



ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 9 March 2022

REPORT TITLE:	DRAFT BIRKENHEAD 2040 FRAMEWORK
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the endorsement of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework as the interim regeneration strategy for Birkenhead and those parts of the Claughton, Bidston & St James, Seacombe and Liscard Wards which lie within its boundary as shown in Appendix 1 to this report.

The Framework is a key evidence document which will inform the emerging Local Plan and sets out a draft comprehensive regeneration strategy for Birkenhead.

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework will support all five themes of the Wirral Plan 2021-26: Inclusive Economy, Safe & Pleasant Communities, Sustainable Environment, Brighter Futures and Active & Healthy Lives.

This is a Key Decision and affects the Birkenhead & Tranmere, Claughton, Bidston & St James, Seacombe and Liscard Wards

RECOMMENDATION

Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee is recommended to endorse the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework as the Council's Interim Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead and those parts of Seacombe and Liscard that are within its scope.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The endorsement of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework as the Council's interim regeneration strategy for Birkenhead will give weight to the document as key evidence informing the Council's emerging Local Plan and to enable the Council to progress the proposals of the Framework including the submission of funding bids for associated projects.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To continue to use the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework as an informal regeneration strategy has been considered. However, whilst significant progress has been made to progress regeneration projects within the Framework area since the publication of a draft for consultation in March 2021 including the preparation of successful bids and masterplans the lack of formal endorsement by the Council of the draft strategy may undermine its importance as key evidence informing the Local Plan Submission Draft and with funding partners.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's preferred spatial strategy for the Local Plan, is to meet all of the Borough's development needs for the period 2021 to 2037 within existing urban areas largely by utilising brownfield land. The Birkenhead 2040 Framework has been prepared to provide key evidence to support this preferred approach for the Local Plan by setting out a comprehensive regeneration strategy for Birkenhead and parts of Seacombe and Liscard.
- 3.2 The Draft Framework and Summary are set out in Appendices 2 and 3 of this report respectively.

Draft Vision

- 3.3 The draft vision for the Birkenhead for 2040 Framework is that Birkenhead:
- has grown into a thriving community on the left bank of the River Mersey;
 - is chosen as home for families and entrepreneurs alike, drawn by the unique and historic waterfront environment and iconic design;
 - is a place of creativity innovation and fun, a place to put down roots;
 - has the connectivity of city living but in harmony with nature. A place with room to breathe and a space to grow.
- 3.4 The Framework has the following objectives:
- Iconic Birkenhead;
 - Connected Birkenhead;
 - Cultural Birkenhead;
 - Waterfront Garden City;
 - Industrious Birkenhead;
 - Inclusive Birkenhead;
 - Sustainable Birkenhead;

- Healthy Birkenhead; and
- Resilient Birkenhead

3.5 The following Catalyst projects are set out:

- Wirral Waters;
- Dock Branch Park;
- Birkenhead Commercial District;
- Birkenhead Landing;
- East-West Cultural Axis;
- Woodside Gyratory;
- Mass transit; and
- Birkenhead District Heating Network.

3.6 The draft Framework sets out draft proposals and illustrative concepts for a number of identified neighbourhoods across Birkenhead as follows (see Appendix 1):

Central Birkenhead;
 Birkenhead Waterfront;
 Hind Street Urban Village;
 Wirral Waters;
 Hamilton Park;
 Scotts Quay;
 Seacombe River Corridor; and
 Northside.

3.7 The Council is preparing more detailed Neighbourhood Frameworks for each of these neighbourhoods to provide further evidence for the Local Plan on the potential for brownfield development and to develop the proposals set out in the main Framework document.

3.8 Subject to members approval when considering the Local Plan Submission Draft Local Plan these neighbourhoods will be included in the Local Plan as regeneration areas. This will provide a useful spatial focus for the delivery of comprehensive regeneration on a neighbourhood basis across the framework area.

3.9 The final Framework will build on the existing close working across the Council and with partners to further develop the non-spatial components of whole place making for Birkenhead including social wealth building, education, skills, health and well being.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from the endorsement of the Draft Framework as the Interim Regeneration Strategy for the area although there are and may be financial implications relating to projects included with it. Many of the projects including key infrastructure identified will require funding from the public sector to enable delivery. All relevant projects which have financial implications for the Council will be reported to appropriate Committees as required.

