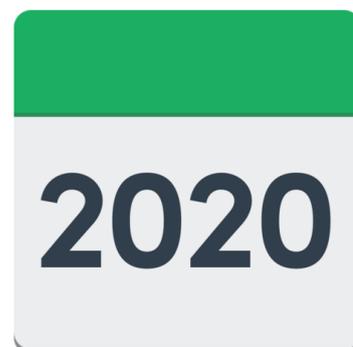


This is a summary of the Issues and Options Consultation Document for full version go to <https://wirral-consult.objective.co.uk>

Wirral Local Plan 2020 - 2035

Issues and Options Local Plan Consultation Summary Document

Consultation ends
(Regulation 18)



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The full version of the Issues and Options document contains questions which can be answered to give a response to the consultation.

You can find the full version of the Issues and Options document at <https://wirral-consult.objective.co.uk> or at your local public library or at Wallasey Town Hall during their normal opening hours.

You can also visit us at one of the drop-in sessions being held in a number of places in the Borough. To find an event near you go to www.wirral.gov.uk/localplanevents

Introduction

- The Local Plan is the long-term plan for Wirral through to 2035.
- It is an important planning document about what can be built, where, how, and why.
- It also covers **climate change** and **the environment, regeneration**, the amount of **new housing** and **jobs** and where they should be provided, **transport, heritage** and **health and wellbeing**.
- The Council has published an important stage of the Local Plan called the '**Issues and Options Consultation**' document. This sets out the draft numbers of new homes and amount of employment land to be provided for in the Local Plan. It also sets out the Council's Preferred Option for where this development should be located.
- We want to know what you think of the Local Plan Issues and Options Document so you can be part of how Wirral will look in the next 15 years. Alongside the Issues and Options Document we are also inviting views on an initial Sustainability Appraisal, which is an independent assessment of how sustainable our different options are (also incorporating health and equalities issues).
- We are also consulting on the Habitats Regulations Assessment which will ensure that the plan does not result in harm to our highest protected environmental sites.
- You can give us your comments by going to **www.wirral.gov.uk/localplan**
- Please give us your views by **5pm on Monday 23 March 2020**.
- Your comments will help us make the final draft of the Local Plan that we will share with everyone later this year.
- The final draft Local Plan will then be sent to the Government for independent review and final changes.
- In 2022, the Local Plan will be adopted and Wirral Council will start using it to decide on all planning applications.

Our Vision

The local plan will be guided by a Vision of what we think we want Wirral to be like in 2035.

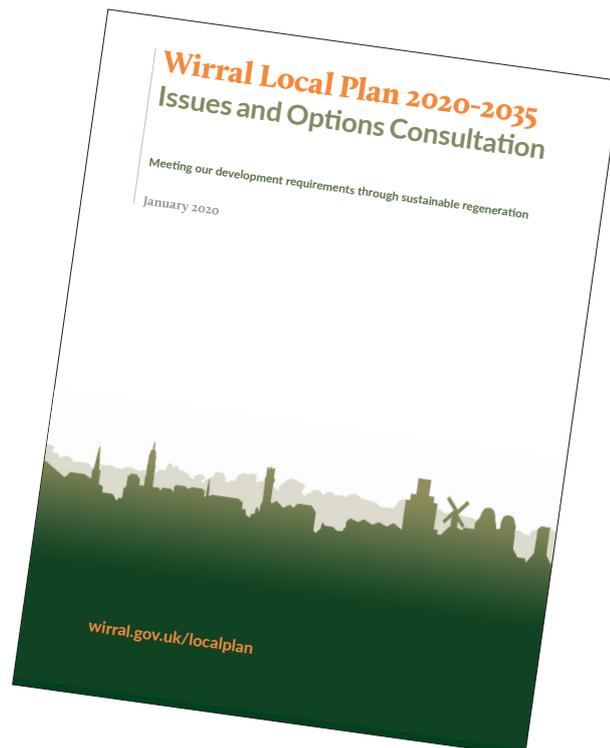
The Vision for Wirral: **A Healthy, Sustainable and Prosperous Borough**

- Ensure that we provide enough homes and employment sites to meet the needs of all our population, young and old
- Set out what types of homes will be built and where they will be located
- Promote the regeneration of Birkenhead, Liscard, New Ferry, New Brighton and other places to provide vibrant, new, mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Ensure that local infrastructure is provided for new development
- Protect our environmental and heritage assets
- Set out a range of policies which will be used to make decisions on planning applications
- Enable all people in Wirral to live longer and healthier lives

What is a Local plan and what will it do?

