

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF KNOWSLEY

To: The Leader and Members of the Cabinet

Meeting: 12 September 2012

Wards Affected: Borough wide

Portfolio area: Regeneration, Economy and Skills

Key Decision

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN **CORE STRATEGY – PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks the Cabinet's endorsement of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy, so that approval can then be sought from a full meeting of the Council to publish the Plan and submit it, along with supporting documents, to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Cabinet are recommended to:-

- (a) Endorse the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy - Proposed Submission Draft;
- (b) Agree that Council approval should be sought to publish the Plan and submit it to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012);
- (c) Request that the Council delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills to:-
 - a) publish and submit to the Secretary of State a final sustainability appraisal report and other supporting documents for the Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) and other legislative requirements;

- b) publish other evidence base documents connected with the Plan; and,
- c) make any necessary typographical or other minor changes to the Plan prior to its publication and submission; and,
- (d) Agree that a further report should be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting on the options and priorities for developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Knowsley Local Plan (previously known as the Local Development Framework or “LDF”) will set out a vision and strategy for the future development of Knowsley and its communities up to 2028. It will provide an important delivery vehicle for the Borough’s Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.2 The requirement to prepare a Local Development Framework was set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 have since changed the legal requirements and have been accompanied by significant reform of national planning policy. The main changes can be summarised as:-

- The introduction of the “Local Plan” term to describe development plan documents prepared by the Council;
- The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategies;
- A new “duty to co-operate” with neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies when preparing the Local Plan; and,
- New powers for local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans (which should be broadly consistent with the Council’s Local Plan).

3.3 *The Local Plan*

3.3.1 As stated in paragraph 3.2 above, the Council must now prepare a Local Plan. The Government expects that a Local Plan will normally be prepared as a single document. This is a marked shift from the “Local Development Framework” approach, in which local authorities prepared a Core Strategy which was supplemented by other development plan documents. Some local authorities (including Knowsley) were well advanced in preparing these Local development Framework documents when the Government introduced the new legislation, and therefore the Government is allowing those authorities to continue with the previous approach in order to allow for continuity with work undertaken to date and to minimise delays.

3.3.2 It is therefore proposed for the Council to continue to prepare the Knowsley Local Plan as a series of separate documents, which will include:-

- The Local Plan: Core Strategy (which is the subject of this report);
- A future Site Allocations and Development Policies document, which will show detailed land allocations for development (this is due to be prepared in late 2013/14 following adoption of the Core Strategy); and,
- The Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (which is now nearing completion and is the subject of a report elsewhere on this agenda).

3.3.3 These separate elements of the Local Plan will progressively replace the current policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006). Further details of future work on the Local Plan and its supporting documents are set out in section 5 of this report below.

3.4 *The National Planning Policy Framework*

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) sets out the Government’s priorities for the planning system and replaces most of the previous Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes. The Framework stresses that the Local Plan should promote “sustainable development” by meeting the objectively assessed development needs of the area, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to change. It sets out stringent “tests of soundness”, which must be met by the Council when preparing the Local Plan. These tests include that the Plan is:-

- Positively prepared;
- Justified;

- Effective; and,
- Consistent with national policy.

3.5 *Revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the New “Duty to Co-operate”*

3.5.1 Since 2008, the Regional Spatial Strategy has been part of the planning framework for all local authorities in the North West region. The proposed revocation of the Strategy (as set out in the Localism Act 2011) will have a very significant impact on Knowsley’s Local Plan, because matters such as the amount of development to be accommodated and the future scale and role of Knowsley’s settlements in the City Region will now be set by the Local Plan, rather than through the Strategy.

3.5.2 Under the “duty to co-operate” (set by section 110 of the Localism Act 2011), the Council must “... *engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis ...*” with neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies in the production of the relevant Local Plans. The Government advises that neighbouring authorities should seek to co-operate, for example, where one authority can help to meet development needs arising in adjoining authority areas. Evidence of such co-operation could include jointly agreed strategies, memoranda of understanding on key issues, or joint Committees to address spatial planning matters. Building on previous extensive joint working (e.g. on the Waste Local Plan and on studies on development land supply), the Liverpool City Region authorities are taking steps to ensure the “duty to co-operate” is complied with.

