



*Knowsley Council*

# **Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy**

Technical Report

## **Strategic Context**

Final Version - Core Strategy Submission Document

**July 2013**



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## **1.0 Purpose of this Technical Report**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 This Technical Report is one of several Technical Reports which have been prepared by the Council on a range of topics, including housing and employment growth, Green Belts and retail issues. It has been published in July 2013 and forms part of the evidence base made available to support the Examination in Public of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Report**

1.2.1 The Report brings together existing evidence, processes and commentary in order to present a clear picture of the strategic context for the development of the Core Strategy. The report sets out:

- the main influences over the development of the Core Strategy, including national, regional and local influences;
- how the Core Strategy has responded to different and competing evidence, pressures and influences; and
- how the Core Strategy preparation process has accounted for statutory elements such as Sustainability Appraisal and the results of previous consultation stages.

1.2.2 The Report should be read alongside: other Technical Reports prepared to support the Core Strategy; the Local Plan evidence base; and statutory documents such as the Statement of Previous Consultation and the Duty to Cooperate Statement.

### **1.3 Sections within the Report**

1.3.1 The Technical Report includes a number of sections as follows:

2. National policy and legislation
3. Local policy
4. Sub-regional and regional policy
5. Evidence base
6. Technical Reports
7. Consultation and governance
8. Assessments

1.3.2 Within these sections full references are given to relevant information sources, usually the title, date and author of the source / document in question. Where relevant, references to where the document appears in the Examination Library are also given e.g. starting with code “CS” or “EB”.

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<sup>2</sup> Also referred to in this report under its shortened name – the “Core Strategy”

#### **1.4 Use within the Submission and Examination stages**

1.4.1 The Report has been made available to support the Submission and Examination in Public Stages for the Local Plan Core Strategy. It explains to stakeholders the strategic context and influences over the Core Strategy. This will provide useful contextual information for those seeking to find out the basis on which the Core Strategy has been developed. The Technical Report will be of use during the Examination in Public process, before a Planning Inspector, as part of the Council's evidence base and also in bringing together discussion of the different elements of the evidence base in a coherent document.

#### **1.5 Relationship to other supporting documents**

1.5.1 This Technical Report is one of a family of such reports produced to support this stage of the Core Strategy and wider Local Plan preparation, and cross refers to these and other documents at various points. Many of the evidence base documents produced as part of Core Strategy preparation have had a strong influence. In particular, strong linkages exist with the Technical Reports entitled "Planning for Housing Growth" and "Planning for Employment Growth", and with the Reports of Consultation which summarise the findings of the consultation stages undertaken on the Core Strategy during its earlier development stages. Links with the Sustainability Appraisal process and other supporting assessments are also very strong.

## 2.0 National policy and legislation

2.0.1 The Core Strategy and its spatial strategy policies have been developed within the context of national planning legislation, supporting regulations, and planning policy. The following sub-sections outline the main national context for the preparation of the Knowsley Core Strategy from 2007 onwards. This context has changed over the time period of Core Strategy preparation, meaning that some of these items are no longer current. However, it is relevant to mention them as they were in place (and hence influential) at some point during the period of preparation of different elements of the Core Strategy.

### 2.1 Acts of Parliament

2.1.1 The **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**<sup>3</sup> formed the legislative basis for the previous plan-making system, under which the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1998) and replacement UDP (2006) were prepared. Although the Core Strategy has been prepared under subsequent legislation, some of the legal framework of the 1990 Act remains in place, for example the use of Section 106 agreements for planning obligations. The Knowsley Replacement UDP was adopted under transitional arrangements to the subsequent system introduced by the 2004 Act (see below).

2.1.2 The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004**<sup>4</sup> was the legislative tool associated with the introduction of the Local Development Framework system. The Act made provision for a new kind of development plan, centred on Development Plan Documents and other Local Development Documents such as the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme and Supplementary Planning Documents. This Act has directly influenced the form and function of the Core Strategy and wider planning policy in Knowsley, particularly in relation to the type of documents being produced and the document structure for the Core Strategy is to sit within.

2.1.3 The **Planning Act 2008**<sup>5</sup> introduced new structures and tools including the Infrastructure Planning Commission and the Community Infrastructure Levy, and provided for a new range of national planning policy statements to be produced. This Act, although not as significant for the Core Strategy as the 2004 Act, made some significant changes to the planning policy system.

