

## 9. Emerging Baseline Issues

Table 9.1 Wirral Waters: Emerging Baseline Issues

	Spatial and Environmental	Social and Economic
<b>1. Policy and Literature Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need to create sustainable communities, in which to live, work and play, is a clear requirement of national guidance.</li> <li>There is clear support from RSS for the transformational regeneration of inner Wirral. Emerging RSS strengthens this, and the Panel Report has recognised the importance of Wirral Waters</li> <li>The Woodside Masterplan and a series of other Masterplan initiatives are already underway in the area around the dock estate. Wirral Waters must build upon these and be used to ensure the comprehensive regeneration of the area</li> <li>The adopted UDP was prepared well in advance of the Wirral Waters opportunity being identified. The Core Strategy and ensuing DPDs of the emerging LDF will be the central policy vehicle for realising Wirral Waters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU funding streams have triggered the renaissance of the City Region, but are coming to an end and cannot be relied upon for the future of Inner Wirral</li> <li>The Liverpool City Region Development Programme provides a strong socio-economic background for accelerated growth</li> <li>The HMRI pathfinder and the local Strategy for Inner Wirral set out the need for significant improvement of housing stock, broadening of economic base and environmental improvements that can be delivered by Wirral Waters</li> <li>Regional/Local strategies including the MAP and various Wirral Council documents all identify the poor economic and social performance of Inner Wirral and the need for investment on a major scale.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Catalysts for Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waterfront development opportunities are key assets that can be developed and exploited</li> <li>There is a need to provide high quality business and living locations, to include quality office space and waterside living</li> <li>Physical development must be integrated with surrounding areas, particularly HMRI Neighbourhoods at North Birkenhead and others</li> <li>Birkenhead Docks need to be re-structured to both improve port facilities and create redevelopment opportunities</li> <li>Linkage to Birkenhead Town Centre, including the Woodside/Hamilton Quarter/Seacombe, and other surrounding hubs/assets, will be critical to the success of Wirral Waters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closing the regional productivity/GVA gap, accelerating the City-Region's economic growth and improving Inner Wirral's economic performance are clear priorities</li> <li>Securing private sector investment (Peel &amp; others) where it is most needed will be critical to the success of the City-Region</li> <li>The success of the maritime economy and associated key influences such as Seaforth, cruise liner markets and Twelve Quays, is crucial to the area</li> <li>There is a clear need for the public, private and voluntary sectors to work in partnership with the wider community, to ensure an integrated approach to regeneration</li> </ul>
<b>3. Urban Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening and creating new neighbourhoods, with a unique 'sense of place' informed by the inherent assets of Wirral's landscape and townscape, and realising the opportunity to create sustainable communities, are the key urban design issues facing Wirral Waters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering clear, safe, attractive and accessible connections between existing, emerging and future neighbourhoods is critical, to ensure that future assets, facilities and benefits are available for all</li> </ul>
<b>4. Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wirral Waters needs to both integrate with and establish new landmark skyline features in Birkenhead and Liverpool, whilst respecting landscape, townscape and visual amenity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Wirral Waters area has outstanding environmental capacity, to accommodate major regeneration</li> <li>Maximum benefit must be realised in terms of the health effects on the local</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be links into Birkenhead Park / other local heritage assets</li> <li>• Sustainable development must be created, through innovative approaches to biodiversity, waste management, drainage, energy and other infrastructure/ services. Achieving high levels of accessibility by a variety of transport modes will also be of importance</li> </ul>	<p>population, through reducing health inequalities</p>
<b>5. Movement &amp; Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport, pedestrian and cycle links should be improved/created, where needed, in order to enable easy movement between the components of Wirral Waters and to link Wirral Waters with nearby destinations, including Birkenhead town centre, Woodside/Hamilton Quarter, Birkenhead North, Wallasey/Liscard and others</li> <li>• Wirral Waters can assist the delivery of Park and Ride objectives for Birkenhead North</li> <li>• Utilising existing highway capacity and infrastructure, whilst minimising the need to travel through sustainable patterns of development is a fundamental issue for Wirral Waters</li> <li>• Maximising public transport access to employment, leisure and other opportunities is a key objective in an area of low car ownership in order to avoid social exclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum advantage will need to be made of high accessibility by rail and bus</li> <li>• The viability of rail and Mersey Ferry services can be enhanced through increased patronage arising from the critical mass of Wirral Waters</li> </ul>
<b>6. Socio-Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to attract higher value-added sectors and skilled workers to inner Wirral. Creating development of a high quality, both in which to work and live, will be critical in realising this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Inner Wirral, there is an urgent need to reduce deprivation and inequality, improve skills levels and broaden the economic base to allow access by more people to employment opportunities</li> <li>• Wirral Waters can be the major catalyst for the social and economic recovery of the area, through increased incomes and opportunity, tackling out-migration and out-commuting, and putting the economic heart back into Inner Wirral</li> </ul>
<b>7. Community Cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be a need to understand, consider and plan for the needs of community infrastructure in the delivery of Wirral Waters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering regeneration benefits locally in areas of need, by learning lessons from other major regeneration initiatives and engaging with, and understanding the needs of, the local community through a range of mechanisms is an essential component of taking forward Wirral Waters</li> </ul>
<b>8. Development Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are strong assets to link into in West Wirral</li> <li>• The provision of high quality residential development in waterside locations, as part of an overall approach to sustainable communities alongside the HMRI, can create a mixed and balanced community within East Wirral and Birkenhead, to further support the economic regeneration of the inner area</li> <li>• Wirral Waters can provide the location and quality of commercial product to attract commercial occupiers, regionally, nationally and internationally</li> <li>• A range of cultural, leisure, tourist and other related uses is essential to support the area's regeneration alongside the more traditional offer already available in Birkenhead and Wirral's countryside and coast.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher value added target sectors of the RES must be brought to Inner Wirral, with high quality living environments in sustainable locations for those sectors</li> <li>• There is the opportunity to assist the local and regional tourism economies through the promotion of Wirral Waters as tourism/leisure "destination"</li> <li>• There is a growing need to ensure high quality, accessible expansion space for the business core of the City Region</li> </ul>