3.6 *Previous Consultation on the Knowsley Local Plan*

3.6.1 The Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy has been informed by several previous rounds of consultation. Most recently, the Council consulted in summer 2011 on its Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. This set out the emerging Strategy and a series of preferred policy options. The consultation used a wide variety of methods including (amongst others) leafleting to all Knowsley residential addresses, media releases, staffed events, use of the Council’s website, and direct mailing to stakeholders. Comments were invited on the summary leaflet, the full Preferred Options Report, and on various supporting technical documents. These technical documents included the Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study, which identified locations for potential removal from the Green Belt to accommodate longer term housing and employment development.

3.6.2 Responses to the consultation exercise were received from 1,866 respondents (either individuals or organisations), including local residents, community groups, Town and Parish Councils, developers, landowners, neighbouring authorities and other statutory agencies. Some people submitted several comments and a total of 2,385 individual responses were recorded.

3.6.3 Of the responses received:-

- 1,412 (62%) were in the form of signatures on 6 petitions, all of which objected to release of specific areas from the Green Belt (at South Whiston, East of Halewood, and North and South of Huyton) to meet future development needs; and,
- 973 (38%) were in the form of more substantive responses, split between “supportive” comments (7%), “non-supportive” comments (8%) and “other” comments (23%).

3.6.4 The results of the consultation, including a full Report of Consultation, were reported to the Cabinet on 14 December 2011. The comments received have been carefully assessed in producing the Proposed Submission Draft of the Local Plan: Core Strategy.

3.7 *Evidence Base*

3.7.1 The Local Plan will be based on a comprehensive evidence base, covering matters such as housing, economic development, town centres and shopping, and green spaces. Details of key evidence base documents have been referred to in previous reports to the Cabinet (most recently on 14 December 2011). Over the last few months, further evidence base studies have been progressed and/or completed, including:-

- The Knowsley Economic Viability Assessment, which assesses the impact of the Plan requirements (e.g. affordable housing) on the financial viability of developing in Knowsley and will also be used to determine the Council’s approach to developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (see section 5 of this report below);
- A review of the Knowsley Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
- A Sustainability Appraisal of the alternative locations proposed for removal of the Green Belt;
- Studies concerning flood risk and transport impacts of the proposed areas for development; and,

- The Knowsley Green Spaces Audit and Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy.
- 3.7.2 The Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study (on which comments were sought at the Preferred Options stage in summer 2011) has also been virtually completed. A more complete list of evidence base studies produced to date can be viewed at www.knowsley.gov.uk/ldf.
- 3.7.3 At the publication stage (see section 5 of this report below), it will also be necessary under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 to publish a final report of the Sustainability Appraisal which has informed the Plan preparation. A final Habitats Regulation Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment, together with all other evidence base documents, will also need to be published.
- 3.7.4 It is proposed to seek delegated authority from a future meeting of the Council for the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills to publish these documents, and also make any remaining necessary non-material amendments to the Plan.

4. THE CONTENTS OF THE CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 The “Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy – Proposed Submission Version” (referred to hereafter as “the Plan”) is over 190 pages long. A summary of the Plan has therefore been made available for Members at Appendix A to this report. For full details, Members may refer to a full draft of the Plan in Appendix B. Copies of Appendix B have been placed in the Members’ Rooms. The document is also stored within the library on the Council website. Copies are available to all Members electronically and on request from Democratic Services.
- 4.2 The Plan will now run until 2028 rather than the previously advertised 2027 (as it should run for 15 years from adoption). The Plan’s approach is similar to that set out in the Preferred Options Report in summer 2011. However, there have been changes concerning matters of detail, informed by a comprehensive assessment of the previous consultation responses, emerging evidence, the sustainability and other appraisals, and to reflect new legislation, regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 Core Strategy

5.1.1 Following consideration by the Cabinet, the next stages in preparing the Local Plan: Core Strategy are expected to be as follows:-

- Council approval of the Plan (on 19 September 2012);
- Publication of the Proposed Submission Version of the Plan, including a minimum 6-week period during which the public and other stakeholders may submit representations relating to the “soundness” of the Plan (October/December 2012);
- Preparation of the final Report of Consultation and other supporting documents;
- Submission of the Local Plan: Core Strategy to the Secretary of State (February 2013, see paragraph 5.1.2 of this report below);
- Examination in public by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector (June 2013); and,
- Receipt of the Inspector’s report and adoption (September/October 2013).