2.1.4 The **Localism Act 2011**<sup>6</sup> represents the greatest change to the plan preparation process since the 2004 Act, and in general signals a reduction in the amount of prescriptive guidance on planning issues and plan-preparation available to local planning authorities. New tools introduced included neighbourhood planning, community right to build orders, and a new National Planning Policy Framework, which replaced much existing policy. The Act

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<sup>3</sup> Examination Library Reference (ELR): LR06

<sup>4</sup> ELR: LR01

<sup>5</sup> ELR: LR02

<sup>6</sup> ELR: LR03

also introduced changes to the plan preparation process, reducing the number of statutory stages for plans, including a new “duty to cooperate” between local authorities and other bodies, and making changes to national and local processes for infrastructure planning, including the Community Infrastructure Levy.

- 2.1.5 Of particular significance, the Localism Act made provision for the abolition of the regional tier of planning policy. Between 2008 (its adoption) and its revocation in May 2013, the North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS)<sup>7</sup> was a part of the statutory development plan for Knowsley, setting strategic regional policies as well as key targets for housing and economic growth. Prior to this, the role of RSS was taken by Regional Planning Guidance 13<sup>8</sup>, which again set targets for growth and a range of strategic policies. The removal of this tier left a significant gap in the planning policy framework, particularly given that it was under preparation and then adopted during the period of preparation of the Knowsley Core Strategy. However, since the intended abolition was announced in mid-2010, there has been scope for the Council to respond to this by filling the policy gaps at the local level.

## 2.2 Circulars

- 2.2.1 **Circular 01/06: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan sites**<sup>9</sup> provided guidance for local authorities in planning to make provision for sites for travelling communities, and also determining planning applications for gypsy and traveller developments. The Circular was replaced by “Planning policy for traveller sites”<sup>10</sup>, published in conjunction with the NPPF in March 2012 (discussed further in section 2.7.1 of this report).
- 2.2.2 **Circular 04/07: Planning for Travelling Showpeople**<sup>11</sup> set policies for the provision of accommodation for travelling showpeople. This Circular was also replaced by the “Planning policy for traveller sites” document referenced above.
- 2.2.3 **Circular 05/05 Planning Obligations**<sup>12</sup> set the government’s approach to planning obligations, including the negotiation of Section 106 agreements and other guidance. The Circular has since been deleted.

## 2.3 Local Planning Regulations

- 2.3.1 The **Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004**<sup>13</sup> set the initial regulations for the Local Development Framework process, including that the existing system of Unitary Development Plans and

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<sup>7</sup> The North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (GONW, 2008) (ELR: PG18)

<sup>8</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, ODPM, 2003) (ELR: PG19)

<sup>9</sup> ELR: PG 11

<sup>10</sup> Planning policy for traveller sites (CLG, 2012) (ELR: PG03)

<sup>11</sup> ELR: PG12

<sup>12</sup> ELR: PG10

<sup>13</sup> ELR: LR10

Local Plans be changed to include Local Development Documents, including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

- 2.3.2 The **Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2008**<sup>14</sup> and the **Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2009**<sup>15</sup> simplified the plan preparation process, amending the 2004 regulations to do this.
- 2.3.3 The **Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012**<sup>17</sup> comprehensively updated the regulatory framework in response to the provisions of the Localism Act (2011) and the NPPF (2012). These Regulations are also based on the PCPA 2004, and set out revised processes by which “local plans” and “supplementary planning documents” should be prepared. The regulations also prescribe processes around the “Duty to Cooperate”, as well as revised protocols for monitoring reports. One notable change is the change in terminology from “Local Development Frameworks” to “Local Plans”. The Council has subsequently reconsidered its terminology for different planning policy documents, but in essence the structure and purpose of the documents, including the Local Plan Core Strategy, remains the same as before the 2012 Regulations.
- 2.3.4 The Council has complied with the 2012 Local Planning Regulations in preparing its final Core Strategy. Previous consultation stages of the Core Strategy, including Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages, have been completed in accordance with the relevant regulatory framework which was in place at the time that these stages took place. At the submission stage the Council has complied with Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations.
- ## 2.4 Other Regulations
- 2.4.1 Separate Regulations require the Core Strategy to undergo processes of Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment as it is prepared. Details of these requirements and how the Council has complied with them are set out in section 8 of this Technical Report.
- 2.4.2 The Government published: the **Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012**<sup>18</sup> to support neighbourhood planning processes under the 2011 Localism Act; and the **Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2010**<sup>19</sup> to support the Community Infrastructure Levy, a tool brought forward by the Planning Act 2008. While these regulations do not directly dictate the drafting of the Core Strategy (in contrast to the Local Planning regulations) they will guide how the Council may use these planning tools in the future.

