



Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update 2014

Foreword

This document provides an update to the Council's 2012-based Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), published in December 2012. The SHLAA Update considers the potential supply of housing across the Borough up to 2029 with a revised base date of April 2014. The information contained within this document reflects the best information available at the time of publication and the SHLAA will be regularly updated to ensure that any changes to the status of sites are reflected in the most up-to-date position.

The results of the SHLAA will be used to inform the Core Strategy Local Plan, along with a range of other technical studies. Further work will be required as part of the production of a site-specific Local Plan, scheduled for commencement following the adoption of the Core Strategy Local Plan in 2016, to ensure that the identification of land allocations is based on sound and up-to-date information and a closer assessment of any site specific considerations.

Please note that the SHLAA does not allocate sites for development or grant planning permission for development and the placing of a site into one of the category bands identified in this report is only intended to give an indication of the Council's current assessment of the likely potential deliverability of each site.

The inclusion of any site in this report should not be taken as a Council endorsement of its future development and does not in any way determine decisions to be taken by the Council on the preferred directions of growth in the Core Strategy Local Plan; in relation to site identification in a future site-specific Local Plan; or the determination of individual planning applications.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) (CLG, 2012) sets out the requirement for local authorities to use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing.
- 1.2 Paragraph 159 of the NPPF identifies the requirement for local authorities to produce a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.
- 1.3 In March 2014 the Secretary of State launched the 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' Planning Practice Guidance² as an on-line resource to replace the earlier Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance (CLG, 2007).
- 1.4 In order to reflect the requirements of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, the Council consulted on a revised SHLAA methodology alongside a separate Call for Sites exercise between 6 January and 21 February 2014.
- 1.5 The Council has updated the SHLAA to a base date of April 2014 using the revised methodology and the responses to consultation, to identify an up-to-date housing land supply position to inform the submission version of the Core Strategy Local Plan.
- 1.6 The structure of the report is set out below:
 - **Background** – this details key policy, legislative and housing market changes which have occurred since the SHLAA 2012 was undertaken.
 - **Methodology** – this sets out the Council's revised methodology.
 - **Results** – this identifies the revised housing land position as at April 2014.
 - **Additional Considerations** – sets out the other factors that may also contribute towards the future housing land supply.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A number of policy and legislative changes have been introduced since the SHLAA 2012 was undertaken.

National Policy

- 2.2 At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. A key objective of the NPPF is to deliver a wide

¹ The NPPF and its associated practice guidance can be viewed on-line at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

² The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Planning Practice Guidance can be viewed on-line at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>

choice of high quality homes. The NPPF sets out the requirement for local authorities to use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing.

- 2.3 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that in order to boost the supply of housing, local authorities should:
- identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; and
 - identify a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.
- 2.4 To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units, or sites have long term phasing plans (footnote 11, paragraph 47, NPPF).
- 2.5 To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged (footnote 12, paragraph 47, NPPF).
- 2.6 Paragraph 159 of the NPPF identifies the requirement for local authorities to produce a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West

- 2.7 The Secretary of State's Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (GONW, September 2008) formed part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral until it was revoked in May 2013 through provisions set out under the Localism Act 2011. The Regional Spatial Strategy set out an annual average housing target for Wirral of 500 net dwellings up to 2021 and aimed to focus new residential development to promote economic growth and regeneration in the east of the Borough.

Core Strategy Local Plan

- 2.8 The Council consulted on the Core Strategy Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft between 14 December 2012 and 11 February 2013. The Local Plan reflected the housing requirement figure of 500 net dwellings per annum set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy. Following consideration of

consultation responses, a further round of public consultation was undertaken between 24 July and 13 September 2013 on a series of Initial Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan. A significant number of respondents cited the Council's need to meet the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing, to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF and for any new housing requirement figure to be based on the latest available household projections.

- 2.9 In order to fulfil this requirement, the Council has commissioned a revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The study is ongoing and is awaiting the publication of the most up-to-date 2012-based national household projections before being finalised. Once completed, this will provide the basis for identifying a new housing requirement for Wirral, to replace the figure contained in the former Regional Spatial Strategy. It will also identify the scale and type of the Borough's affordable housing need.
- 2.10 The Council has also commissioned a Core Strategy Local Plan and CIL Viability Study (the Viability Study), to examine the viability of policies in the Local Plan and to identify whether sufficient viability 'surplus' exists to justify the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. The Viability Study will determine the likely profitability of a range of development typologies, set within the existing planning policy framework, based on geographical viability 'zones' to reflect variations in housing market strength.
- 2.11 The conclusions and assumptions set out in the Viability Study Baseline Report, in relation to the viability of the development typologies identified within each geographical zone, have been used to inform the assessment of 'achievability' in the SHLAA.

Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development

- 2.12 The Council initially adopted an Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development in December 2003 in response to the spatial priorities set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, March 2003³). The Interim Planning Policy was further revised in October 2005 to more strongly focus new housing development into identified regeneration priority areas, including the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area. The Interim Policy increased development in the east of the Borough from 19% of total completions in 2004/05 to a peak of 82% in 2009/10, in line with national and regional priorities.
- 2.13 The Council withdrew the Interim Planning Policy on 15 October 2012, in order to further boost the supply of new housing in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Previous Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments

- 2.14 Roger Tym & Partners, supported by A.P. Sheehan & Co, was jointly commissioned by Liverpool City Council and Wirral Council in May 2009 to undertake a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment across Liverpool and Wirral, to meet the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 3 (CLG, 2007). Consultation on the methodology used in the assessment was undertaken between April 2009 and May 2009. The final SHLAA Report for

³ when the annual average net requirement for Wirral was 160 dwellings per annum

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Wirral was published in July 2010 and set out the Council's housing land supply at April 2008 (SHLAA 2008).

- 2.15 Formal consultation on the SHLAA 2008 was undertaken alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report between 15 November 2010 and 7 January 2011. Consultees were also invited to submit additional sites for consideration. The results of consultation were reported to the Council's Cabinet on 21 July 2011 (Minute 80 refers).
- 2.16 A revised SHLAA Update was subsequently produced, to the same methodology, with a base date of April 2011 (SHLAA Update 2011). The majority of the SHLAA Update 2011 was undertaken in-house, with the achievability assessment element undertaken by A.P. Sheehan & Co. to ensure consistency with the SHLAA 2008.
- 2.17 The SHLAA Update 2011 was subject to consultation between 22 February and 4 April 2012. An updated SHLAA at April 2012 (SHLAA Update 2012) was reported to Cabinet on 27 September 2012 (Minute 92 refers) and published for public consultation alongside the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy in December 2012.

Requirement for SHLAA 2014

- 2.18 In March 2014, the Secretary of State launched the 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as an on-line resource to replace the earlier Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance (CLG, 2007). The PPG largely follows the earlier Practice Guidance but provides further clarity on the use of windfalls and the approach to meeting any 'backlog' in housing delivery within the first five years.
- 2.19 Following the publication of the NPPF and revised PPG, the Council consulted on a proposed revised SHLAA methodology between 6 January and 21 February 2014. A copy of the Revised Methodology and a summary of the responses received are set out in appendices to this report.

Changes in Housing Delivery

Residential Completions

- 2.20 The base date of the former Regional Spatial Strategy was April 2003. Prior to the onset of the recession, between April 2003 and April 2008 Wirral recorded a total of 3,284 gross housing completions (at an annual average of 657 dwellings) and a total of 1,353 demolitions. Taking net gains from conversions into account, this equated to an annual average of 367 net housing completions. Although this fell below the requirement of 500 net dwellings per annum set by the Regional Spatial Strategy, Wirral had exceeded the annual requirement in both 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 2.21 Since then, between 2008 and 2014, Wirral has delivered an annual average of 437 gross completions. Taking demolitions and net gains through conversion into consideration, this equates to an annual average of 201 net housing completions. Market conditions have, therefore, had a significant impact on the ability of developers to deliver new housing to the pre-recession levels envisaged in Regional Spatial Strategy.

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- 2.22 An additional 1,047 gross dwellings (1,017 net) which had been previously registered as still under construction, were found, following a visual inspection undertaken as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy, to be complete and occupied at 31 March 2013 without a completion date having been registered under the Building Regulations. Although it has not been possible to assign these completions to any particular year, they significantly reduce the previously recorded shortfall in past housing delivery.

Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI)

- 2.23 Newheartlands was a long term national regeneration project to tackle the causes and symptoms of housing market failure, vacancy and decline at the heart of the Merseyside conurbation. In Wirral, the boundary designated by the Government in April 2002 included parts of Bidston, Birkenhead, Liscard, Tranmere and Seacombe. The programme has been very successful in securing a number of homes for acquisition and clearance, renovating a range of existing properties and providing new high quality housing on former clearance areas.
- 2.24 Following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, HMRI funding ceased prematurely at the end of March 2011. Despite funding cuts, the objectives of housing market renewal continue to form a prominent part of the Council's Housing Strategy and the Council's ongoing Housing Investment Programme is based on the completion of previous priorities and initiatives in Birkenhead, Rock Ferry and Tranmere. New housing is already being developed on the sites in North Birkenhead, with new housing due to start on site in Tranmere and Rock Ferry in 2015.

Demolitions

- 2.25 Between 2003 and 2014, an average of 244 demolitions took place each year in Wirral, associated with the continued completion of HMRI programmed demolitions. Magenta Housing had also begun to re-develop a number of its key sites but is now coming to the end of its demolition programme. Future demolitions are therefore likely to be significantly lower than those seen over the last 11 years.
- 2.26 The number of completions and demolitions within each Core Strategy Settlement Area is set out in the Council's latest Monitoring Report (December 2014).

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 The SHLAA Update 2014 has been produced in line with the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Revised Methodology 2014 ("The Revised Methodology"), as amended in response to consultation.

Stage 1 – Site/Broad Location Identification

- 3.2 The 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' PPG states that plan makers should be proactive in identifying as wide a range as possible of sites for development and that all sites capable of delivering 5 or more units should be assessed. It states that plan makers may also wish to consider

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even smaller sites where appropriate (Paragraph 010, Reference ID:3-010-20140306 refers).

- 3.3 A previous assessment of sites with an extant planning permission for new build housing development at April 2013 showed a mean average yield of 8 units; with a corresponding median of 2 units, demonstrating the significant contribution of small sites to Wirral's housing land supply. A minimum site size threshold has not therefore been applied in the SHLAA Update 2014.
- 3.4 Sites have been identified from the following sources of supply:

Sites already subject to the planning process

- Sites with planning permission under construction at 1 April 2014
- Sites with planning permission yet to start at 1 April 2014
- Sites already approved for development subject to the signing of Section 106 agreement at 1 April 2014
- Undeveloped housing land allocations from the Unitary Development Plan

Sites not currently subject to the planning process

- Sites submitted as part of a 'Call for Sites' exercise
- Vacant sites allocated for employment or commercial development in the UDP
- Other vacant and derelict sites and buildings identified in the National Land Use Database (NLUD)
- Sites for which a residential planning application has been refused or withdrawn since 1 April 2008 (where the reason for refusal or withdrawal could be overcome with changes to the proposed scheme)
- Sites where planning permission has previously been approved but where approval for development has lapsed without construction having commenced
- Sites identified by the Council for potential future disposal
- Other undeveloped land not in active use for recreation or subject to a designation for protection from development

- 3.5 All sites included in the SHLAA 2012 have been reassessed in line with the revised methodology. Sites where planning permission for housing or for an alternative use has been granted since 1 April 2012 have been excluded from this assessment.

- 3.6 Site surveys have been carried out for all sites to record their boundaries; current land uses; the character of the site; the land use and character of the surrounding area; and any obvious physical or environmental constraints.

Stage 2 – Site/Broad Locations Assessment

- 3.7 The Revised Methodology sets out the detailed scoring methodology which has been applied to each site and reflects the changes introduced through the NPPF.
- 3.8 A range of secondary data sources, including local and national mapping data, has been used alongside information obtained through site visits to inform the assessment of sites.

3.9 Each site has been given a separate score for suitability, availability and achievability and has been assigned an overall score with each of these three factors combined. On this basis sites have been placed into the following categories:

- **Category 1** - sites considered to be suitable for housing and which could be delivered within five years
- **Category 2** - sites considered to be developable but which may have some additional constraints which mean that they are more likely to be delivered within a 6-10 year period
- **Category 3** - sites considered not currently developable and subject to constraints which may only make them deliverable within an 11-15 year period

Assessment of Suitability

3.10 Sites have been assessed against the following suitability criteria to identify an overall suitability score:

- Impact on Adopted Green Belt
- Impact on Designated Recreational Open Space
- Impact on Nature and Earth Science Conservation Assets
- Impact on Designated Employment Land
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Access Infrastructure Constraints
- Drainage and Water Supply Infrastructure Constraints
- Ground Condition Constraints
- Impact on Flood Risk
- Impact on Adjoining Uses
- Transport Accessibility

3.11 In exceptional circumstances, suitability factors not listed above may have been taken into account to give a different overall score. These exceptions are recorded and explained in the accompanying Site Assessment Database.