## What is the Wirral Waters Opportunity?

- 9.1 The above table is the summary of key issues arising through the comprehensive analysis of the social, economic and environmental context to the Birkenhead Docks estate and its environs. It has been undertaken in the knowledge that Peel Holdings has an aspiration, as communicated through the Initial Vision, to realise a major development opportunity at Birkenhead Docks.
- 9.2 The review of Policy and Legislation at Appendix 1 confirms the need for major transformation of Inner Wirral at every level, as explored through the commentary of the preceding sections of this Study. A key aspect emerges from large parts of the Baseline Study is the extent and breadth of this need.
- 9.3 Considering the above, and informed by Table 9.1, it is clear that Wirral Waters has the potential to work on three key levels:
- LEVEL 1: A “Big Bang” transformation of Wirral’s docklands;
  - LEVEL 2: A leading role in the delivery of the regeneration of the local area, as the most significant opportunity within Inner Wirral; and
  - LEVEL 3: A fundamental component in driving the economic growth of the Liverpool City Region and the Ocean Gateway to the North West.
- 9.4 The most striking aspects of Wirral Waters are its boldness and visionary approach, which look towards the introduction of major new development in markets as yet unproven in Inner Wirral.
- 9.5 The long term vision of Peel Holdings is to deliver an Ocean Gateway to the North West, which includes two key projects at Wirral Waters and Liverpool Waters, combined with a multi-modal approach to creating a “Superport” capitalising upon the company’s ownership and control of both the Port of Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- 9.6 Peel’s approach is to work in partnership with key stakeholders and ensure an integrated approach that will secure regeneration benefits for local communities. The “ripple effect” of private investment, allied to a strong partnership approach, will ensure that Wirral Waters becomes an exemplar 21<sup>st</sup> century regeneration initiative.

## What must Wirral Waters achieve?

9.7 This Baseline Study July 2007 demonstrates that **Wirral Waters must:**

- **Be big, fresh, aspirational and “cutting edge”**, in a way not previously seen in Wirral;
- **Be mixed-use, incorporating residential, commercial, retail and leisure**, subject to demonstrating that mixed communities are being delivered and existing town centres are not being harmed;
- **Be Deliverable**, through Peel’s intended investments and through others (public and private sector) working in partnership;
- **Achieve Design Excellence**, realising the inherent quality, value and scale of Wirral’s assets – its landscape, townscape, inland waterways and waterfront location - to inform the creation of vibrant, successful and accessible high quality neighbourhoods.
- **Take maximum advantage of environmental resources, assets and capacity**, including public transport, infrastructure and biodiversity;
- **Provide for high levels of accessibility by public transport**, making best use of existing capacity and seeking to introduce innovative transport measures where these would be viable.
- **Have an International Profile**, to ensure that markets in key sectors can be created;
- **Complement and bring additionally to the City Region, and be of regional/national economic significance**, to reflect the scale of ambition and opportunity to contribute to sub-regional, regional and national economies;
- **Ensure that local communities reap the benefits**, through working in partnership with the Borough Council, local agencies and other partners to ensure the necessary processes and mechanisms are set in place, and that experience and lessons learned from elsewhere are used positively.