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<sup>14</sup> ELR: LR09

<sup>15</sup> ELR: LR08

<sup>17</sup> ELR: LR07

<sup>18</sup> ELR: LR04

<sup>19</sup> ELR: LR05, LR05a, LR05b

## 2.5 Planning Policy Statements and Guidance

2.5.1 The Government published a range of **Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)** and (since 2004) **Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)** setting out national policy and principles towards certain aspects of planning. Although most of the documents were superseded in 2012 by the National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraph 2.6 below) several of them did influence the early stages of preparing the Knowsley Core Strategy including:

- **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development<sup>20</sup>** (replacing PPG1) – set out the government’s approach to achieving sustainability within the planning process. The Core Strategy responded to this by promoting a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives and by ensuring that Knowsley’s communities can operate sustainably supported by appropriate physical, social and environmental infrastructure.
- **Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts<sup>21</sup>** – set the national policy for Green Belts, including the central purposes which they serve and the circumstances within which Green Belt boundaries could be changed, or that development within the Green Belt could be permitted. This was particularly influential in developing the early stages of the Knowsley Core Strategy, as the urban areas of the Borough are tightly constrained by Green Belt boundaries.
- **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing<sup>22</sup>** – set the national policy in relation to housing provision, design quality, affordability and sustainability of residential communities. PPS3 also indicated the kind of evidence which Councils should have made available to support their housing policies, and which informed the development of the spatial strategy.
- **Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth<sup>23</sup>** – included national planning policies relating to employment, the economy (including within rural areas) and retail development. PPS4 set out the kind of evidence required to support local approaches to economic growth and development of town and local centres, the outcomes of which have had a clear influence over the development of the Knowsley Core Strategy.
- **Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management<sup>24</sup>** sets out national policies relating to sustainable waste management and sets a hierarchy which encourages greater reuse, recycling and recovery of waste. The document encourages the development of appropriate strategies which ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the development of appropriate waste management facilities. This document has guided the preparation of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan, and the policy approach to waste management in Knowsley’s Core Strategy.

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<sup>20</sup> ELR: PG04

<sup>21</sup> ELR: PG05

<sup>22</sup> ELR: PG06

<sup>23</sup> ELR: PG07

<sup>24</sup> ELR: PG08

- **Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning<sup>25</sup>** – guided the development of local plans by local authorities, including the process for preparing different components, and set requirements which development plans would have to meet if they were to be determined to be “sound”. This document guided the initial preparation of the Core Strategy, including the vision and objectives, strategic policies, evidence base and the spatial strategy.

2.5.2 **Minerals Policy Statements (MPS) and Minerals Policy Guidance Notes (MPG)<sup>26</sup>** have been used to guide the strategic approach to minerals extraction and safeguarding within the Borough. These are supplemented by the **National and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2005-2020<sup>27</sup>**.

2.5.3 **National Policy Statements (NPS)** were consulted on between 2009 and 2011, with some documents now having been finalised. These focus mainly on issues of infrastructure, energy and adapting to climate change.

2.5.4 Most of the existing PPGs, PPSs, MPGs and MPSs were replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. However, these documents did as stated above influence the early stages of the Knowsley Core Strategy. In any event, many of the broad principles established in the PPGs, PPSs, MPGs and MPSs remain within the NPPF.

## 2.6 National Planning Policy Framework

2.6.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>28</sup>** was announced as the Localism Act was being introduced, and has replaced the majority of PPS, PPG, MPS and MPG documents, as well as two Circulars and a number of guidance letters issued by CLG from 2003 onwards<sup>29</sup>. In all, over one thousand pages of national planning policy were reduced to a single document of less than sixty pages. This was accompanied by Technical Guidance<sup>30</sup>.

