

WIRRAL COUNCIL

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SUBJECT:	<i>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL – REPORT OF CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT CORE STRATEGY</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR PAT HACKETT, REGENERATION & PLANNING STRATEGY</i>
KEY DECISION?	<i>YES</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Proposed Submission Draft of the Council's Core Strategy Local Plan, which was approved by Council on 15 October 2012 (Minute 60 refers) was published for statutory public consultation in December 2012. A summary of the comments received and the recommended responses are set out in the Council's on-line Document Library. Some of the recommended responses propose modifications to the Core Strategy. Other responses, for example, with regard to housing, gypsies and travellers and viability will require further work to be completed before they can be confirmed.

1.2 The report recommends that:

- the responses recommended in the Document Library are approved;
- the recommended modifications to the Core Strategy are approved as the basis for further informal consultation with key stakeholders and respondents;
- progress on up-to-date evidence to support responses to issues related to housing, Green Belt, gypsies and travellers and viability are noted;
- four supplementary planning documents are prepared, for housing, employment, town centre uses and telecommunications to support the future implementation of the Core Strategy; and that
- any further modifications that may be necessary to address issues related to housing, Green Belt, gypsies and travellers, development viability, retail floorspace thresholds and the views of key stakeholders, are reported back to Cabinet before Full Council is invited to approve the final text of the Core Strategy for submission to the Secretary of State for public examination.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Council on 15 October 2012 (Minute 60) approved the publication of a Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy that is intended to replace the strategic policies of the Unitary Development Plan and provide the framework for neighbourhood plans prepared by the local community. Consultation took place over eight weeks during December 2012 and February 2013 and a total of 64 respondents made up to 670 separate comments on individual elements of the Core Strategy.

- 2.2 Cabinet on 27 September 2012 (Minute 92) resolved that the comments received on the Proposed Submission Draft should be reported back to the Cabinet before the Core Strategy was approved for submission to the Secretary of State for public examination. A summary of the representations received and the responses recommended to each comment can be viewed in the Council's on-line Document Library.
- 2.3 The Planning Inspector that the Secretary of State will appoint to examine the soundness and legal compliance of the Core Strategy will have a legal duty to consider each of the representations made and to offer the opportunity for anyone who has requested a change to the Core Strategy to be heard at an oral hearing. The Inspector is not however limited by the scope of the representations that have been received and can also raise issues for further consideration.
- 2.4 Given the cost and significance of the public examination process, it is important for the Council to consider the implications of the representations submitted; to seek to minimise the number and range of issues that will need to be examined by the Inspector; and to reduce the risk of the Core Strategy being found unsound or legally deficient. The Council is now also subject to an additional legal duty to co-operate with named public bodies, including adjoining local authorities and national agencies, introduced by the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.5 Most of the comments that have been submitted could be addressed by minor changes to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the Core Strategy. Others are, however, more significant and involve issues of policy or principle that could significantly alter the direction and content of the Core Strategy and are summarised below.

3.0 ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS TO CABINET

- 3.1 A previous report to Cabinet indicated a number of areas where a Planning Inspector could potentially find the Core Strategy unsound. This included issues related to the former Regional Spatial Strategy; housing requirements; housing land supply; accommodation for gypsies and travellers; employment land requirements; development viability; the capacity of waste water treatment; and future standards for open space unsound (Cabinet, 27 September 2012, Minute 92 refers).
- 3.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy was formally revoked by the Government on 20 May 2013, increasing the importance that will be attached to the new housing requirement figure that must now be included within the Council's Core Strategy. This issue is currently being addressed by a review of the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year.
- 3.3 Issues relating to housing land supply have initially been addressed through the revocation of the Council's non-statutory Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (Council, 15 October 2012, Minute 60). Initial indications are that a further 116 dwellings have been granted planning permission since the Interim Planning Housing Policy was revoked, on sites that would previously have been subject to restrictions. A further 106 dwellings have also been approved subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement.

