decline in line with past trends and that the backlog to April 2008 is made up across the remainder of the plan period to 2028.
- 4.22 Newly released ONS 2010-based sub-national population projections now suggest a potential reversal in the decline in population in Wirral, with an increase of 16,000 people by 2028. The projections still show a reduction in working age population and

the increase is almost wholly accounted for by an increase in older people. The implications for the housing requirement in the Core Strategy cannot be assessed until household-based projections are released by the ONS (expected to be later this year) but the revised figures could lead to a further increase in the number of homes that may need to be provided in the final Core Strategy, subject to the publication of initial results from the 2011 Census expected in July 2012.

- 4.23 The National Planning Policy Framework now requires an additional buffer of between 5 and 20 percent to be applied to the Borough's rolling five-year supply of specific deliverable housing sites, to provide for choice and competition in the market for land. Twenty percent will need to be added "where there has been a record of persistent under-delivery" which the Framework does not define (NPPF, paragraph 47).
- 4.24 Experience from independent examinations elsewhere in the country appears to indicate that Planning Inspectors are taking a precautionary approach to future housing land supply and are beginning to apply a 20 percent buffer, even where past delivery has been held back by market conditions rather than housing land supply. A recent Core Strategy Examination in Wigan has shown that Examination Inspectors will delay Core Strategies if this issue is not adequately addressed. The requirement for flexibility has already meant that authorities such as Halton and St Helens have been required to publish major modifications to their core strategies, to allow sites in the Green Belt to be considered, were this found to be needed later on in their plan periods, even where their strategies have been supported by evidence to demonstrate that an ongoing future supply of land was likely to be available.
- 4.25 Due to the impact of the recession on housing delivery (the number of net additional dwellings was only 22 in 2011/12) it would therefore appear prudent to plan on the basis of the worst case scenario and apply a 20 percent buffer, so as to comply with the NPPF's requirements.
- 4.26 The Borough's current housing land supply was included in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update for April 2011, which was published for public consultation in February (Cabinet, 3 February 2012, Minute 284 refers). The figures showed a limited five-year supply against the Regional Spatial Strategy, which would depend on all Category 1 sites, small sites and extant planning permissions being fully developed, including greenfield sites, sites within designated Conservation Areas, sites currently designated for employment and sites that would currently be subject to restrictions in the Interim Planning Policy. The provision of sufficient housing land in years 6-10 and 11-15 would also need to rely on these sources. The comments received are summarised at Appendix 3 to this report in the Council's web library.
- 4.27 Previous responses to consultation on the Core Strategy, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and on the draft Settlement Area Policies have shown continued opposition to the use of previously undeveloped greenfield sites. Accepting this would mean that realising the supply would need to primarily rely on the re-development of surplus employment land and previously developed sites in areas where restrictions on new development were previously in force.
- 4.28 The amended Assessment, which now takes full account of the additional requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, continues to show a shortfall in housing land supply when measured against the RSS requirement over the five and

ten year periods from 2012, without Wirral Waters. Across the fifteen year period, the amended Assessment demonstrates a potential surplus against the RSS requirement, reflecting the significant capacity of sites that are not currently developable, which are included in Category 3. When measured against the 2008-based household projections, the amended Assessment demonstrates that the capacity identified would be able to accommodate projected household growth within the five, ten and fifteen year periods from 2012, without Wirral Waters.

- 4.29 Applying the NPPF 20 per cent buffer would maintain this position, although it would limit the five-year supply against the 2008-based household projections to a 5.4 year supply, without Wirral Waters.
- 4.30 In response to these issues, Policy CS19 - Housing Contingencies (in section 20 of the draft Core Strategy), sets out the approach to be taken if sites have not come forward for development at Wirral Waters and an ongoing five-year supply cannot be maintained by other sites from within the urban area. Sites would only be considered in the Green Belt as a last resort, and where a rigorous set of criteria had been satisfied. Sites to meet the requirements of CS19 would be allocated in a site-specific Local Plan.

Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development

- 4.31 The successful refusal of planning applications under the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development has been based on housing land supply grounds, while the supply of land with planning permission was sufficient to meet the national requirement for a five-year supply, and the regeneration priorities set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update shows that the ongoing supply of suitable urban sites will be severely limited, if the Interim Planning Policy continues to be retained.
- 4.32 The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that local policies will be considered out-of-date where a five-year supply cannot be demonstrated and that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply. In the absence of alternative sites within the urban area, the presumption would allow development within the areas previously subject to restrictions, where they can be shown to be sustainable, in terms of access to shops, services and public transport, even with the Interim Planning Policy still in place.
- 4.33 Removing the Interim Planning Policy would allow the Council to retain a measure of control by allowing urban sites outside the regeneration priority areas to come forward for development in line with the existing Unitary Development Plan and could reduce the pressure to provide for development on less suitable greenfield and Green Belt sites in the Core Strategy. This could also allow for an increase in the delivery of new housing, which has slumped in response to the recession, to contribute to economic recovery and jobs.

5.0 EVIDENCE BASE UPDATES

- 5.1 A number of additional studies relating to employment, housing, retailing, open space and recreation, water and transport have been drawing to completion since the Core Strategy was last reported to Cabinet (Cabinet, 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers):

Employment Land and Premises Study Update

- 5.2 An update of the Employment Land and Premises Study is being prepared by BE Group, which compares past levels of take-up and the latest forecasts for labour supply and job growth. Initial findings from the study indicate that the principal issue is still the need to safeguard existing employment and the quality of future supply.
- 5.3 The final Study will be presented to Cabinet for Council approval, alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in September.
- 5.4 Policies for employment are now contained within section 19 of the draft Core Strategy.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update (April 2011)

- 5.5 A update to the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was published for public consultation in February 2012. A copy of the documents that were consulted on and the comments received can be viewed at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>. The responses recommended are set out in Appendix 3 to this report and the principal findings have already been outlined at paragraph 4.25 above.
- 5.6 The final revised assessment will be presented to Cabinet for Council approval, alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in September.
- 5.7 Policies for housing are now contained within section 20 of the draft Core Strategy.

Retailing Spending Update

- 5.8 The Council's retained retail consultants (GVA) have been preparing an update of the assessment of retail capacity and expenditure previously contained within the Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study prepared by Roger Tym & Partners in 2009.
- 5.9 The final revised assessment will be presented to Cabinet for Council approval, alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in September.
- 5.10 Policies for retailing and town centres are now contained within section 21 of the draft Core Strategy.

Wirral Open Space and Recreation Assessment

- 5.11 Amendments required in response to the comments received on the Open Space Assessment prepared by Strategic Leisure as part of the former Cultural Services Forward Plan (Cabinet 4 February 2010, Minute 308 refers) have now been addressed by Council Officers. The findings are now presented at Settlement Area-level; include a revised analysis based on the waiting list for allotments; and more detailed information on the supply and use of outdoor sports facilities. The revised Assessment also sets out a preliminary assessment of provision for indoor sport, which shows that the Borough is generally well-provided with a broad range of both public and private facilities.

- 5.12 The final Open Space and Recreation Assessment will be presented to Cabinet for Council approval, alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in September and may be supplemented by the revised Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Sports Study being prepared by Technical Services with the guidance of Sport England by the end of the year.
- 5.13 Further work has also been completed to minimise the scale of the contract likely to be needed to prepare a green infrastructure strategy, which is now expected to be commissioned during the summer (Cabinet, 13 January 2011, Minute 283 refers).
- 5.14 References to indoor sport have now been included in section 2 and the policies for individual Settlement Areas (sections 9 to 16); and policies for green infrastructure are now contained within section 22 of the draft Core Strategy.