2.6.2 The “Report of the Review of Planning Practice Guidance” led by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor (published in 2012) sets out further proposals to rationalise the remaining detailed guidance on specific aspects of the planning system which exists at national level. The Government is currently (as at July 2013) considering the recommendations of this document.

2.6.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The document develops this theme across a number of policy areas, including the economy, town centres, sustainable transport,

<sup>25</sup> ELR: PG09

<sup>26</sup> ELR: PG13, PG14, PG15 and PG16

<sup>27</sup> National and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2005 – 2020 (CLG, 2009) (ELR: PG17)

<sup>28</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, 2012) (ELR: PG01)

<sup>29</sup> See Annex 3 of the NPPF. Some notable exceptions remain, e.g. PPS10.

<sup>30</sup> Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, 2012) (ELR: PG01a)

communications infrastructure, housing, design, health, the Green Belt, climate change, the natural environment, the historic environment and minerals planning. The document also includes specific guidance for plan-making (i.e. preparation of Local Plans and other documents, and supporting evidence base) as well as decision-making (i.e. development management).

2.6.4 The impact of the NPPF for the planning system is likely to be extremely significant and an understanding of its impact is likely to develop further as experience develops of its implementation. For the Knowsley Core Strategy, the NPPF has only been in place for a short period of its overall preparation time, and therefore changes have been made where necessary to the Core Strategy to ensure it remains in conformity with national planning policy. In particular, the Council has had to make changes to the Core Strategy to ensure it reflects:

- the up to date structure and terminology of planning documents (i.e. “local plan” terminology)
- the presumption in favour of sustainable development
- changes to policy areas which are central to the spatial strategy, including housing land supply, town centres, employment land and Green Belts
- changes to other policy areas, including green infrastructure, design, minerals and climate change
- compliance with the plan-making procedures, including the revised definition of “soundness”
- compliance with changes to mechanisms for calculating local land supply
- changes to the development management process, including impacts of removal of detailed policy previously contained within PPG and PPS documents.

2.6.5 The Council has proactively addressed the changes brought about by the introduction of the NPPF, and has completed an assessment toolkit provided by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). This has been made available alongside the Submission Version of the Core Strategy<sup>31</sup>.

## 2.7 Other National Policy

2.7.1 Alongside the NPPF, CLG published “**Planning policy for traveller sites**”<sup>32</sup> which replaces two previous Circulars (see paragraphs 2.1.7 and 2.1.8 of this report). This document sets out national policies for planning for provision of gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation, and dealing with planning applications for these types of development. This revised national guidance has been accounted for in the approach to planning for travelling communities within the Knowsley Core Strategy (policy CS18).

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<sup>31</sup> Knowsley Legal Compliance and Soundness Self Assessments (ELR: SD18, SD18a)

<sup>32</sup> Planning policy for traveller sites (CLG, 2012) (ELR: PG03)

## 2.8 Other guidance

- 2.8.1 The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) maintains a “Plan Making Manual” which gives guidance for local authorities seeking to progress local plans. This covers relevant legislation and regulations, and established best practice and examples. This replaced a companion guide to PPS12, which issued similar advice.
- 2.8.3 The Planning Inspectorate has also produced “Best Practice” guidance notes, setting out lessons learnt from their experience in examining development plan documents over several years. This is supplemented by advice on the Planning Portal, which is also supplied by the Planning Inspectorate<sup>33</sup>. The Council has referred to this guidance and to the wider PAS website during the development of the spatial strategy at several points.
- 2.8.4 Some of this guidance is now in the process of being revised in accordance with the NPPF. As the final form and content of the NPPF was not known until the end of March 2012, additional guidance is under preparation and not available in full to support the development of the Core Strategy. It is also likely that guidance will be developed in response to the lessons learnt from the experience of implementation of the NPPF, e.g. through experience of examination of Local Plan documents, or through case law.

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<sup>33</sup> Available at: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planninginspectorate/> (Planning Inspectorate, 2012 and as updated)

### 3.0 Local Policy

3.0.1 The Council and its partners have developed a range of statutory and non-statutory local policy documents covering a wide variety of topics. These have influenced to varying degrees the development of the spatial strategy. Some documents (e.g. Sustainable Community Strategy) have had a very strong influence over how the vision and policies within the Core Strategy have developed.