- 3.4 Issues relating to gypsies and travellers are currently being addressed through a sub-regional study of accommodation requirements, with the councils for Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton and West Lancashire, which is expected to be completed in September 2013.
- 3.5 Issues relating to employment land requirements have been addressed through a review of the additional land that may be required to address the aspirations of the Wirral Investment Strategy, which has reduced from 55 hectares to 36 hectares and may provide further scope for the development of less attractive or more marginal employment sites for alternative uses, such as housing in suitable locations.
- 3.6 Issues related to development viability are currently being addressed by specialist consultants appointed to examine the viability of the strategy and policy requirements to be contained in the Core Strategy and to advise on the scope for charges that could be applied through a potential Community Infrastructure Levy on new development, which is currently expected to be complete by October 2013.
- 3.7 Issues relating to waste water treatment have been addressed through the completion of a jointly commissioned Water Cycle Study, with Liverpool City Council, and through ongoing discussions with United Utilities, which should be concluded during the summer.
- 3.8 Issues relating to open space standards are currently being addressed through additional survey work, which should also be completed during the summer.
- 3.9 Progress on some of these outstanding items means that a formal response to some of the representations received will need to be the subject of a further report to Cabinet, before a final set of modifications can be recommended for approval by Council.

4.0 ISSUES ARISING FROM STATUTORY CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Statutory consultation on the Proposed Submission Draft has identified at least four major issues that will need to be resolved before the Core Strategy is submitted to public examination.
- 4.2 These issues relate to future housing requirements (to replace the Regional Spatial Strategy); the adequacy of the housing land supply (to provide an ongoing five-year supply over the fifteen year plan period); the implications for the Green Belt; proposals for new retail and leisure development; and the re-use of existing employment sites, some of which are inter-related and have drawn comments from duty to co-operate partners, including Liverpool City Council, Sefton Council and Chester West and Chester Council.
- 4.3 Unless resolved in line with national policy, these issues will form a prominent part of any future public examination of the Core Strategy and could lead a Planning Inspector to recommend that the Core Strategy should be withdrawn as unsound.

Housing Requirement

- 4.4 A significant number of respondents to the Core Strategy have cited the Council's need to meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing, to satisfy the requirements of national policy (National Planning Policy Framework,

paragraph 47 refers) and for any new housing requirement figure to be based on the latest available household projections.

- 4.5 The housing requirement figure included in the Proposed Submission Draft (Policy CS18 – Housing Requirement) was based on the Regional Spatial Strategy for North West England (RSS), which the Core Strategy was legally obliged to follow until RSS was formally revoked. Now that RSS has been revoked, the Council will be responsible for setting a new housing requirement through the Core Strategy.
- 4.6 The previous report to Cabinet, in September 2012 (Minute 92 refers), explained how the identification of a revised housing requirement for Wirral had been complicated by the publication of the 2011 Census, which had rendered previously published population and household projections invalid, leaving no reliable alternative basis for projecting future household needs until revised national projections were published. This included the analysis contained within the Council's existing Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which was based on projections from 2006.
- 4.7 Interim 2011-based household projections for England have now been published, to take account of the results of the 2011 Census. The accompanying statistical release, dated 9 April 2013, advises that the projections should be used as part of the evidence base for the future demand for housing in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.8 The Interim statistics for Wirral project an annual average increase of 335 households between 2011 and 2021, which is significantly lower than previously projected. It should, however, be noted that household projections are policy-off projections based on past demographic trends and that the final revised housing requirement must also take account of other factors including vacancy rates, second homes and any pre-existing housing needs, as part of a wider Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 4.9 As final responses to comments related to the future housing requirement figure for Wirral will not be able to be confirmed until the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wirral has been completed, recommendations related to these and related items are marked in the Document Library as "no change is recommended, at this stage".
- 4.10 Responses to comments related to the future housing requirement figure for Wirral will therefore need to be the subject of a further report to Cabinet once the Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been completed, before the final text of the Core Strategy is approved.