3.12 Each site has been identified as previously developed or greenfield, in accordance with the national definition of previously developed land contained within Appendix 2 to the NPPF. This defines previously developed land as: “land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”

3.13 With regard to the ‘Impact on Adopted Green Belt’, the definition of previously developed land has been used to determine which sites may qualify as an exception under paragraph 89 of the NPPF, which includes “the limited

infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development". It should, however, be noted that any compliance with paragraph 89 of the NPPF would need to be demonstrated at planning application stage, before any decision to allow development could be permitted.

Assessment of Availability

- 3.14 As a detailed assessment of legal and ownership issues is outside the scope of a SHLAA, sites have been scored on the basis of two key factors: market interest and site ownership. Sites where market interest for new housing development can be clearly demonstrated have scored most highly. Vacant sites and sites subject to low intensity land uses that can easily be extinguished or relocated have also scored highly, unless evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that established uses could only be extinguished or relocated to a later timetable.

Assessment of Achievability

- 3.15 The Viability Study assesses the economic viability of the scale and location of development and of the policies proposed in the Core Strategy Local Plan at a strategic level. It tests the likely profitability of a range of development typologies set within the existing planning policy framework based on four geographical viability zones, reflecting variations in housing market strength.
- 3.16 The methodology for the Viability Study was considered at a stakeholder workshop on 27 June 2013 and a further workshop was held on 25 September 2013 to test the initial findings, before producing a final Baseline Report⁴.
- 3.17 The Viability Study Baseline Report has been published alongside this assessment. The Baseline Report does not include a requirement for affordable housing. A 'policy-on' assessment of viability for affordable housing in each zone (based on 50 per cent intermediate and 50 per cent affordable rent), however, demonstrates that a level of 10 and 20 per cent affordable housing is likely to be viable without the support of grant funding in the majority of the Borough, with the exception of previously developed sites in Zone 1. The assessment of sites is considered to be robust as affordable housing would not, in any case, be required if it could be demonstrated that it would not be viable to provide affordable housing.
- 3.18 An achievability score has been applied to each site in line with the findings of the Viability Study which assumes that:
- a site is 'viable' if the development surplus is equivalent to or greater than 5% of the Gross Development Value

⁴ The material presented at each of the workshops can be viewed on the Council's website at: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/planning/local-development-framework/evidence-base>

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- a site is 'marginal' if the development surplus is equivalent to between 0-5% of the Gross Development Value. In such cases a relatively small increase in costs or reduction in revenue could make the scheme unviable
- a site is 'unviable' if it demonstrates a loss or deficit against the Gross Development Value

Treatment of Sites with Planning Permission

- 3.19 Footnote 11 of the NPPF states that sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years.
- 3.20 The Council has undertaken two rounds of consultation surveys for sites with planning permission for new housing development where development had not commenced as at April 2013 and at April 2014. A questionnaire was posted to all applicants and/or agents requesting information about when they were intending to bring their site forward for development. Respondents who were no longer intending to bring the site forward were asked to state their reasons, including questions relating to funding, ownership issues and site constraints. A copy of the questionnaires is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 3.21 In 2013, 75 site-specific responses were received, equating to a 45 per cent response rate. One respondent was not intending to bring the site forward within five years due to lack of finance. A further five respondents were intending to bring their site forward but did not know when. Five respondents stated that the planning permission had already been implemented. A further three were unsure whether development would be brought forward either due to a change in personal circumstances or because the site had been sold to a third party whose intentions were not known. The remaining 61 respondents, equal to 81 per cent of responses, confirmed that they were intending to bring the site forward within five years.
- 3.22 In 2014, 32 site-specific responses were received, equating to a 36 per cent response rate. One respondent noted that the planning permission had already been implemented. Two respondents stated that they were intending to bring the development forward in years 6-10. Four respondents were unsure whether development would be brought forward either due to difficulties in securing finance or because the site had been sold to a third party whose intentions were not known. The remaining 25 respondents, equal to 78 per cent of responses, confirmed that they were intending to bring the site forward within five years.
- 3.23 Where no evidence has been presented to confirm that the site will not be developed within five years (either where a survey response indicates that it was unclear whether a site would be brought forward or where no response had been received), the site has been assessed against the findings of the Viability Study and has been scored in the same way as sites without planning permission, on the basis of viability alone.