5.1.2 The date for submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State and the subsequent dates in paragraph 5.1.1 of this report above remain tentative at this stage for the reasons discussed at section 7 of this report below.

5.2 Future Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents

5.2.1 A key priority for the Council over the next 12-18 months will be to progress the Core Strategy to adoption. Following adoption, the main focus of the work will shift to preparing the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies document.

5.2.2 It is also proposed to prepare and revise various Supplementary Planning Documents providing further guidance where necessary. As already stated, the legislation also allows for local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. No requests have been received to date from qualifying community bodies to prepare such documents.

5.3 *Developer Contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy*

- 5.3.1 The Plan policies will require or encourage developers to make contributions (either as financial or “in kind” provision) across a range of areas, for example related to affordable housing, carbon reduction, or provision of community facilities. Under powers in the Planning Act 2008, the Council may also wish to prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in the future, which would set out charges for developers to pay towards infrastructure provision in the area. This would require the Council to produce, consult upon, and then justify a schedule of charges in front of a Planning Inspector.
- 5.3.2 Initial findings from the Knowsley Economic Viability Assessment (which is currently being prepared) has identified that the levels of viability of new development in Knowsley vary significantly according to location, development type, and scale. In some parts of the Borough, viability levels are marginal, whereas in others there is more “headroom” viability from which developer contributions could be sought. It will be necessary for the Council to prioritise carefully the levels of contribution required for different purposes from developers. In relation to the sale and development of land in Council ownership, the agreement of developer contributions would also form part of the negotiations for the sale of the land in line with the strategic partnering approach endorsed by the Cabinet on 18 July 2012.
- 5.3.3 It is intended to bring a further report to the Cabinet on this subject in the next few months.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

- 6.1.1 The Local Plan is likely to have significant long-term financial benefits for the Council, for example by encouraging regeneration and investment, and by promoting population retention/growth and therefore benefitting the Council Tax base. Due to its role in identifying sites for housing development, the Plan is also likely to increase future entitlements of New Homes Bonus resources (introduced in 2010/11) under which the Government matches Council Tax receipts on new dwellings for a six-year period. These long-term demographic and financial effects will be monitored as the Local Plan is progressed and implemented.
- 6.1.2 Further future income is likely to arise from the Plan policies concerning developer contributions, including the potential for a future Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule (see section 5.3 of this report above).

6.1.3 As previously reported to the Cabinet, there are financial implications for the Council in progressing the Core Strategy through its remaining stages, for example the costs of further consultation exercises and the examination in public. Provision for this has been made as part of the Regeneration, Economy and Skills Portfolio budget for 2012/13. This provision, together with earlier agreed reserves, is expected to be sufficient to progress the Core Strategy to adoption.

6.2 Human Resources

This report has no direct human resource implications.

6.3 Information Technology

This report has no direct information technology implications.

6.4 Physical Assets

The Local Plan will guide the future use and development of land in Knowsley, including the Council's own land and buildings.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare the Local Plan. The process continues to carry significant risks, including the need to ensure that the Core Strategy is found to be "sound" at its examination in public. Several Local Plans prepared by other authorities have been found "unsound" at this late stage, resulting in significant delays and additional costs. Further risks could arise from potential legal challenges from third parties.

7.2 The risks are also affected by the changing national and regional policy context (see section 3 of this report above). The proposed abolition of the Regional Strategies, the new "duty to co-operate", and the changes introduced by the new National Planning Policy Framework have all had to be addressed in the Core Strategy. These uncertainties will need to continue to be managed as the Plan progresses through its remaining stages.