Housing Land Supply

- 4.11 A number of responses to the Core Strategy have continued to be directed towards the adequacy of the Borough's current housing land supply, citing a reliance on sites which do not yet have planning permission, sites with alternative uses or designations and the viability of the sites identified, particularly within regeneration priority areas now public funding has reduced. The likelihood of the delivery of high numbers of homes at Wirral Waters has also been questioned.
- 4.12 The previous report to Cabinet, in September 2012 (Minute 92 refers), explained the importance of the Council being able to ensure that an ongoing five-year housing land

supply is in place before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State. The two elements of this requirement are based on the number of new homes that are needed and the likelihood that they will be delivered on the sites identified, based on an assessment of development viability.

- 4.13 Following the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the numerical adequacy of the land supply will need to be assessed against the housing requirement figure to be identified in the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wirral.
- 4.14 Although the potential delivery of housing sites has already been assessed as part of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, wider issues related to development viability will also need to be considered as part of the Core Strategy Viability Study, with regard to the delivery of the Core Strategy as a whole (referred to in paragraph 3.6 above).
- 4.15 As final responses to comments related to the adequacy of the future housing land supply will not be able to confirmed until the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Core Strategy Viability Study have been completed, recommendations related to these and related items are marked in the Document Library as "no change is recommended, at this stage".
- 4.16 Responses to comments related to the adequacy of the future housing land supply will therefore need to be the subject of a further report to Cabinet once the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Core Strategy Viability Study have been completed, before the final text of the Core Strategy is approved.

Green Belt

- 4.17 The future housing requirement figure to be identified in the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment could have implications for the Green Belt, if the number of homes required cannot be delivered within the existing urban area.
- 4.18 The Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy included a contingency policy which indicated that sites in the Green Belt may have to be considered if new housing did not come forward at Wirral Waters within the first five years and alternative sites sufficient to provide an ongoing five-year supply between 2018 and 2023 had not obtained planning permission (Policy CS20 – Housing Contingencies, refers).
- 4.19 A number of respondents have indicated that a review of the Green Belt should be undertaken immediately, given the issues surrounding the current housing land supply and the time that would be needed to complete a subsequent site-specific land allocations Local Plan. Cheshire West and Chester Council also consider that the approach to Green Belt release should be dealt with up-front, rather than being left to monitoring and review, as any failure to meet Wirral's full objectively assessed needs may result in additional pressure on neighbouring authorities to accommodate any unmet need.
- 4.20 Although the Core Strategy is not intended to identify specific sites, land currently being promoted for development in the Green Belt through submissions to the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy include:

- land at Irby Road, Irby (rear of Irby Hall) – for housing;
- land at Meols (to the rear of and Rycroft Road) – for housing;
- land at Chester Road, Gayton (between Gayton Park, Darlington’s Yard and the railway) – for housing;
- land at Seaview Meadows, Leasowe (west of the Leasowe Castle Hotel) – for housing;
- land at Landican (opposite Asda at Woodchurch) – for employment, as an extension to the North Cheshire Trading Estate;
- land at Eastham (between the Motorway and the Mill Park Estate) – for housing;
- land at Eastham (on three sites along Ferry Road Seaview Road) – for housing and/or employment; and
- land associated with the rural settlements at Barnston, Brimstage, Raby, Storeton and Thornton Hough – for housing, tourism and employment.

4.21 As final responses to comments related to the Green Belt will, again, not be able to confirmed until the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Core Strategy Viability Study have been completed, recommendations related to these and related items are also marked in the Document Library as “no change is recommended, at this stage”.

4.22 Responses to comments related to the potential release of land from the Green Belt will therefore also be the subject of a further report to Cabinet, once the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Core Strategy Viability Study have been completed, before the final text of the Core Strategy is approved.

Retail and Leisure Development

4.23 The main issue arising from representations submitted to the Core Strategy on retail and leisure development, relate to proposals for the future of Bidston Dock, which the owners of the site wish to develop as “a major nationally important leisure and retail destination”, which “is expected to attract visitors from the wider region and beyond...whilst also serving to claw back the substantial volumes of leisure and retail expenditure which is currently lost to surrounding areas”.