The Local Plan covers the whole of the Borough of Wirral and will:

- Protect our environmental and heritage assets and help tackle climate change
- Make sure that we provide enough homes and employment sites to meet the needs of all our population young and old
- Set out what types of homes and where they will be built.
- Promote the regeneration of Birkenhead, Liscard, New Ferry, New Brighton and other places to provide vibrant new mixed use neighbourhoods
- Ensure that local infrastructure is provided for new development
- Replace old out of date planning policies to be used when making decisions on planning applications



What about the consultation in late 2018?

We consulted you on the Development Options Review in Autumn 2018. We received over 3,000 responses. We listened to you and decided to make a fresh start on the Local Plan. The comments you made, and our response is set out in a separate Consultation Statement which can be found by going to www.wirral.gov.uk/localplan.

What are our Development Needs?

The Government requires us to plan to meet our housing and employment needs for the next 10 to 15 years.



12,000 homes

We need 12,000 new homes between 2020 and 2035 (30% affordable)



5,050 new homes

Of these about 5,050 new homes to need to be delivered by 2025



80ha Employment Land

We need about 80ha of land for new jobs



We need to support major regeneration of brownfield sites in and around Birkenhead

How do we calculate our local housing needs?

The Government require us to use the 'Standard Method' which is a formula set out in national planning guidance.

Based on the standard method, the Council needs to ensure that the Local Plan provides for a minimum requirement of 800 net new homes per year - this equates to 12,000 net new homes over the whole plan period to 2035.

We can only change this if exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. So far we have not been able to identify any.



Objectives

Our objectives are the long term things we aim to do in the next 15 years.

A Sustainable Wirral

1	To support sustainable approaches to the location, design, construction, operation and impact of new development.
2	Realise the potential of our industrial legacy, and our waterside and heritage assets to deliver comprehensive urban regeneration.
3	Promote sustainable travel, improve accessibility, connectivity, and ease of movement and direct new development to locations which will provide easiest access to existing centres, high-frequency public transport corridors, pedestrian and cycle routes.
4	Ensure the responsible use of land and natural resources to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change and promote the transition to a low carbon Borough.
5	Protect and improve the quality and accessibility of green space, green infrastructure and nature, whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ensuring that development delivers net environmental gains where possible.

A Special and Healthy Place to Live

6	Manage flood risk through a risk-based approach which directs inappropriate development away from high risk coastal, river or surface flooding areas, makes space for water and uses sustainable urban drainage systems.
7	Provide sufficient housing to meet identified local housing needs and provide a choice of housing for people at all stages of life and incomes.
8	Ensure that high quality new development integrates with and respects our peninsula's distinctive character, natural environment and built heritage, to create vibrant, healthy places and local communities.
9	Provide and promote essential local infrastructure including emergency services, community, cultural, education, transport, health and leisure facilities, shops, and services all within easy reach of local communities.

A Thriving Wirral

10	Tackle social, economic and environmental deprivation, especially in the eastern part of the peninsula, through housing renewal, reducing unemployment, improving skills, education, community and environmental conditions.
11	Provide a range of employment and mixed-use sites to meet assessed needs, provide work opportunities for our residents and foster an environment where our existing businesses and new, innovative start-ups can prosper. To support a competitive and diverse rural and visitor economy.
12	Ensure that Birkenhead and the Borough's other town, district and local centres adapt to changing shopping patterns to become a vibrant mixed-use focus for each of our peninsula's communities.

Themes in the Local Plan



Spatial Options for meeting our Development Needs

In developing the spatial options for the Local Plan the Council is mindful that they must:

- **Be realistic** - this means they must all deliver the quantity of homes and land for employment that has been identified as required for Wirral; and
- **Consider all reasonable alternatives** to ensure that this Local Plan can be considered “sound”

The Local Plan Issues and Options document sets out three main Options for locating our housing and employment needs over the Plan period:

Preferred Option 1: Urban intensification



Option 1A: Urban Intensification
Between 10,300 and 14,800 homes
within the plan period

The Council’s Preferred Option is to locate all new housing and employment within existing urban areas and on brownfield sites.