Stage 3 - Estimating the housing potential on each site

- 3.24 The Revised Methodology sets out the factors which have been taken into consideration in identifying potential site capacity.

- 3.25 The overall potential site capacity has been calculated as follows:

Gross site area x permanent features factor x gross to net factor x mixed use factor x density

- 3.26 Where further information has indicated that an alternative capacity would be appropriate, for example through a planning permission or 'Call for Sites' submission, an alternative yield has been entered manually and explained within the accompanying Site Assessment Database.

Density Assumptions

- 3.27 NPPF Paragraph 47 states that local authorities should set their own approach to housing density in order to boost the supply of new housing. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment PPG goes further to note that the estimation of the development potential of each site should be guided by existing or emerging planning policy, including locally-determined policies on density (paragraph 017, Reference ID: 3-017-20140306). It notes that where the plan policy does not provide a sufficient basis to make a local judgement then relevant existing development schemes can be used as the basis for assessment.
- 3.28 The Wirral UDP only applies specific housing density controls within seven designated areas in the Borough (Policy HS5 – Density and Design Guidelines) but Policy HS4 – Criteria for New Housing Development, expects the scale of new housing development 'to relate well to surrounding property, in particular with regard to existing densities and form of development'.
- 3.29 Policy CS2 – Broad Spatial Strategy, of the emerging Core Strategy states that densities of 30 dwellings per hectare or above could be permitted within areas of greatest need of physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration, particularly within the older urban areas of east Wirral, and on urban sites within an easy walking distance of an existing town, district or local centre or a high-frequency public transport corridor. Outside these areas, only smaller scale, lower-density development of up to 20 dwellings per hectare will normally be permitted.
- 3.30 The Council's Viability Study has assessed the viability of sites at densities of 20, 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; informed by the density of extant planning permissions within each individual area of the Borough. To avoid the over-estimation of potential capacity, however, a density of 30 dwellings per hectare has been applied to all sites, except in the following circumstances:
- Where a site is within a designated Conservation Area and/or contains a Listed Building or other identified heritage asset;
 - Where a site contains trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order;
 - Where a site falls outside an easy walking distance of an existing centre or high-frequency transport corridor.
- 3.31 In such instances, a density of 20 dwellings per hectare has been applied.

4.0 Results

Identified Capacity

- 4.1 The SHLAA Update identifies a total of 609 sites within the existing urban area and within designated Infill Villages in the Green Belt, Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt and on previously developed land where development subject to further consideration may not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. These sites yield a total potential capacity of 6,020 dwellings without planning permission, excluding Wirral Waters⁵.
- 4.2 A total of 1,639 new build planning permissions have also been identified at April 2014⁶ and Section 5 of this report provides additional detail on the contribution of conversions and changes of use to the future housing land supply, in the form of an annual allowance.
- 4.3 The SHLAA also identifies a total of 94 wholly greenfield sites in the Green Belt with a total potential capacity of 7,215, as shown in Table 4.1 below⁷. These sites have not been included in the assessment of future supply, as they can only be released for development in exceptional circumstances, in an adopted Local Plan, following a formal review of the Green Belt as a whole, subject to the considerations set out in paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF.

Table 4.1: Green Belt Sites

Number of dwellings (gross)	
Ward	Total
Bebington	464
Bidston and St James	79
Clatterbridge	1355
Eastham	364
Greasby Frankby and Irby	1500
Heswall	517
Hoylake and Meols	533
Leasowe and Moreton East	173
Moreton West and S' Massie	232
Pensby and Thingwall	1719
Prenton	172
Upton	61
West Kirby and Thurstaston	46
Grand Total	7215

- 4.4 Table 4.2 illustrates the general location of the total capacity currently available, excluding these greenfield sites within the Green Belt.

⁵ Figures for Wirral Waters are shown separately, based on the revised potential capacity identified by the developers. Outline planning permission for up to 15,193 units was granted subject to a section 106 legal agreement signed in May 2012. No reserve matters applications have yet been submitted and the future programme of housing delivery is still uncertain.

⁶ The sites are listed in an appendix to this report

⁷ Sites which are not currently within a designated Infill Village or within a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt or are not on previously developed land where development subject to further consideration may not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing development, which are listed in an appendix to this report.