Water Cycle Study

- 5.15 The Water Cycle Study has been prepared by specialist consultants under a joint contract with Liverpool City Council (Cabinet, 14 October 2010, Minute 176 refers). A draft report for Wirral was received from the consultants in October 2011. Comments have been received from each of the main partners but have not yet been received from United Utilities, which means that the study cannot yet be formally concluded. The final report for Wirral, currently being prepared alongside the final report for Liverpool, is expected to be received from the consultants in September. If comments cannot be obtained from United Utilities, the final report may need to be adopted without their input.
- 5.16 The main findings related to wastewater treatment and transmission, water resources and supply, flood risk and drainage include recommendations to ensure that the water environment and water services infrastructure has the capacity to sustain the level and pattern of growth envisaged within the Core Strategy.
- 5.17 In addition to the Water Cycle Study process, information on likely future development has been provided to United Utilities on three occasions. Comments received in response to consultation on the draft Settlement Area policies, nevertheless, appear to indicate that there are likely to be serious issues with the ongoing capacity of the waste water treatment works at Meols and Birkenhead. While there are no issues with the overall amount of water that can be supplied to Wirral, local supply infrastructure will require multiple projects and network reinforcement to deliver the necessary pressure and volumes, particularly to support the delivery of Wirral Waters. It is not yet clear how much of an impact this will have on the future pattern of development and further investigations are ongoing.
- 5.18 It is hoped that the final Study will be available to be presented to Cabinet for Council approval, alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in September.
- 5.19 Policies related to the findings of the Water Cycle Study are currently contained in Policy CS20 – Criteria for New Housing Development (section 20), Policy CS33 – Drainage Management (section 23) and the policies for individual Settlement Areas (sections 9 to 16 of the draft Core Strategy).

Transport Modelling

- 5.20 Mott MacDonald have assessed the transport impacts within the Core Strategy utilising the Liverpool City Region Transport Model developed as part of the Third Local Transport Plan preparation process. Early results from this work indicate that the levels of growth anticipated in the draft Core Strategy are likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing transport network, albeit with increases in traffic flows in Birkenhead Town Centre, Wirral Waters, and the A41 at Tranmere and Bromborough. These results will now be applied to the Council's more detailed East Wirral Traffic Model to identify any more localised infrastructure requirements.
- 5.21 The results of the final study will be reported to Cabinet in September for inclusion in the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.
- 5.22 Policies for transport are currently contained within section 25 of the draft Core Strategy and in the policies for individual Settlement Areas (in sections 9 to 16).

6.0 OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 The Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy must be accompanied by a statutory sustainability appraisal report, to demonstrate that the duty to promote sustainable development has been taken into account; and a Habitats Regulations Assessment, to demonstrate that the Strategy will not have an adverse impact, either on its own or in combination with other plans or strategies, on designated European Sites.

Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 6.2 The Core Strategy has been accompanied by a sustainability appraisal report at each stage in its preparation, amended in response to previous consultation, to consider the performance of each of the emerging policies against 25 local sustainability objectives. The final report will need to conclude this analysis and must also satisfy the additional requirements of strategic environmental assessment (Executive Board, 12 July 2006, Minute 114 refers).
- 6.3 An independent Sustainability Appraisal Panel was appointed in October 2006, to oversee the appraisal processes undertaken by the Council at each stage of the plan making process. It is therefore recommended that the Panel is again involved in the preparation of the sustainability appraisal report for the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy before the final documents are presented to the Council for approval.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.4 A separate statutory assessment is required to test the impact of the Core Strategy on designated European Sites. An initial Screening Assessment was previously prepared to inform the consultation on the Spatial Option Reports and a fuller Interim Assessment was prepared to accompany the Preferred Options Report. This must now be worked up into a final assessment of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.
- 6.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment is a specialist piece of work, requiring the input of nature conservation professionals, which could not be carried out in-house. As the Assessment also needs to consider the potential impacts on designated European Sites outside the Borough boundary, savings have previously been achieved through joint commissioning with the other Merseyside districts, through the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) the Council's specialist environmental

advisors. It is therefore recommended that monies remaining from this contract, which MEAS advise should be sufficient to complete the final report, are used with a contingency from existing resources set aside within the budget for Regeneration and Planning.