If we can bring forward development of brownfield sites and release some existing employment land for housing we might be able to meet all our housing requirements within the urban area.

But this will mean:

- **Increasing the density of houses** - but maintaining good design, creating high quality housing layouts and living environments such as those achieved in Europe and Scandinavia;
- **Getting financial help** from our partners including the Government, Homes England, and the Liverpool City Regional to tackle brownfield sites

Proposed Urban Housing Allocations

These are sites that we have sufficient information now to include within the urban housing supply - subject to comments received during this consultation (see map below).



Map 1 Proposed Urban Housing Allocations

- Proposed Urban Housing Allocations
- Urban Permissions Not Started in April 2019

Potential Intensification and Additional Urban Housing Allocations

These include sites where the landowner or developer has indicated that they could develop their site with more homes or at a faster rate. They also include sites which have been identified as potentially suitable for re-designation as part of the latest review of employment land (see map below).



Map 2 Potential Urban Intensification and Additional Urban Housing Allocations

- Proposed Urban Housing Allocations
- Urban Permissions Not Started in April 2019
- Potential Additional Urban Housing Allocations

Other Suitable but Currently Uncertain Sites

These are sites that we are not sure about. They include sites where planning permission has previously been granted but has now lapsed; where the landowner has not recently indicated that they are still willing to take the site forward for development; and sites which have been identified as unviable in the current market (see map below).



Map 3 Other Suitable but Currently Uncertain Sites

■ Other Suitable but Currently Uncertain Sites

Option 1A: Urban Intensification advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>It meets all of our development needs within the urban area, predominantly using brownfield land.</p> <p>An urban focus for new development supports the prioritisation of previously developed land, directing new development to areas of regeneration need and opportunity and need, enabling the creation of attractive new mixed-use communities.</p> <p>Social, convenience, economic, and environmental benefits of living in places of higher density, supporting high quality urban living.</p> <p>More homes would be built close to employment opportunities and existing transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Reduces the potential need for vehicle dependency, supporting active travel with benefits to the environment and climate. Supports investment in existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Will safeguard Green Belt land with benefits for agricultural production, Climate Change, biodiversity, landscape and amenity.</p>	<p>Risk of the plan being found unsound if it relies on an over-optimistic and potentially undeliverable set of circumstances.</p> <p>Challenges with meeting the housing target, due to the dependence on a high proportion of brownfield sites with potentially uncertain viability or land contamination issues.</p> <p>Could lead to some delay in providing new homes whilst more complicated brownfield sites are remediated.</p> <p>Reliance on less viable sites could reduce ‘planning gains’, such as the future provision of affordable housing in market housing development.</p> <p>Over concentration of cars and traffic in intensified areas, with impacts on noise and air pollution.</p>

Green Belt Options

Why do we need to consult on Green Belt Options?

Although our Preferred Option is to locate all new housing and employment development during the Plan period within the urban area we need to consult on other options for meeting any shortfall in housing land in the urban area. This is because not all the potential urban sites currently pass the tests for inclusion in the Local Plan.

If we can't meet our all housing needs in the urban areas and if surrounding Councils can't help us, we will need to release some land from the Green Belt.

How many new homes could we need to build on the Green Belt?

We still hope to be able to avoid any Green Belt development but we have calculated that we may need to release Green Belt sites to build up to 2,500 homes.

The actual amount of land required will not be known until we have exhausted our search for land within the urban area and completed discussions with Government, Homes England and the City Region.

We have therefore set out two options for Green Belt Sites.

The final approach could be a hybrid of Options 2A and 2B.

How have we identified potential Green Belt options and sites?

Following a review of the comments received on the Development Options Review in Autumn 2018 we asked a specialist to undertake a detailed Green Belt Review which has identified areas that perform strongly, moderately and weakly against the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in national policy.