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Table 4.2: All Sites at April 2014⁸

Number of dwellings (gross)	Category 1			Category 2			Category 3			New Build Sites with Planning Permission April 2014			Grand Total	% Borough
	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total		
Settlement Area	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total		
Area 1	38	15	53	49	39	88	122	88	210	267	6	273	624	8.1
Area 2	0	0	0	95	0	95	1324	0	1324	0	0	0	1419	18.5
Area 3	264	149	413	186	252	438	230	126	356	479	34	513	1720	22.5
Area 4	132	183	315	232	145	377	419	96	515	398	5	403	1610	21.0
Area 5	76	29	105	106	308	414	278	516	794	70	16	86	1399	18.3
Area 6	6	23	29	17	27	44	8	63	71	56	4	60	204	2.7
Area 7	13	56	69	25	69	94	10	46	56	63	24	87	306	4.0
Area 8	5	5	10	42	34	76	74	0	74	214	2	216	376	4.9
Grand Total	534	460	994	752	874	1626	2465	935	3400	1547	91	1638	7658	

⁸ Excluding Wirral Waters and Green Belt Sites not currently within a designated Infill Village or a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt or on previously developed land where development is likely to have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing development

Table 4.3: All Sites Assessed as Deliverable Within Five Years From April 2014

Number of dwellings (gross)	Category 1			New Build Deliverable Sites with Planning Permission April 2014			Grand Total	% Borough
	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total		
Area 1	38	15	53	260	6	266	319	12.4
Area 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Area 3	264	149	413	447	29	476	889	34.7
Area 4	132	183	315	395	5	400	715	27.9
Area 5	76	29	105	56	10	66	171	6.7
Area 6	6	23	29	56	4	60	89	3.5
Area 7	13	56	69	63	24	87	156	6.1
Area 8	5	5	10	214	2	216	226	8.8
Grand Total	534	460	994	1491	80	1571	2565	

4.5 Table 4.3 includes Category 1 sites identified as deliverable within the first five years, together with new build deliverable planning permissions at April 2014, excluding Wirral Waters. A list of Category 1 Sites is provided as an appendix to this report.

4.6 Table 4.3 demonstrates that 79 per cent of the total five year supply is on previously developed land. Outside Wirral Waters, the largest potential capacity lies within the urban areas in Settlement Area 3 – Suburban Birkenhead and Settlement Area 4 – Bromborough and Eastham. This includes 10 units on sites within designated Infill Villages in the Green Belt⁹.

4.7 Wirral Waters is expected to be able to provide an additional 1,480 dwellings between 2014 and 2019, based on the figures provided by the developers.

Table 4.4: Sites Assessed as Developable Within Six to Ten Years From April 2014

Number of dwellings (gross)	Category 2			New Build Sites Developable Sites with Planning Permission April 2014			Grand Total	% Borough
	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total		
Area 1	49	39	88	0	0	0	88	5.3
Area 2	95	0	95	0	0	0	95	5.8
Area 3	186	252	438	10	2	12	450	27.3
Area 4	232	145	377	3	0	3	380	23.1
Area 5	106	308	414	0	6	6	420	25.5
Area 6	17	27	44	0	0	0	44	2.7
Area 7	25	69	94	0	0	0	94	5.7
Area 8	42	34	76	0	0	0	76	4.6
Grand Total	752	874	1626	13	8	21	1647	

4.8 Table 4.4 includes Category 2 sites identified as developable within the first ten years, together with new build developable planning permissions at April 2014, excluding Wirral Waters. A list of Category 2 Sites is provided as an appendix to this report.

⁹ Site references 945, 947 and 1802

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- 4.9 Table 4.4 demonstrates that 46 per cent of the total six to ten year supply is on previously developed land. Outside Wirral Waters, the largest potential capacity lies within the urban areas in Settlement Area 3 – Suburban Birkenhead, Settlement Area 4 – Bromborough and Eastham and Settlement Area 5 – Mid Wirral. This includes 36 units on sites within designated Infill Villages in the Green Belt and 46 units on one previously developed site in the Green Belt¹⁰.
- 4.10 Wirral Waters is expected to be able to provide an additional 2,590 dwellings between 2019 and 2024, based on the figures provided by the developers.
- 4.11 Six of the sites within Category 2, with a total capacity of 54 units, have been identified as currently marginally viable but otherwise suitable and available¹¹. These sites could be included in Category 1, were the market to improve.

