

# Local Plan for Sefton Publication Draft Consultation - January 2015

## Summary Overview

### Chapter 1 – Introduction and Duty to Cooperate

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the content of the Local Plan, identifies the key influences on its preparation and summarises the stages of its production. It also sets out how Sefton believe that they have fulfilled the legal ‘duty to cooperate’ and identifies the key strategic matters addressed in preparing the Local Plan.

The key influences on the Local Plan include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - particularly the need to boost the supply of housing and facilitate sustainable development
- Sefton’s role within the sub-region – including the Liverpool City Region ‘Combined Authority’; the ‘transformational actions’ of the Local Enterprise Partnership; and the Local Nature Partnership ‘Nature Connected’
- Evidence – the findings of the range of studies undertaken by Sefton or in partnership with Liverpool City Region authorities, including a sustainability appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment required under the European Habitats Directives
- Previous Consultation - comments received that have helped shape the content of the Plan, considered in the context of the NPPF.

The Key Strategic Matters identified include:

- addressing sub-regional housing and employment needs;
- the land needs arising from the expanded Port of Liverpool;
- provision for businesses relocating from land adjacent to the Port of Liverpool; and
- Joint Waste Local Plan.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in this section of the Plan.

### Chapter 2 – Profile of Sefton

Chapter 2 sets the sub-regional context for the Plan and provides a summary of the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the Borough.

Sefton is a borough of contrasts with five main settlement areas in three geographical areas. In the south, Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth and Netherton share the metropolitan character of Liverpool; in the centre of the Borough are the settlements of Crosby, Maghull, Hightown and Formby; and in the north, the Victorian resort of Southport, which together comprise about half the land area of the Borough. The other half of Sefton is rural, including a number of villages, and is covered by the Merseyside Green Belt which is tightly drawn around the towns and villages.

The population is currently around 273,700 having declined slowly from a peak of 300,100 in 1981. The decline has now stabilised and is projected to reverse, to rise to about 280,000 by 2037 (ONS 2012 based sub national population projections).

Sefton has a sensitive environment with:

- 22 miles of coast, most of which is of international importance for nature conservation;
- more than 150 parks, playing fields and sports pitches and other public open spaces;
- a large amount of high quality agricultural land;
- over 500 Listed Buildings; 25 Conservation Areas; 5 registered Parks and Gardens; 13

Scheduled Ancient Monuments;

- much of Sefton is flat and low lying, with over 40,000 properties at risk of surface water flooding;
- Bootle's industrial past has left large tracts of contaminated and derelict land in need of remediation; and
- five air quality management areas.

Homes & Neighbourhoods

- Sefton has a largely self-contained housing market, with a higher proportion of owner occupiers outside Bootle and Netherton;
- house prices are generally higher in central and north Sefton, with a need for affordable housing;
- long term vacant homes are concentrated in south Sefton and central Southport; and
- Sefton has one of the oldest populations in the North West and by 2030 the number of residents aged over 65 will exceed 80,000 by 2030.

Jobs and economy

- Sefton is economically part of the Liverpool City Region, providing up to 90,000 jobs, including a quarter in the public sector;
- two out of every five of Sefton's working residents commute to work outside the Borough, particularly from Crosby, Formby and Maghull. Southport is a relatively self-contained;
- only 1,190 Sefton residents travelled to work in Wirral, while 1,920 Wirral residents travelled to Sefton to work;
- the older industrial areas in the south of the Borough account for only about 7% of employment;
- Sefton's employment land supply is the smallest of any of the greater Merseyside local authorities;
- Sefton has high skill levels and low rates of deprivation, although parts of Bootle, Seaforth and Southport are within the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in the country;
- Unemployment rates (at 8.4%) are lower than in Liverpool and Knowsley but rates in parts of Sefton, including Bootle, remain twice the national average;
- Bootle and Southport are the main town centres in the Borough;
- The Port of Liverpool is critically important and ambitious plans for expansion will require a significant modernisation of the City Region's road and rail infrastructure;
- The visitor economy is critical to Southport's long term economy, supporting over 4,000 full time equivalent jobs.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.

### **Chapter 3 – Key issues and Challenges, Vision and Objectives**

Chapter 3 sets out the key issues and challenges for Sefton, describes what Sefton will be like at the end of the plan period when the policies in the Local Plan have been implemented and identifies the objectives of Sefton's Local Plan.