4.2 The cost of updating and finalising the Framework is estimated to be between £50,000 and £70,000 which can be met from within existing departmental budgets.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The purpose behind the seeking of Members' approval to the Framework is to provide weight to the document as a key point of reference in programme planning for the regeneration projects within its scope. The document will provide strong supporting evidence for future grant applications to the government and public bodies. Members' endorsement will give the document weight as a key evidence document to support the Council's case during the Examination of the Local Plan.
- 5.2 The Framework will not be a Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 albeit elements of it could be used for the purpose of production of future Supplementary Planning Documents. Notwithstanding this the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework is capable of being a material consideration in respect of planning applications relating to developments that are within its scope.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The update and finalisation of the 2040 Framework will be coordinated by officers from the Regeneration and Place Department working with a range of officers from other departments. It will be necessary to engage specialist planning, economy and design consultants to assist with technical aspects of the Framework.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Unless the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework has been endorsed by the Council as the regeneration strategy for Birkenhead there is a risk that the document will not have sufficient weight as an evidence document informing the Local Plan Submission Draft during the Examination in Public process. There is also a risk that without formal endorsement, the relevance of the strategy as a comprehensive regeneration strategy will be diminished when submitting projects for public funding.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation on the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration took place between 23rd March and 19th May 2021. Consultation was extensive and comprised:
- Media notices;
 - Documents made available on Have your say consultation [Birkenhead 2040 Framework | Have your say Wirral](#);
 - Documents made available on the planning policy web pages with email notifications via the Local Plan consultee database;
 - Questionnaire embedded within the Have your say portal;
 - Explainer video [Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework - YouTube](#) ; and
 - Meetings with specific local interest groups.
- 8.2 A summary of the comments received via the 'Have your say Portal' is set out in Appendix 4 to this report. There were a total of 142 online responses to the survey and 6 Easy Read copies. 84.8% of respondents agreed with the Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework Vision whilst 45.5% strongly agreed.

- 8.3 All the Objectives had similarly high levels of support, with between 70.6% - 89.2% of respondents signalling agreement or strong agreement with each. The Objective that was most agreed with was the Inclusive Birkenhead objective (89.2%), whilst the Resilient Birkenhead objective was agreed with the least (70.6%).
- 8.4 As set out in Appendix 5 to this report, technical responses were received from 31 consultees. Responses to the consultation were generally supportive of the vision and objectives presented through the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. In particular, the overall housing delivery approach, based on the regeneration of Birkenhead was supported, alongside the creation of new green space such as Dock Branch Park and the creation of wildlife corridors. However, concerns were raised which related to matters such as the deliverability and viability of urban regeneration-based housing delivery, the impact of housing development upon dockside industrial uses, and the possible impacts of the proposed approach upon Birkenhead's heritage and habitats located in close proximity to Birkenhead's waterfront development areas. These concerns have been addressed in the preparation of specific policies and allocations in the emerging Local Plan and will be reflected in the updated Framework as appropriate.
- 8.5 The video explainer has had over 6,500 views.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The proposals set out in the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework could have significant impacts on the lives of Birkenhead residents and businesses. Overall, these proposals will be beneficial as they will lead to the regeneration of Birkenhead as a more sustainable and equitable place.
- 9.3 Equality implications were part of the procurement and award process. Any associated actions may require its own Equality impact Assessment.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Draft Framework document contains a series of proposals which will contribute to the regeneration of Birkenhead as a green and sustainable town. It is proposed to prepare a sustainability and green strategy to inform the delivery of the final Framework proposals. Where appropriate individual projects will be subject to environmental impact assessment at planning application stage.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The implementation of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework will have significant community wealth opportunities through the delivery of its catalyst projects and other proposals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Birkenhead Framework Boundary
Appendix 2: Birkenhead 2040 Framework Main Document
Appendix 3: Birkenhead 2040 Framework Summary
Appendix 4: Have Your Say: Birkenhead Framework 2040
Public Consultation Report
Appendix 5: Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040 Consultation Summary Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Consultation on the draft Birkenhead Regeneration Framework (officer delegated decision)	26 March 2021