We have then:

- excluded land most likely to be subject to serious flood risk
- excluded land with statutory environmental designations
- excluded areas which may be used by internationally important bird species
- prioritised weakly performing parcels with a known developer or landowner interest (to ensure evidence of developability)

Further details of how we have identified the sites included in the Green Belt Options is set out in Appendix 4.7 of the full Local Plan Issues and Options Document.

It is important to note that if it was decided that it would be necessary to consider releasing Green Belt land for housing development then the Council would undertake more detailed assessments of the suitability, availability and achievability of the proposed areas of land before the draft Local Plan was finalised. This would include further, more detailed assessments of transport, agricultural land quality, environmental matters, sustainability, heritage and other potential site constraints, which would also be used to inform the amount of development that would be appropriate within each area.



Option 2A: Green Belt Dispersed
 Potential for up to 2,900 dwellings within the plan period

Option 2A: Dispersed Green Belt Release

This option proposes the release of a series of small to medium sized areas of land, which when added together would allow sufficient land to be allocated to meet any residual housing needs within the Plan period. The final number of sites required will depend on the number of homes that could be provided within the urban area.

This option would see up to 12 different smaller areas of Green Belt released for housing as set out in map below and in Table 1.



Map 4 Option 2A: Dispersed Green Belt Release

■ Potential Dispersed Green Belt Release

Option 2A: Dispersed Green Belt Release

Table 1

Site ref no.	Green Belt Parcel reference	Net Development Area (hectares)	Estimated Capacity (dwellings)
Bromborough and Eastham			
1	Parcel 4.13 (SP049) South of Mill Park Eastham	20.45	368
Saughall Massie			
2	Parcel 5.8 (SP0005, SHLAA 0740) East of Garden Hey Road, Saughall Massie	1.74	47
3	Parcel 5.9 (SP004, SHLAA 0925) North of Saughall Massie Conservation Area	8.56	193
West Kirby			
4	Parcel 6.15 (SP013, SHLAA 4056) West of Column Road, West Kirby	17.38	261
Heswall			
5	Parcel 7.11 (SP071) Land at Chester Road, Gayton	18.71	337
Thingwall			
6	Parcel 7.18 (SP061) North of Gill's Lane, Pensby	18.09	326
7	Parcel 7.19 (SP065) West of Lower Thingwall Lane, Thingwall	6.90	155
Irby			
8	Parcel 7.25 (SP009, SHLAA 1778) West of Sandy Lane, Irby	4.09	92
9	Parcel 7.26 (SP059C, SHLAA 1764) 59 Thurstaston Road, Irby	0.58	16
10	Parcel 7.26 (SP059B, SHLAA 1765) 41 Thurstaston Road, Irby	0.67	18
11	Parcel 7.26 (SP059D, SHLAA 1766) 61 Thurstaston Road, Irby	0.51	14
12	Parcel 7.27 (SP060) South of Thingwall Road, Irby	56.42	1,106

Parcel Reference is the number assigned to parcels of land in the Green Belt identified by consultants Arup in the 2019 Green Belt Review. The SP Reference is the number assigned to parcels of land in the Green Belt consulted on in the 2018 Development Options Review.

Option 2A: Dispersed Green Belt Release advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Only land with weaker Green Belt contribution and value would be used.</p> <p>Development could strengthen the vitality of a number of existing settlements, help to meet localised housing needs, make use of existing local infrastructure and may support other local improvements.</p> <p>Development would only be used to 'round-off' the existing settlement patterns.</p> <p>The impact of development would be spread across the Borough, rather than being concentrated in one single location.</p>	<p>Smaller sites may not be able to support significant improvements to local infrastructure.</p> <p>Green Belt lost across a number of locations in the Borough, albeit smaller sites.</p>

Option 2B: Single Urban Extension



Option 2B: Green Belt Urban Extension
Potential for 2,500 dwellings
within the plan period

The alternative option to dispersed release is to focus development more strategically into a single larger area around an existing settlement. This option still relies on the weakly performing Green Belt areas but groups these together to identify a larger area for urban expansion. The most suitable location would be on land west of Barnston Road, Heswall as set out in map below and in Table 2.