Key issues and challenges include

- urban regeneration;
- the changing age structure and population;
- meeting Sefton's diverse need for homes, as far as possible close to where they arise;
- providing employment opportunities, sustaining growth and improving access to the labour market;
- supporting town and local centres;

- growing the Port without unacceptable harm to amenity;
- providing the infrastructure to support growth;
- improving access to services and employment;
- protecting and enhancing the high quality environment;
- raising the quality of life of Sefton's most deprived households; and
- responding to climate change.

The Vision for Sefton in 2030 includes:

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- delivery of sustainable development that meets local needs including provision of affordable housing and specialist accommodation for the elderly;
- the provision of two new high quality business parks;
- expanding the Port, as a catalyst for investment;
- a more flexible approach to town and local centres, to allow them to withstand changes to retailing and develop new roles;
- the protection of nature sites, heritage assets and green infrastructure;
- making the most of tourism potential, to accommodate increasing numbers of visitors without adding to the pressure on the natural environment;
- reducing deprivation, with a healthier environment and greater choice in housing and job opportunities;
- increasing the use of low-carbon, decentralised and renewable energy; and
- directing development away from areas at risk of flooding or coastal change;

The Plan's objectives are to:

1. To support urban regeneration and priorities for investment in Sefton.
2. To help meet the housing needs of Sefton's changing population for market and affordable housing; homes for families, the elderly, people with other special housing needs and others.
3. To promote economic growth, tourism and jobs creation and support new and existing businesses.
4. To meet the diverse needs for homes, jobs, services and facilities, as close to where they arise as possible.
5. To help Sefton's town and local centres to diversify and thrive
6. To make the most of the value of the Port to the local economy and jobs, while making sure that the impact on the environment and local communities is mitigated.
7. To make sure that new developments include the essential infrastructure, services and facilities that they require.
8. To improve access to services, facilities and jobs.
9. To protect and enhance Sefton's natural and heritage assets
10. To achieve high quality design and a healthy environment
11. To respond to the challenge of climate change, encouraging best use of resources and assets.
12. To work with partners and make the most of Sefton's place within the Liverpool City Region.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.

#### **Chapter 4 – Priorities, Policy Principles and Spatial Strategy**

Chapter 4 sets out the spatial challenges that Sefton faces to meet the needs for homes, jobs, associated infrastructure and a high quality living environment in a way that makes the most of resources and minimises harm.

The need for new housing has been reviewed, to take the most recent 2012 sub-regional population projections into account. This includes an assessment of 'pent up' need based on

the Census. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (November 2014) identifies a net need for up to 434 affordable dwellings a year equivalent to 7,815 dwellings over the Plan period and recommends that 15% of the Borough's housing provision over the Plan period should be for special needs 'extra care' housing for older people, to reflect Sefton's ageing population. Successive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments have found a significant shortage of urban land to meet the housing needs of the Borough.

A review of Sefton's employment land, published in 2012, identified a shortfall of 30.76 hectares of employment land, two thirds of which was needed in the south and one third in the north. There is no scope to provide additional sites in the built-up area.

Virtually all the land outside the main settlements is within the Green Belt. A review of the Green Belt is long overdue. Sefton has considered all the available options and neighbouring authorities are unable to help. West Lancashire and Knowsley also require land to be removed from the Green Belt to meet their own needs.

Without altering the Green Belt, the amount of development would fall well short of the assessed need for housing and employment, with severe consequences including (as set out, following consultation, in a published Consequences Study):

- failure to meet the Government's requirement of promoting sustainable economic development and boosting the housing supply;
- demand for new housing outstripping supply, increasing house prices and leading to younger people being unable to stay in the area;
- a significant need for affordable housing remaining unmet;
- constraint on the provision of specialist older person's housing, limiting the freeing up of larger family homes for local families;
- an increasingly ageing population, as younger people are unable to stay;
- fewer opportunities to retain and allow local companies to grow and attract inward investment and economic growth; and
- more pressure on town centres and local services, due to declining demand.

The lack of sufficient suitable and available urban land and the inability of adjoining authorities to help, are presented as the 'exceptional circumstances' required by national policy to justify a review of the boundary to the Green Belt through the Local Plan.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.