4.24 The owners of Bidston Dock want their intentions to be reflected in the Spatial Vision, in Policy CS5 – Priorities for the Commercial Core of Birkenhead, in revised wording in Policy CS12 – Wirral Waters, and in other amendments throughout the Core Strategy associated with the further promotion of Wirral Waters.

4.25 Duty to co-operate partners including Liverpool City Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council and other interested parties are seeking further information on the scale, type and impact of any future development at Bidston Dock and the inclusion of safeguards to prevent harm to existing centres in neighbouring authorities, including Liverpool City Centre.

4.26 The Proposed Submission Core Strategy currently states that: “Development at Bidston Dock will provide for complementary development that will further support the economic revitalisation of the area, without causing harm to existing centres and facilities” (Policy CS12 – Wirral Waters).

4.27 As the Core Strategy is not a site-specific Local Plan it must stop short of endorsing detailed site-specific proposals. National planning policy also requires the application of a sequential approach to the location of new main town centre uses. Only if suitable town or edge-of-centre sites are not available should out-of-centre sites be

considered. Planning applications above 2,500 square metres (or any locally set threshold in the Core Strategy) must also be subject to an impact assessment.

- 4.28 The Council's latest Retail Strategy Update, reported to Cabinet in September 2012 (Minute 92 refers) showed a limited capacity for new retail development in Wirral, which suggests that any new floorspace would need to be carefully located if it was not to have a significant harmful impact on existing centres.
- 4.29 As no detailed proposals are yet available for Bidston Dock, including more than the existing wording could at this stage have significant implications for the soundness of the Core Strategy and for the Council's duty to co-operate partners. It is therefore recommended that only minor wording changes are proposed to Policy CS12 – Wirral Waters, to read: "Bidston Dock will provide for development that will further support economic revitalisation without causing harm to existing centres or facilities".
- 4.30 The designation of new town centres has also been requested at East Float and at New Brighton waterfront, for which no change has been recommended. At East Float, this is because inclusion in the retail hierarchy would be premature as the details of the location and pattern of any future development have not yet been established. At New Brighton, this is because of the difficulty in identifying a logical boundary that would include both the waterside development and the existing Local Centre at Victoria Road while excluding the intervening residential area.
- 4.31 The floorspace guidelines for the scale of new retail development to be permitted within each type of retail centre identified in Policy CS25 – Hierarchy of Retail Centres and the thresholds in Policy CS28 – Retail Impact Assessments, have also been challenged. It is therefore recommended that further work is undertaken to support these guidelines and thresholds prior to the approval of the final Core Strategy.

Employment Sites

- 4.32 A number of respondents are seeking greater flexibility in the range of uses that can be accommodated on sites currently designated for business, industrial and storage uses, including the owners of sites at Moreton and Upton.
- 4.33 The recommendations in the Document Library are for "no change", on the basis that Policy CS17 – Protection of Employment Land, as currently worded, provides sufficient flexibility to allow alternative uses to be considered in the event that it can be demonstrated that there is no realistic prospect of employment uses coming forward on any particular site.

5.0 OTHER ISSUES

- 5.1 The Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy indicated the intention to prepare a series of supplementary planning documents to provide further guidance to potential applicants for planning permission, to support the implementation of the Core Strategy. Existing supplementary planning guidance will no longer apply when their associated policies in the Unitary Development Plan are replaced following the formal adoption of the Core Strategy.