Map 5 Option 2B: Single Urban Extension

Potential Single Urban Extension Sites

Option 2B: Single Urban Extension

Table 2

Green Belt Parcel reference	Net Development Area (hectares)	Estimated Capacity (dwellings)
West of Barnston Road, Heswall		
Parcels 7.15 and 7.16 (SP062)	107.71	1,938
Parcel 7.17 (SP062A, SHLAA 0884)	17.76	320
Parcel 7.18 (SP061)	18.09	326

Option 2B: Single Urban Extension advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Any impacts would be concentrated within only one area of the Borough.</p> <p>A larger site would be better able to plan for and support any necessary improvements to local infrastructure and secure a sustainable pattern of development.</p> <p>Provision would make a major contribution to the overall housing need and supply of housing, including affordable housing.</p> <p>The allocation of a single strategic parcel of land would allow the integrity of the remainder of the Green Belt protected.</p>	<p>It will take longer to develop homes on a larger site.</p> <p>The impact of construction would be prolonged.</p> <p>Comprehensive land assembly may be more difficult to achieve.</p> <p>Significant investment is likely to be required in supporting necessary infrastructure.</p>

The Council will continue, through this consultation period and beyond, to undertake further intensive work to increase the supply of suitable land in the urban area.

How to view all the documents and make your comments

We want to know your views.

The Wirral Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document is available for comment between **Monday 27 January 2020** and **Monday 23 March 2020** - a period of eight weeks.

We are particularly interested to hear views on the options for our future development strategy and would also welcome views on other parts of the document as we move towards the finalisation of our new Local Plan.

Copies of the Issues and Options consultation document and supporting evidence studies are available for viewing and inspection using any of the following options:

- The Council's Local Plan web page: www.wirral.gov.uk/localplan
- A direct link to the Council's Consultation Portal is <https://wirral-consult.objective.co.uk>
- Wallasey Town Hall (Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 17:00) www.wirral.gov.uk/counciloffices
- Public Libraries across Wirral (during their normal opening hours) www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries

If you are unable to use the Council's online portal you can request a separate questionnaire via email or telephone.

If you use the questionnaire to make comments please send it to arrive no later than **5pm on Monday 23 March 2020** to:

- Forward Planning Team, PO Box 290, Brighton Street, Wallasey, CH27 9FQ; or email: localplan@wirral.gov.uk

You can find out more about all the sites included in Option 1A, Option 2A and Option 2B and make comments on them by visiting: <https://wirral-consult.objective.co.uk> please click on the **Wirral Local Plan 2020-2035 Potential Allocations**

What happens next?

The responses received to this consultation will be used to help to finalise our plan.

We will publish all comments received on the online consultation portal (names and contact details will not be shown). We will also in due course publish our response to relevant comments made (at this stage the names of agents, developers or land owners may be published).

Following the completion of the current consultation the Council will consider all comments received. The Council will then consider whether any additional evidence is required (including any further detailed investigations of urban or Green Belt sites) before making a final decision on what sites should be proposed for allocation in the final Draft Local Plan.

We currently anticipate presenting the draft final Local Plan to be considered by elected Members in summer 2020. The draft final Local Plan will then be published under Regulation 19 to enable further formal representations to be made. All representations received will be passed to the independent Inspector appointed to undertake the 'Local Plan Examination'.

We anticipate submitting the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination in November 2020, with the examination hearings likely to take place from Spring 2021.

Subject to the Inspector finding that the final Wirral Local Plan is "sound" and allowing for a period of modification to the submitted plan, we anticipate that the Wirral Local Plan 2020-2035 will be formally adopted in 2022.

Find out more

The full Local Plan Issues and Option document contains a lot more information on a wide range of issues including:

- Climate change and the environment
- Regeneration
- Local Green Space
- Open Space
- Infrastructure
- Heritage
- Affordable housing
- Housing in multiple occupation

You can find out more by reading the full version of the Issues and Options document at <https://wirral-consult.objective.co.uk> or at your local public library or at Wallasey Town Hall during their normal opening hours.

You can also visit us at one of the drop-in sessions being held in a number of places in the Borough. To find an event near you go to www.wirral.gov.uk/localplanevents

Other formats

We will be able to provide the consultation information in different formats and languages.

These can be requested from localplan@wirral.gov.uk. We will respond to any requests for information in accessible formats and have these available as soon as practicable.

Staff will be on hand during the drop in events to offer assistance if you wish to complete the form on the day.