7.0 ADDITIONAL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 has introduced a new duty to co-operate, to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on strategic matters in the preparation of development plan documents in the interests of the sustainable development or use of land, which will need to be addressed before the Core Strategy is published and submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 7.2 The bodies listed in the latest national regulations currently include other local planning authorities, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Homes and Communities Agency, Primary Care Trusts, the Office of Rail Regulation, Integrated Transport Authorities, Highway Authorities including the Secretary of State, the Marine Management Organisation and Local Enterprise Partnerships. While there is a long history of co-operation with these authorities and public agencies, Planning Inspectors are now expecting evidence of a level of engagement which goes beyond previous notification and consultation procedures. It is therefore recommended that further work is undertaken to engage and seek the agreement of these bodies before the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy is brought back for Cabinet and Council approval, so that an appropriate evidence base can be presented to the independent public examination.

8.0 REQUEST FROM SEFTON COUNCIL

- 8.1 Sefton Council has recently written to the Council under the Duty to Co-operate to consider the potential to meet development needs arising from Sefton within adjoining districts in order to avoid going into the Merseyside Green Belt in Sefton. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 6 to this report.
- 8.2 Evidence from the Liverpool City Region Overview Study (Cabinet, 21 July 2011, Minute 76 refers) shows a general trend of out-migration from Liverpool to surrounding neighbours. Interactions between Wirral and Sefton are therefore primarily secondary, in the sense that people moving out of Liverpool are choosing between Sefton and/or Wirral (amongst others) depending on the housing offer available and do not tend to move between Sefton and Wirral directly. This suggests that the potential to meet Sefton's unmet housing needs within Wirral would be very limited. More fundamentally, the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment would suggest that there is likely to be little or no spare capacity within Wirral to accommodate the additional requirements of neighbouring districts.
- 8.3 Travel to work patterns would, again, appear to show a very limited functional relationship between Wirral and Sefton, with the main flows out of Wirral to Liverpool and to Cheshire West and Chester and comparatively minor flows between Sefton and Wirral. While the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study shows sufficient employment land to meet the Borough's needs in terms of past trends, addressing significant challenges around low wages, low job and business densities and high rates of economic inactivity, worklessness and income and employment deprivation is likely to leave little capacity to meet needs arising from other areas.

- 8.4 It is therefore recommended that the Wirral Council response to Sefton, whilst confirming assistance with Sefton's consequences study, supports the retention of the Green Belt in order to continue to promote urban regeneration across the sub-region as a whole and would view releasing land from the Green Belt as a last resort, while vacant urban land remains available elsewhere within the urban areas. Secondly, it is recommended that Wirral Council confirms that it will not be able to identify land for development to meet housing and/or economic development needs arising in Sefton.

9.0 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 The Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with a Statement of Community Involvement that was adopted by Council following public examination on 18 December 2006 (Minute 86 refers). Significant changes to national regulations (in 2008 and again in 2012) mean that the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement is now considerably out of date.
- 9.2 While the Statement of Community Involvement is still a statutory requirement, it is no longer subject to public examination and can be adopted by the Council following statutory procedures including public consultation. It is therefore recommended that the existing Statement is revised to comply with the new requirements and that draft revisions are reported to Cabinet for approval for public consultation later in the year.
- 9.3 The revised Statement of Community Involvement will only apply to documents prepared once the Core Strategy has been adopted.

10.0 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORTS

- 10.1 The statutory requirements for annual monitoring, to set out progress on the delivery of local development documents and the extent to which local policies are being achieved, have also recently been altered to allow authorities more discretion in the content and timing of reporting to local communities (Localism Act 2012, section 113, refers).
- 10.2 In previous years, the Council has published a single monitoring report, once a year in December, for formal submission to the Secretary of State. An annual report no longer needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State and local planning authorities are now required to make any up-to-date information, which they have collected for monitoring purposes, available as soon as possible after the information is collected. The data must, however, still be presented on at least an annual basis.
- 10.3 In addition, the Government's Open Data policy for local government requires data (unless private or sensitive) to be made available on-line in open, machine readable formats with the ability for the user to interrogate the data so that it can be easily reused by residents, businesses and other interested parties.
- 10.4 In the future, the information collected for annual monitoring will be influenced by the content of the Core Strategy and will need to be published directly to the Council's website and presented in a different format, including a series of spreadsheets rather than summary data in a single annual report. Proposals for delegating the approval of datasets for future publication will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet later in the year.