## **Chapter 5 - Sustainable Development**

Chapter 5 reiterates the national policy requirement to 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs' and sets out the Sefton's policies for sustainable development.

Policy SD1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy SD2 - Principles of Sustainable Development

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.

## **Chapter 6 – Meeting Sefton's Needs**

Chapter 6 identifies the number of homes and the amount of employment land that will be provided for and allocates sites for development.

The housing requirement is 11,070 over the Plan period. A 5 percent buffer has been added

in case a few sites do not come forward or densities are lower. The total identified supply is 11,787. Around 6,300 homes can be accommodated in the urban area including allocations on former green spaces.

Some of the sites identified in the Plan will not be completed until beyond 2030 and could contribute an additional 500 dwellings to the supply after the end of the Plan period.

'Safeguarded land' to meet longer-term needs, beyond the plan period has also been identified to accommodate around 1,000 dwellings, which will also be taken out of the Green Belt but protected from development and only allocated for development through a future review of the Local Plan.

The employment land requirement over the Plan period is 84.5 hectares. Seven employment sites can be provided in the urban area but at least 30 hectares will need to be accommodated in the Green Belt, at three proposed Strategic Employment Locations.

Policy MN1 - Housing and Employment Requirements proposes that the requirement for 11,070 new homes will be provided at an annual rate of 500 dwellings per annum between 2012 and 2017 and 660 dwellings per annum between 2017 and 2030; and the provision of 84.5 hectares of employment land between 2012 and 2030; and identifies the sources from which they will be met.

Policy MN2 - Housing, Employment and Mixed Use Allocations identifies the key development sites that will be allocated for housing, employment, and mixed-use development, as shown on the Policy Map.

A number of the allocated sites identified in Policy MN2 require site-specific policy guidance and the following policies set out site specific issues that development on these sites will need to address:

Policy MN3 - Strategic Mixed Used Allocation – Land East of Maghull

Policy MN4 - Land North of Formby Industrial Estate

Policy MN5 - Land South of Formby Industrial Estate

Policy MN6 - Land at Brackenway, Formby

Policy MN7 - Sefton's Green Belt sets out how the Council will apply and interpret the requirements of national policy for development. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policy Map. No further alterations will be made to the Green Belt boundary until a future Local Plan review.

Policy MN8 - Safeguarded Land identifies, in line with national planning policy, two areas of Safeguarded Land between the urban area and the Green Belt in order to meet longer term needs beyond the current Plan period.

*Comment: There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.*

## **Chapter 7 – Economic Development and Regeneration**

Chapter 7 sets out policies for Sefton's priorities for economic growth and identifies the main focus for regeneration during the Plan period and the types of development the Borough would like to attract to its employment sites:

Policy ED1 - The Port and Maritime Zone permits development and re-structuring within the Port and Maritime Zone including the expansion of the operational port subject to criteria including restrictions in relation to Seaforth Nature Reserve

Policy ED2 - Development in Town Centres, District Centres, Local Centres and Local

Shopping Parades and Outside Defined Centres  
Policy ED3 - Primarily Industrial Areas  
Policy ED4 - Mixed Use Areas  
Policy ED5 - Tourism  
Policy ED6 - Regeneration Areas  
Policy ED7 - Southport Central Area  
Policy ED8 - Southport Seafront  
Policy ED9 - Crosby Centre

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan, subject to the recommendations on Policy ED1 – The Port and Maritime Zone (Paragraph 3.7 and Paragraph 3.11 of the accompanying Delegated Report refer).

## **Chapter 8 – Housing and Communities**

Chapter 8 contains policies on affordable homes, homes for older people, housing mix, meeting the needs of travellers, and the type of development that will be allowed in residential areas:

Policy HC1 - Affordable and Special Housing Needs sets out requirements for affordable housing in terms of the percentage of total bedspaces and allows for special needs housing to be substituted for up to 50 percent of the affordable housing contribution.

Policy HC2 - Housing Type, Mix and Choice sets out the requirement for the type and mix of properties in developments of 15 or more dwellings. At least 25 percent of market dwellings should be 1 or 2 bedroom properties and at least 40 percent 3 bedroom properties, subject to site specific constraints, economic viability and neighbourhood characteristics.