Table 4.5: Sites Which Could be Delivered Within Eleven to Fifteen Years

Number of dwellings (gross)	Category 3			New Build Not Currently Developable Sites with Planning Permission April 2014			Grand Total	% Borough
	PDL	GF	Total	PDL	GF	Total		
Settlement Area								
Area 1	122	88	210	7	0	7	217	6.3
Area 2	1324	0	1324	0	0	0	1324	38.0
Area 3	230	126	356	22	3	25	381	11.0
Area 4	419	96	515	0	0	0	515	15.0
Area 5	278	516	794	14	0	14	808	23.0
Area 6	8	63	71	0	0	0	71	2.1
Area 7	10	46	56	0	0	0	56	1.6
Area 8	74	0	74	0	0	0	74	2.2
Grand Total	2465	935	3400	43	3	46	3446	

- 4.12 Table 4.5 includes Category 3 sites and new build sites with planning permission identified as not currently developable within the first ten years, excluding Wirral Waters. A list of Category 3 Sites is provided as an appendix to this report.
- 4.13 Table 4.5 demonstrates that 73 per cent of the eleven to fifteen year supply is on previously developed land. Outside Wirral Waters, the largest potential capacity lies within the urban areas in Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core, (in and around the town centre and the docks hinterland) and in Settlement Area 5 – Mid Wirral. This includes 74 units on a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt¹².
- 4.14 Wirral Waters is expected to be able to provide an additional 2,330 dwellings between 2024 and 2029, based on the figures provided by the developers.
- 4.15 Thirty of the sites within Category 3, with a total capacity of 94 units, have been identified as not currently viable but otherwise suitable and available¹³. These sites could be included in Category 1, were the market to improve.

¹⁰ Site references 946, 948, 1489, 1788, 1822, 1823 and 1824

¹¹ Site references 553, 758, 908, 1658, 1690 and 1737

¹² Site reference 512

¹³ The sites are listed in an appendix to this report

5.0 Additional Considerations

- 5.1 The results above demonstrate the potential housing land supply on specific sites identified in each Settlement Area but there are also other factors which may contribute to the future housing land supply.

Projected demolitions

- 5.2 The Council maintains a list of properties programmed for demolition by Wirral Council and by Registered Providers, in addition to demolitions identified through planning permissions and demolition consents. Although past recorded demolitions have been high, the completion of demolitions relating to the Housing Market Renewal Initiative and the programme to remove poor quality, obsolete stock owned by Magenta Living (formerly Wirral Partnership Homes) indicates that future demolitions are now likely to be much lower.
- 5.3 Council data shows approximately 119 demolitions are currently scheduled to take place. The number of recorded demolitions is published each year as part of the Council's statutory Monitoring Report and is subject to regular review.

Windfalls

- 5.4 Although the SHLAA provides a comprehensive assessment of potential sites for new housing development, it is still reasonable to assume that some unidentified sites will come forward.
- 5.5 NPPF paragraph 48 states that local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five-year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the SHLAA, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends but should not include residential gardens¹⁴.
- 5.6 Wirral has a long history of windfall generation, as identified in successive Monitoring Reports. A different approach has, however, been adopted following the regular preparation of the SHLAA's and SHLAA Updates since 2008, as set out below.

Residential Conversions and Changes of Use

- 5.7 The SHLAA 2008 assessed the number of completions arising from changes of use and conversions between 2001 and 2009, which showed that a total of 781 dwellings were completed over an eight-year period, contributing to an average of 98 net dwellings per year. An updated analysis, based on median conversions and changes of use completed between 2003 and 2014 now provides a figure of 74 net dwellings per annum (rounded to 75 net dwellings), reflecting the reduction in completions since the onset of the recession.

¹⁴ Annex 2 of the NPPF defines windfall development as 'sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available'

Table 5.1: Recorded Conversions and Changes of Use 2003 to 2014

Year	No. of conversions and changes of use recorded (net)
Net completions not assigned to a specific year	276
2003/04	74
2004/05	81
2005/06	55
2006/07	115
2007/08	155
2008/09	154
2009/10	47
2010/11	14
2011/12	10
2012/13	144
2013/14	63
Total 2003 - 2014	912
Mean (2003 - 2014)	83
Median (2003 - 2014)	74

- 5.8 As it is difficult to reliably assess the future delivery of small sites with potential for conversion or a change of use, these sites have now been excluded from the SHLAA Update 2014, in favour of an annual allowance, based on previous rates of delivery, as part of the ongoing five year supply.
- 5.9 The additional 276 completed net conversions and changes of use (306 gross), which had previously been registered as still under construction, have not been included, as they cannot be assigned to any particular year but further demonstrate the robustness of Wirral's track record of delivering significant completions for conversions and changes of use.