- 5.2 Following an internal review of the need for existing and future guidance, it is recommended that new supplementary planning documents are prepared to provide additional guidance for the design and layout of:
- residential development - including new housing, extensions, conversions, residential and extra care homes, separation distances, backland development and requirements for landscaping and public open space;
 - industrial development – including parking and servicing requirements;
 - town centre uses – including retail and leisure uses; and
 - telecommunications – to ensure that existing guidance remains up-to-date and in force.
- 5.3 It is therefore proposed that draft supplementary planning documents are drawn up, so that the Planning Inspector will be able to assess the influence that they are likely to have on the implementation of the Core Strategy.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 A series of policy and procedural risks have been identified in the main body of this report.
- 6.2 There is a risk that comments that have not been met to the satisfaction of a respondent will need to be addressed at the public examination of the Core Strategy, with associated time and cost implications.
- 6.3 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. As it is no longer the Inspector's role to improve the Core Strategy, Inspectors could simply recommend that an unsound plan is withdrawn.
- 6.4 If the Core Strategy is withdrawn, the Council may be required to re-start the plan preparation process, set a new vision and objectives for the area and prepare a full Borough-wide site-specific Local Plan, with associated time and cost implications. If the Core Strategy is withdrawn, none of the proposed policies will be able to be applied, even those which would otherwise have been considered sound.
- 6.5 Measures to mitigate risks identified in previous reports to Cabinet have been identified in section 3.0 of this report. Measures to mitigate the risks identified in response to statutory public consultation are set out in section 4.0 of this report; the recommendations for responding to individual comments set out in the Document Library; and in the recommendations set out in section 15 of this report.
- 6.6 A failure to comply with the requirements of national policy, for example by not making adequate provision for viable new development to meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change or to comply with the duty to co-operate, can be fatal to the legal compliance and soundness of the Core Strategy and could require the Core Strategy to be withdrawn.
- 6.7 Risks associated with unnecessary or abortive costs have also been identified in sections 2.0 and 7.0 of this report.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Options for inclusion in the Core Strategy have been subject to consultation on two previous occasions and were considered in the Preferred Options Assessment Report (November 2010) and in the Council's response to consultation on the Preferred Options Report (Cabinet 21 July 2011, Minute 80 refers).
- 7.2 The principal 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 (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 14 refers). In the absence of an up-to-date Core Strategy, decisions on planning applications will have to be made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, with policies in the Unitary Development Plan carrying weight according to their consistency with the Framework.
- 7.3 Not modifying the Core Strategy could lead to the Core Strategy being withdrawn and lead to unnecessary time and expense at a future public examination.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 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, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by the Council in December 2006.
- 8.2 Any agreed modifications to the Core Strategy will need to be published for public consultation, in accordance with national regulations and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, before the Core Strategy can be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 9.1 Voluntary, community and faith organisations have been consulted throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, in line with the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

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

- 10.1 The Core Strategy is being prepared using existing resources from Regeneration and the Environment.
- 10.2 Consultation on the Proposed Submission Draft cost £5,500 during 2012/13. Income from the sale of additional paper copies of consultation documents amounted to £112.
- 10.3 An up-dated calculation of the additional land needed to meet the aspirations of the Council's Investment Strategy has been completed by Regeneris, for £1,995, funded from the Council's Investment Strategy budget.
- 10.4 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be undertaken following the appointment of the successful tenderer, with an estimated budget of £60,000, funded from the Council's Housing Strategy budget.

- 10.5 The Core Strategy Viability Study is being undertaken, following the publication of a Request for Quotation, by Keppie Massie for £19,890, from an original estimated budget of £25,000, funded from the Council's Regeneration and Planning budget.
- 10.6 The Council's contribution towards the jointly commissioned sub-regional Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment was £5,000, which was funded from the Council's Housing Strategy budget.
- 10.7 Further work to support the retail floorspace guidelines and thresholds identified in Policy CS25 – Hierarchy of Retail Centres and Policy CS28 – Retail Impact Assessments, is expected to cost up to £5,000, to be funded from the Council's Regeneration and Planning budget.
- 10.8 Any agreed modifications to the Core Strategy will need to be subject to a revised Sustainability Appraisal report, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment, including a further review by Sustainability Appraisal Panel, duty to co-operate partners and other stakeholders, before the final text of the Core Strategy can be recommended for publication and submission to the Secretary of State.
- 10.9 A revised Habitats Regulations Assessment is estimated to cost up to £5,000, to be funded from existing resources in the Council's Regeneration and Planning budget. The Sustainability Appraisal, Equality Impact Assessment and further informal consultation with duty to co-operate partners and other stakeholders can be undertaken using existing staff resources.
- 10.10 Formal consultation on the final agreed modifications to the Core Strategy, following a further report to Cabinet, is expected to cost up to £6,000, subject to changes in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 10.11 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 £150,000 during 2013/14 or 2014/15. These costs could be reduced by using in-house resources and by minimising the number of areas to which people are likely to want to make submissions. Other authorities within the sub-region have received individual bills totalling up to £81,000 for comparable public examinations, for the Planning Inspector's expenses alone.
- 10.12 The preparation of four statutory supplementary planning documents, including public consultation and screening for any likely significant environmental effects, is expected to cost up to £7,500 for each document, subject to changes in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, funded from existing resources in the Council's Regeneration and Planning budget.
- 10.13 The provision of net additional dwellings has implications for any future award of New Homes Bonus. The loss and/or provision of additional non-residential floorspace will have implications for the collection of business rates.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 National legislation and the Council's Constitution require the publication, submission and adoption of the Core Strategy to be approved by Full Council.