7.3 It is proposed that, following the Publication stage of the Plan (early in 2013), a further risk assessment will be undertaken prior to its submission and examination in public stages. This is necessary to ensure the Plan is as robust as possible upon submission to the Secretary of State and could affect the timescales for these future stages.

8. IMPACT ON POPULATION GROUPS

- 8.1 The Local Plan is likely to impact in different ways upon a wide range of population groups. These impacts are too diverse to cover fully in this overview report. However, as an example, the Plan will encourage a wide range of new housing to be delivered in the affordable and market sectors. The Plan policies will also encourage the delivery of appropriate new dwellings to meet specialist needs, such as those of the elderly and less mobile. A further example is that the Plan will set standards for the provision of green space, sporting and recreational provision, including standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of such provision from residential areas and for specific groups such as young people.
- 8.2 The Plan has been subject to robust processes in terms of an Equalities Impact Assessment, a Health Impact Assessment and a Sustainability Appraisal as it has been prepared. These processes, the final reports of which will be published with the Local Plan: Core Strategy, have sought to ensure that the positive impacts of the Plan on specific population groups are maximised while the negative impacts are mitigated through amendments to the Plan policies.

9. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

The Publication stage (see section 5 of this report above) will be the final opportunity for Knowsley residents and other stakeholders to submit representations on the emerging Local Plan: Core Strategy. It will therefore include publicity and targeted consultation to ensure that people and organisations with an interest in the Plan can submit their comments. It will be necessary for all representations to be expressed in terms of how the Core Strategy performs in relation to the Government's "tests of soundness" set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraph 3.4 of this report above). Individuals and organisations who submit valid representations relating to the "soundness" of the Plan may be invited to take part in the subsequent examination in public hearing sessions in 2013.

10. CONCLUSION

The Cabinet is recommended to endorse the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy so that approval may then be sought for the Plan from a full meeting of the Council

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Appendices:-

Appendix A Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy – Proposed Submission Draft – Summary

Appendix B Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy – Proposed Submission Draft

(Copies of Appendix B have not been circulated with the agenda but are available as set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report)

Background Papers:-

Previous reports to the Cabinet concerning the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy on 14 October 2009, 21 April 2010, 8 June 2011 and 14 December 2011

Knowsley Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report of Consultation (December 2011)

Evidence Base Studies – see www.knowsley.gov.uk/ldf for full list

National Planning Policy Framework – Department of Communities and Local Government - March 2012

**KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY – PROPOSED
SUBMISSION DRAFT**

SUMMARY

Vision and Objectives

The Plan's vision (see chapter 3 of the Plan) is for Knowsley to be known in 2028 for its *successful suburban townships*. The vision is supported by nine strategic objectives which are entitled:

- Sustainable Economic and Employment Growth
- Well-balanced Housing Market
- Regenerate and Transform
- Distinctive, Viable and Sustainable Town Centres
- Quality of Place
- Sustainable Transport
- Manage Environmental Resources
- Green Infrastructure and Rural Areas.
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Spatial Strategy and Regeneration Priorities

In accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the Plan contains a policy (in chapter 4) which will set a strong presumption in favour of allowing "sustainable development". The Plan's spatial strategy (set out in chapter 5) will retain a strong focus on development and regeneration within the urban areas of Huyton/Stockbridge Village, Kirkby, Prescott/Whiston and Halewood. In common with the previous Preferred Options Report, the Plan identifies six "Principal Regeneration Areas", within which there is both a need for and anticipated opportunity to promote comprehensive change, at:

- North Huyton and Stockbridge Village
- Kirkby Town Centre
- Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks
- Tower Hill, Kirkby
- South Prescott
- Prescott Town Centre

Subject to funding availability, need and deliverability, appropriate regeneration will also be supported in other areas particularly those with high deprivation levels.

Housing Supply, Distribution and Delivery

Future housing supply and distribution are covered by policy CS3 (see chapter 5 of the Plan).