11.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 11.1 There is a risk that all or parts of the Core Strategy will not be found sound at public examination, which would lead to abortive and additional costs, and could significantly delay the adoption of an up-to-date Local Plan for Wirral.
- 11.2 There is a risk that the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which has currently been delayed by the preparation of environmental reports, may still not have occurred by the time the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State, which could affect some of the calculations contained within the Core Strategy, but should largely be mitigated by the continued promotion of urban regeneration and compliance with the newly issued National Planning Policy Framework.
- 11.3 There is also a risk that further alterations may be required to the Core Strategy to take account of any new national household projections and the 2011 Census, which may need to be considered during the independent examination.

12.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 12.1 The spatial options for the Core Strategy have been subject to consultation on two previous occasions.
- 12.2 The alternative option of not preparing a Core Strategy would mean that the Council would have to continue to rely on the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000. The national presumption in favour of sustainable development will be held to apply where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date (NPPF paragraph 14). It is therefore highly likely that decisions on planning applications will have to be made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, with the policies in the Unitary Development Plan carrying weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF, assessed on a case by case basis.

13.0 CONSULTATION

- 13.1 The Core Strategy has been prepared in consultation with a wide range of statutory and public agencies; private businesses, landowners and developers; local amenity societies; national interest groups; and members of the public; including Area Forum representatives and the Local Strategic Partnership, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by the Council in December 2006.

14.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 14.1 Voluntary, community and faith organisations have been involved at each stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by the Council in December 2006 and will have the opportunity to comment on the soundness of the Core Strategy before it is submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 14.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Panel includes representatives from local wildlife and amenity groups.

15.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 15.1 The publication of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy is estimated to cost up to £15,000, which can be met from existing resources.
- 15.2 The Employment Land and Premises Study Update will be completed by BE Group for £3,000 (excluding VAT) from an original estimated budget of £6,000 (Cabinet 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers).
- 15.3 The Retail Update has been prepared by GVA, the Council's retained retail consultants, for £4,412.50 (excluding VAT) from an original estimated budget of £5,000 (Cabinet 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers).
- 15.4 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment April 2011 Update has been prepared with the Council's in-house resources with assistance from A P Sheehan for £5,100 (excluding VAT) from an original estimated budget of £6,000 (Cabinet 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers).
- 15.5 The Water Cycle Study, a joint commission with Liverpool City Council, will be completed by Scott Wilson URS for £25,000 (£12,500 per authority, excluding VAT) from an original estimated total budget of £50,000 (Cabinet, 14 October, Minute 176 refers).
- 15.6 The Open Space and Recreation Assessment has been prepared using in-house resources.
- 15.7 Transport modelling has been carried out by specialist consultants procured under the Technical Services Framework Agreement and is currently expected to cost in the region of £50,000 (excluding VAT), funded from budgets in Technical Services
- 15.8 The Sustainability Appraisal will be completed using in-house resources, with the assistance of the Sustainability Appraisal Panel.
- 15.9 The Habitats Regulations Assessment will need to be prepared by independent specialist consultants under an existing joint contract with the Merseyside districts. The remaining budget of £2,523 should be sufficient to complete this report.
- 15.10 The costs associated with supporting the independent examination of the Core Strategy can only be estimated when the scale and nature of the issues likely to be considered is better known but could cost up to £200,000 during 2012/13, which could be reduced by using in-house resources and by reducing the number of areas to which people are likely to want to make submissions.
- 15.11 The provision of net additional dwellings will have implications for the ongoing award of New Homes Bonus, in addition to a wider economic impact and the number and composition of the local population can have significant implications for future Council resources.