Other Unidentified Windfalls

- 5.10 The Council granted planning permission for 297 new build units between April 2008 and April 2014 on brownfield sites not previously identified in a SHLAA, at an annual average rate of 50 units per annum.

Table 5.2 – Number of Windfall Units Granted Planning Permission on Previously Developed Land

Time Period	Number of windfall units granted planning permission on PDL
2008-2011	139
2011-2012	64
2012-2013	45
2013-2014	49
Total	297
Mean annual average over 6 years (297/6)	50

- 5.11 As windfalls have continued to consistently become available in the local area and are still considered to provide a reliable source of supply, an allowance for windfalls has been included within the five year supply set out in the Council's latest Monitoring Report (December 2014).

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- 5.12 Paragraph 24 of the PPG (Reference ID: 3-24-20140306) states that plan makers should not need to rely on a windfall allowance in years 6-15 and should rather identify broad locations, if required, to allow a degree of flexibility to meet development needs where specific sites cannot be identified.
- 5.13 Although it is considered likely that windfalls will continue to deliver housing beyond the first five years, based on the evidence outlined above, new build windfalls on previously developed sites will not be included in the 6-15 year supply but will remain the subject of ongoing monitoring, for inclusion in successive assessments of the ongoing five year supply.
- 5.14 Paragraph 39 of the PPG (Reference ID: 3-039-20140306) states that local authorities may also include an allowance for empty homes in their housing land supply, if robustly justified. As the Council's forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment will include an allowance for empty properties, it is not considered appropriate to incorporate empty properties into the housing land supply at the present time.

Future Review

- 5.15 The revised methodology states that if insufficient sites within the urban area have been identified to meet objectively assessed need, the SHLAA assessment will be reviewed to:
- reconsider the development potential of each site; and
 - review constrained sites to assess whether such constraints could be overcome more quickly, to bring the site forward sooner.
- 5.16 If, following this review, there are still insufficient sites, the Council will need to consider whether it will be appropriate to meet this shortfall through other means, in consultation with surrounding authorities and other relevant stakeholders, through proposals to be contained within the Council's Core Strategy Local Plan.
- 5.17 Once finalised, the Council's revised SHMA will be used to inform the future housing requirement to be contained within the Core Strategy Local Plan.
- 5.18 The Council's latest Monitoring Report (December 2014) sets out the Council's five-year housing land supply position in the interim.
- 5.19 It is important to note that predicting when each site is likely to come forward for development can only be based on the best evidence available at the time. The placing of a site into one of the three Category bands is therefore only intended to give an indication of the Council's current assessment of likely deliverability and the potential timing of a site's development.
- 5.20 Due to the economic climate, a number of sites have been assessed as suitable and available, which are not considered deliverable in the current market. If the economic situation improves, it is reasonable to assume that some of these sites could come forward sooner. It is therefore important that the SHLAA is continually monitored to reflect changes in the housing market.
- 5.21 National guidance recommends an annual update through the Council's statutory Monitoring Report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Final Revised Methodology 2014
- Appendix 2 Responses to Consultation on Draft Revised Methodology
- Appendix 3 Sites Assessment Database
- Appendix 4a Questionnaire to agents with extant planning permission for fewer than 5 units 2013
- Appendix 4b Questionnaire to agents with extant planning permission for 5 units or more 2013
- Appendix 4c Questionnaire to agents with extant planning permission for fewer than 5 units 2014
- Appendix 4d Questionnaire to agents with extant planning permission for 5 units or more 2014
- Appendix 5 Sites with Planning Permission for New Build Properties April 2014
- Appendix 6 Category One Sites
- Appendix 7 Category Two Sites
- Appendix 8 Category Three Sites
- Appendix 9 Greenfield Green Belt Sites
- Appendix 10 Wirral Waters Delivery
- Appendix 11 Category Three Sites Suitable and Available But Not Currently Viable
- Appendix 12 Programmed Demolitions April 2014
- Appendix 13 Call for Sites Submissions Since 2008
- Appendix 14 Site Plans