Due to the proposed revocation of the Regional Strategy, the Plan includes a local target for the scale of future housing development. The setting of this target has taken account of: the evidence which underpinned the Regional Spatial Strategy; the Knowsley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010 (which identified very significant outstanding housing needs); and deliverability. The Plan proposes that the previous target of 450 dwelling completions per annum should be retained, albeit running from a new “start date” of 2010. This target equates to **8,100 additional dwellings** (in addition to demolition replacements) to be developed between April 2010 and April 2028, which represents about a 12.5% increase on Knowsley’s current housing stock.

There is only capacity for about two thirds of this total requirement up to 2028 to be built on sites in the current urban area. It is proposed to make up this shortfall in supply (comprising about 3,000 dwellings) by reviewing Green Belt boundaries in some locations – see “Green Belts” sub-section below for further details.

The proposed distribution of new housing up to 2028 in each of Knowsley’s townships reflects their relative housing needs and land availability, and is set out below (NB figures are rounded and subject to further confirmation as the Local Plan progresses):

Huyton and Stockbridge Village	33%
Kirkby	15%
Prescot, Whiston, Cronton and Knowsley Village	33%
Halewood	19%

Affordable Housing and Housing Types

The Plan proposes (see policy CS15 in chapter 7) that, subject to exceptions including where there are viability issues, all development proposals for market housing of 15 dwellings or more should include at least 25% provision of affordable housing. This requirement, together with continued partnership working with Registered Providers, will help to address Knowsley’s housing affordability issues. The Strategy also proposes policies concerning the design of housing and provision of specialist and supported accommodation, to help meet the needs of Knowsley’s ageing population.

Gypsies and Travellers

Government policy requires the Plan to address the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people. The Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008) recommended that Knowsley should make provision for five permanent caravan pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, together with a share of transit pitches across Merseyside. While the evidence base is being updated, it will be necessary to keep the requirements under review and, whilst the Strategy does not identify the scale of site required, nor a specific site or sites to meet these needs, it does identify criteria under which an appropriate site (or sites) may be identified in

the future (see policy CS18 in chapter 7). It is also proposed that these criteria be used to assess any planning application for such a use that may come forward over the Plan period.

Economic and Employment Development

Key aspects of the proposed Plan in relation to economy and employment (see Policy CS4 in chapter 5) are to:

- Support economic growth and meet the development needs of established and emerging employment sectors;
- Provide sufficient land to meet needs for employment growth up to 2028;
- Enhance the quality of existing employment areas (including the regeneration of Knowsley Industrial Park as proposed in “Delivering a New Future for Knowsley Industrial Park: Strategic Framework”, 2011);
- Improve accessibility to jobs and tackle barriers to employment; and
- Support the diversification of the rural economy (e.g. for appropriate leisure and tourism uses).

The Plan is required to set a target amount of land to be made available for employment development (industrial, business and distribution uses). Based on factors such as historic build rates, land availability, and quality and range of sites available, the Plan identifies that up to a further 57 hectares of land (over and above current land supply) should be made available for employment development up to 2028. It is proposed to review Green Belt boundaries in some locations to meet this need – see “Green Belts” sub-section below for further details.

Green Belts

Just over half of Knowsley has been designated since the early 1980s as Green Belt, within which there is a strong presumption against most forms of development. The NPPF advises that Green Belt boundaries, once set, should only be changed in exceptional circumstances.

As demonstrated, there are expected to be considerable shortfalls of land to meet identified needs up to 2028 for housing and employment development within Knowsley.

Given the close linkages which exist between Knowsley and neighbouring districts in terms of the housing market and travel to work patterns, consideration has been given to whether there is scope within neighbouring districts to meet some or all of the development needs. The “Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study” (reported to Cabinet on 14 December 2011) assessed land supply across 8 local authorities within and adjacent to the Liverpool City Region. The Study concluded that there is overall capacity to meet housing and employment development needs across the City Region. However, the situation in individual districts varied with some

districts (e.g. Liverpool) having a surplus of capacity to meet their needs, whilst others (Knowsley, Sefton, West Lancashire and potentially Halton and St. Helens) faced shortages of land supply and pressure to develop in the Green Belt. Whilst the study found some scope for development to be focussed towards those districts with a surplus of land supply it is considered that this does not over-ride the need to propose release of Green Belt land in Knowsley to meet a portion of the Borough's future development needs.