- 11.2 The Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 will remain the statutory Development Plan for Wirral until 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.
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 Although the Core Strategy will only formally replace the strategic policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan when the Core Strategy 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).
- 11.5 The Core Strategy cannot be formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan unless it is found to be legally compliant and sound following independent examination.
- 11.6 A failure to comply with the duty to co-operate can be fatal to the legal compliance of the Core Strategy and could require the Core Strategy to be withdrawn.
- 11.7 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).
- 11.8 Once adopted, neighbourhood planning proposals, such as those now being prepared for Devonshire Park and Hoylake, will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Core Strategy.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Core Strategy has been subject to an ongoing Equality Impact Assessment. The results of previous Equality Impact Assessments prepared at each stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/planning/local-development-framework/core-strategy-development-plan>
- 12.2 Any agreed modifications to the Core Strategy will need to be subject to a revised Equality Impact Assessment before the final text of the Core Strategy is recommended for publication and submission to the Secretary of State.

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Proposed Submission Draft includes policies intended to promote a more sustainable pattern of development and measures to promote sustainable design and construction, which could have a significant influence on carbon reduction.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Once adopted, the Core Strategy will be used in the determination of individual planning applications and in other planning-related decisions as a replacement for the strategic policies for the control of land use and development contained within the Council's Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000. The policies that will be replaced are currently listed in section 29 of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 15.1 That the responses recommended set out in the Council's on-line Document Library are approved.
- 15.2 That the modifications recommended to the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy are approved for negotiation with key stakeholders and the partners with which the Council has a statutory duty to co-operate.
- 15.3 That progress on up-to-date evidence to support responses to issues related to housing, Green Belt, gypsies and travellers and development viability are noted.
- 15.4 That supplementary planning documents for the design and layout of housing, employment, town centre uses and telecommunications development are prepared to support the future implementation of the Core Strategy.
- 15.5 That any further modifications that may be necessary to address issues related to housing, Green Belt, gypsies and travellers, development viability, retail floorspace thresholds and the views of key stakeholders and duty to co-operate partners, are reported back to Cabinet before Full Council is recommended to approve the final text of the Core Strategy for submission to the Secretary of State for public examination.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 16.1 To comply with the legal and procedural requirements necessary to complete the preparation and adoption of an up-to-date Core Strategy Local Plan for Wirral.

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APPENDICES

A summary of the comments received and the responses recommended is set out in the Document Library at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?bcr=1&sch=doc> under "Information Items">"Core Strategy Responses to Proposed Submission Draft June 2013"

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The full text of the comments received on each section of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy can be viewed at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Additional background information relating to the preparation of the Core Strategy Local Plan, including the text of the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy, can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/planning/local-development-framework/core-strategy-development-plan>

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework can be viewed at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
<u>Approval of Preferred Options</u> Cabinet (Minute 143) Council (Minute 36)	23 September 2010 18 October 2010
<u>Report of Consultation on Preferred Options</u> Cabinet (Minute 80)	21 July 2011
<u>Proposed Submission Draft</u> Cabinet (Minute 61)	19 July 2012
<u>Publication of Proposed Submission Draft</u> Cabinet (Minute 92) Council (Minute 60)	27 September 2012 15 October 2012