16.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 The Council's Constitution requires the publication and submission of the Core Strategy to be approved by Full Council.

- 16.2 The Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and the Regional Spatial Strategy will remain the statutory Development Plan for Wirral until RSS is revoked and the Core Strategy is formally adopted by the Council following independent examination. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration and the national presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply when the Development Plan is considered to be absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, which means that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 16.3 Although the Core Strategy will only formally replace the strategic policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 when it has been formally adopted by the Council following independent examination, the weight to be attached to the emerging Core Strategy as a material consideration will increase as each successive stage towards adoption is reached (NPPF, paragraph 216 refers). In the meantime, the approval of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy for publication and submission to independent examination will endorse the content of the Proposed Submission Draft as a statement of Council policy and will supersede the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development adopted in October 2005.
- 16.4 The Core Strategy cannot, however, be formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan unless it is legally compliant and found to be sound following independent examination. To be sound the Core Strategy must be *positively prepared*, to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements; *justified*, in terms of being the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives; *effective*, in terms of being deliverable and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and *consistent with national policy*, by delivering sustainable development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 182).
- 16.5 Once adopted, neighbourhood planning proposals now being prepared for Devonshire Park, Hoylake, Central Liscard and Greasby, will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Core Strategy. The resulting Neighbourhood Plans will also be subject to separate independent examination and a referendum in each area, prior to their potential adoption by the Council as part of the statutory development plan.

17.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 The Core Strategy has been subject to an ongoing impact review. The policy directions promoted within the draft Core Strategy attached to this report have been developed in line with the previously published Preferred Options. The EIA for the Preferred Options stage can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/2577>
- 17.2 The Draft Core Strategy includes criteria for considering accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers (Policy CS23, section 20).
- 17.3 The final EIA for the Core Strategy will be submitted when the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September.

18.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

18.1 The draft Core Strategy includes policies related to the promotion of a more sustainable pattern of development, including measures to promote sustainable design and construction, which could have a significant influence on carbon reduction.

19.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

19.1 The Core Strategy will set out the Council's strategic policies for the control of land use and development, which will be used in the determination of planning applications and other decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts and will replace the strategic policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development adopted in October 2005.

19.2 The draft Core Strategy includes policies related to environmental protection, major accident hazards, pollution, flooding, water management, coast protection, highway safety, anti-social behaviour and crime prevention.

20.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

20.1 That the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy attached to this report is approved as the basis for preparing a final document for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

20.2 That the findings of the remaining evidence base reports on employment, housing, retailing, open space and recreation, water and transport are reported back to Cabinet alongside the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.

20.3 That the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy attached to this report is approved for further informal internal and external liaison to confirm the soundness of the emerging Core Strategy and to satisfy the new duty to co-operate.

20.4 That the independent Sustainability Appraisal Panel is involved in the preparation of the sustainability appraisal for the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.

20.5 That the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy is undertaken by independent specialist consultants under the existing sub-regional contract with the Merseyside districts.

20.6 That the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy and its accompanying documents are reported back to Cabinet before being submitted to Council for approval for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

20.7 That the Council responds to Sefton Council to indicate that Wirral would not be able to accommodate development needs arising from Sefton based on the comments set out in paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4 of this report.

21.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

21.1 To enable the Council to submit an up-to-date Local Plan for Wirral to the Secretary of State for public examination in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and to respond to a request by Sefton Council under the duty to co-operate.