Given these issues, there are still considered to be exceptional circumstances justifying a review of Green Belt boundaries in Knowsley. This must be undertaken through the Local Plan.

The Plan (see policy CS5 in chapter 5) identifies broad locations for potential release from the Green Belt in Knowsley to meet future development needs. The broad locations (subject to further confirmation as the Local Plan progresses) will be the same as those consulted upon at Preferred Options stage in summer 2011. These were in the following areas:

- Bank Lane, Kirkby (housing)
- East of Knowsley Industrial Park (employment)
- Knowsley Lane, Huyton (housing/employment)
- Edenhurst Avenue, Huyton (housing)
- Land bound by A58, to the north of Prescot (housing)
- Carr Lane, Prescot (housing/employment)
- East of Halewood (housing)
- South of Whiston (housing)
- Cronton Colliery (and land south of M62) (employment)
- Knowsley Village (housing)

These areas have been identified using evidence provided by the Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study. This assessed areas for potential release from the Green Belt based upon the extent to which they contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt set in the National Planning Policy Framework. For example, areas which are considered to form "essential gaps" between settlements and thereby contribute most significantly to the purposes of Green Belt designation are to be kept in the Green Belt.

Under policy CS5 of the Plan, the release of land from the Green Belt would be phased to give priority to developing land in urban areas, support regeneration, and maintain a minimum 5 year supply of deliverable and available land for development for housing and employment uses. Most of the areas will be identified for removal from the Green Belt to meet development needs before 2028.

Town Centres and Retailing

The Plan (in common with the previous Preferred Options Report) proposes a "hierarchy" of centres in which Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot would continue to be the main town centres, with other centres performing a more local role. Specific priorities in Policy CS6 include:

- Kirkby Town Centre – delivery of retail led regeneration, including the town centre expansion area to the south of Cherryfield Drive;
- Prescott Town Centre – to refocus the role of the town centre taking account of heritage issues and improve linkages to Cables Retail Park;
- Huyton Town Centre – to investigate opportunities for refocusing the retail offer and mix of uses; and
- District centres – to complete current regeneration proposals at Ravenscourt (Halewood) and Stockbridge Village.

The Plan proposes to reduce the “leakage” of shopping expenditure from the catchment areas of Knowsley’s centres to centres outside the Borough and fill current gaps in shopping provision.

Transport

The Plan supports provision of a sustainable and integrated transport system (consistent with the Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2011). A range of specific transport schemes and programmes are supported.

“Green Infrastructure” and Greenspaces

The Plan promotes protection, management and enhancement of Knowsley’s network of natural, artificial and open spaces and identifies several “strategic green links”. It also proposes revisions to the standards for various types of public open space provision which are broadly intended to secure a better balance between quantity and quality.

Design Quality, Sustainability and Low Carbon Development

The Plan proposes targets (under the national Code for Sustainable Homes and Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology) which are in line with the Government’s proposal to achieve “zero carbon” development by 2016 for new homes and 2019 for commercial developments, via progressive updates to the Building Regulations. There will be a phased progression in the intervening period to these standards. Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks are identified as a “Priority Zone” for low carbon and renewable energy within which the potential of the area for decentralised energy networks will be facilitated.

Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Funding

The Plan contains strong linkages with other strategies for the delivery of infrastructure (e.g. transport, health, schools, greenspaces, utilities, etc.) and establishes that funding will be sought where appropriate from developers to help deliver the infrastructure required as a result of their development. This chapter also addresses whether the Council will charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Based upon the emerging findings of the Knowsley Economic Viability Assessment, the Council may be able to justify charging a CIL for specific types of development (including housing and retail) but only in

certain parts of the Borough. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet to decide the approach to CIL in due course. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Knowsley is being prepared as a further supporting document, which will outline the Borough's current and future infrastructure requirements and priorities.