Policy HC3 - Residential Development and Development In Primarily Residential Developments

Policy HC4 - House Extensions and Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Flats

Policy HC5 - Planning for Gypsies and Travellers allocates sites to meet the Borough's needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in line with the findings of the Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

Policy HC6 - Assets of Community Value sets out the criteria for assessing development that would result in the loss of a formally listed Asset of Community Value.

Policy HC7 - Education and Care Institutions in the Urban Area sets out the type and scale of development which will be acceptable in principle on school and college sites and care institutions.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.

## **Chapter 9 – Infrastructure**

Chapter 9 contains policies that explain the Council's approach to developer contributions to support of infrastructure, including priorities for transport and waste:

Policy IN1 - Infrastructure and Developer Contributions  
Policy IN2 - Transport  
Policy IN3 - Managing Waste

A viability assessment has been undertaken to set out the potential scope for a Community Infrastructure Levy in Sefton but no decision on whether to proceed has yet been made.

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan, subject to the recommendation on Policy IN1 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions (Paragraph 3.4 of the accompanying Delegated Report refers).

## **Chapter 10 – A Quality, Healthy Environment for Sefton**

Chapter 10 contains policies to improve the places people live in, dealing with issues related to access, design, pollution, energy efficiency, flood risk and the provision of trees and open spaces:

Policy EQ1 - Planning for a Healthy Sefton

Policy EQ2 - Design

Policy EQ3 - Accessibility

Policy EQ4 - Pollution and Hazards

Policy EQ5 - Air Quality

Policy EQ6 - Land Affected by Contamination

Policy EQ7 - Energy Efficient and Low Carbon Design

Policy EQ8 - Managing Flood Risk and Surface Water

Policy EQ9 - Provision of Public Open Space, Strategic Paths and Trees in Development

Policy EQ10 - Food and Drink

Policy EQ11 - Advertisements

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan, subject to the recommendation on Policy EQ4 – Pollution and Hazards (Paragraph 3.7 of the accompanying Delegated Report refers).

## **Chapter 11 – Natural and Heritage Assets**

Chapter 11 contains policies to protect and enhance environmental assets, including the coast, nature sites, open spaces, minerals; and built assets, such as listed buildings, conservation areas and recreation facilities:

Policy NH1 - Environmental Assets

Policy NH2 - Protection and Enhancement of Nature Sites, Priority Habitats and Species

Policy NH3 - Development in the Nature Improvement Area

Policy NH4 - The Sefton Coast and Development

Policy NH5 - Protection of Open Space and Countryside Recreation Areas

Policy NH6 - Urban Golf Courses

Policy NH7 - Rural Landscape Character

Policy NH8 - Minerals

Policy NH9 - Demolition or Substantial Harm to Designated Heritage Assets

Policy NH10 - Works Affecting Listed Buildings

Policy NH11 - Development Affecting Conservation Areas

Policy NH12 - Development Affecting Registered Parks and Gardens

Policy NH13 - Development Affecting Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

Policy NH14 - Development Affecting Non-Designated Heritage Assets

**Comment:** There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan, subject to the recommendations on Policy NH1 – Environmental Assets (Paragraph 3.9 of the accompanying Delegated Report refers) and Policy NH8 – Minerals (Paragraph 3.7 of the accompanying Delegated Report refers).

## **Chapter 12 – Implementation and Monitoring**

Chapter 12 sets out how the Plan will be implemented and monitored. Policy PIM1 - Planning Enforcement sets out the Council's approach to protecting the public from inappropriate

development and the future need for a more formal framework or strategy for monitoring and managing recreational access across the City Region is identified.

**Comment:** *There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan, subject to the recommendation related to Policy NH1 – Environmental Assets (Paragraph 3.9 of the accompanying Delegated Report refers).*

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Site Specific Requirements

Appendix 2 - Nature Conservation and Enhancement – Supporting Information

Appendix 3 - Local Plan Monitoring

Appendix 4 - Supplementary Planning Documents

**Comment:** *There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.*

## **Policy Maps**

For Southport; Formby; Bootle and Crosby; and South East Sefton

**Comment:** *There are no issues affecting Wirral in relation to this section of the Plan.*