REPORT AUTHOR: Andrew Fraser
Forward Planning Manager
telephone: (0151) 691 8218
email: andrewfraser@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

The following appendices can be found in the Council's web library under "Information Items" and then "Core Strategy - Proposed Submission Draft July 2012"

Appendix 1 – Summary of Proposed Responses to Settlement Area Consultation
Appendix 2 – Summary of Proposed Submission Draft Contents
Appendix 3 – Summary of Proposed Responses to SHLAA April 2011 Consultation
Appendix 4 - Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy
Appendix 5 - Draft Report of Consultation on Settlement Area Policies
Appendix 6 – Letter from Sefton Council

REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Localism Act 2011](#) (part 6 refers)

[National Planning Policy Framework \(CLG, March 2012\)](#)

[Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|--------------------------|
| Cabinet (Spatial Options) (Minute 200) | 26 November 2009 |
| Cabinet (Preferred Options) (Minute 89) | 22 July 2010 |
| Cabinet (Preferred Options - Approval) (Minute 143) | 23 September 2010 |
| Council (Preferred Options - Approval) (Minute 36) | 18 October 2010 |
| Cabinet (Preferred Options – Report of Consultation) (Minute 80) | 21 July 2011 |

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Robert Oates

Email address: robertoates@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: David Ball

Chief Officer: Kevin Adderley

Department: Regeneration, Housing and Planning

Date: 24/06/12

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

The Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Cabinet 19 July 2012.

The EIA of the proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be published on the Council's website at the following location:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

A Borough-wide strategy for the use and development of land that could have ramifications for a whole range of public, private and voluntary and community sector interests.

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

| Which group(s) of people could be affected | Potential positive or negative impact | Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact | Lead person | Timescale | Resource implications |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Race | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012.</p> <p>Policy CS23 – Gypsies and Travellers, is likely to have a positive impact through the provision of more suitable accommodation.</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Gender | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012. | | | Cabinet in September 2012 | |
| Disability | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012.</p> <p>Policy CS22 – Criteria for Specialist Housing, and Policy CS42 – Design, are likely to have a positive impact by providing additional accommodation and layouts suitable to provide for all abilities.</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Gender Reassignment | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012.</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Age | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012.</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Policy CS22 – Criteria for Specialist Housing, is likely to have a positive impact by increasing the local provision of sheltered, supported and extra care housing. | | | 2012 | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012. | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Religion and Belief | The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012. | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Sexual Orientation | The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012. | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |
| Marriage and Civil | The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission | Staff time in producing the Submission |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Partnership | negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012. | | | Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Draft Core Strategy. |
| Low Incomes and Worklessness | <p>The policy directions promoted have been developed in line with the previous Preferred Options EIA, which identified that there were no negative impacts affecting this particular group of people. A full EIA of the final Proposed Submission Draft will be undertaken when the Core Strategy comes back to Cabinet for final approval in September 2012.</p> <p>The focus on improving areas in greatest need, defined as areas falling within the lowest 20% of scores within the national Index of Multiple Deprivation in England, is likely to have a positive impact by improving quality of life and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Policy CS21 – Affordable Housing Requirements, should also have a positive impact by providing additional affordable housing.</p> | None | Forward Planning: Andrew Fraser | The final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in September 2012 | Staff time in producing the Submission Draft Core Strategy. |

Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

The final revised EIA for the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will be presented to Members in September 2012. The Core Strategy is subject to statutory annual monitoring under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

The policy direction identified in the draft Core Strategy is based on Preferred Options which were subject to public consultation in November 2010. The Preferred Options EIA found no negative impacts identified.

The final Core Strategy is expected to apply equally to all people submitting planning applications, irrespective of their status, based on the impact of the development itself in line with planning case law.

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

The policies contained within the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy are based on the findings of a Spatial Portrait, informed by socio-economic data collated from national data sets and the Council's Annual Monitoring Report, which has been completed, each year, since 2004/05. This includes information on the broad profile of the Borough's residents and key issues within each of the Settlement Areas across the Borough, confirmed through repeated public consultation.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Consultation on the final Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy will take place in accordance with the Council's statutory Statement of Community Involvement, adopted in December 2006, and will comply with national regulations (issued by the Government in April 2012), be subject to Council approval in October 2012, and should be completed by early 2013.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

Section 9: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Add appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)**
- c) **Send this EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**