#### 3.1 Community Plans and Strategies

3.1.1 PPS12 stated that:

*"Local authorities should align and coordinate the core strategy of the local development framework with the unitary or district sustainable community strategy" (paragraph 4.33).*

At the outset of Core Strategy preparation, the Sustainable Community Strategy therefore had a high degree of relevance for spatial planning. The central vision, themes, aims and objectives of the strategy are meant to influence the development of the spatial planning policy for the area. The Core Strategy (and other subsequent Local Plan documents) formed an important part of the "delivery plan" for the Sustainable Community Strategy, particularly the spatial priorities contained therein. Knowsley Council has produced two iterations of the Sustainable Community Strategy since the preparation of the Core Strategy began.

3.1.2 The first Knowsley Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted by the Knowsley Partnership (including the Council) in 2008, entitled: **Knowsley the Borough of Choice: Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2023**<sup>34</sup>. The Sustainable Community Strategy has been used to identify a spatial vision for Knowsley in the Local Plan, hence ensuring a joined up approach to community planning and place shaping. This was recognised from the first stages of preparation of the Core Strategy, including the draft vision and objectives consulted on as part of the Issues and Options consultation.

3.1.3 The first Sustainable Community Strategy's central themes, which included, "a diverse and prosperous economy", "increasing economic activity at all levels", "a well connected Knowsley" and "improving the offer and quality of space" are clearly important for the Core Strategy. These priorities have been aligned with those emerging through the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy. In particular, the first Sustainable Community Strategy outlines the following actions, which have been accounted for within the development of the Core Strategy:

- *To make the land use and development priorities identified in this strategy happen*

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<sup>34</sup> Knowsley the Borough of Choice: Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2023 (Knowsley Partnership and Knowsley MBC, 2008) (ELR: PG31a)

- *To identify the strategic role of each of Knowsley's town centres and include policies to ensure the vitality and viability of each centre*
- *To set out requirements for affordable housing*

3.1.4 Knowsley's second version of the Sustainable Community Strategy, entitled: **A Strategy for Knowsley: the Borough of Choice**<sup>35</sup>, is essentially a revision and update to the initial Strategy. The primary drivers behind the need for a revision to the Strategy included the changing circumstances between 2008 and 2013, and that some of the priorities established in the first version needed alteration to reflect progress.

3.1.5 The revised Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a revised evidence base and revised drivers, including “improve Knowsley the place”, “create a thriving diverse economy” and “narrowing the inequality gap”. These revised drivers lead to a set of strategic outcomes, several of which are important to the development of the Core Strategy. These include:

- *Empowered, resilient, cohesive communities*
- *Quality infrastructure and environment*
- *Safe, attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods*
- *Supporting sustainable business growth*

3.1.6 To accord with these outcomes, activities are identified for coordination through the Knowsley Partnership, many of which are connected to the spatial planning priorities associated with the Core Strategy. These include:

- *Encouraging public sector partners within Knowsley to use their spending power to create jobs and employment opportunities*
- *Build partnerships with developers, businesses and public sector partners to ensure Knowsley offers a competitive business location with effective internal transport links, digital connectivity and high quality sites and premises*
- *Focus investment and development activities towards sectors where Knowsley has identified strengths and potential for long-term growth: Transport, Communications and Distribution; Manufacturing; Finance and Business Services*
- *Through the Sustainable Knowsley Programme oversee and coordinate the Borough's strong portfolio of green energy projects*
- *Enhance the local housing offer through the Knowsley Local Plan, Partnership Tenancy Strategy and delivery of the Homes and Communities Agency housing investment programme*

3.1.7 In addition, the performance monitoring framework set out within the Sustainable Community Strategy documents has influenced the development of a monitoring framework and indicators for the Core Strategy. The draft monitoring framework for the Core Strategy was published alongside the

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<sup>35</sup> (Draft) A Strategy for Knowsley: The Borough of Choice 2012 – 2023 (Knowsley Partnership and Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: PG31)

Preferred Options Report, and a revised version with the Submission Version Core Strategy.

- 3.1.8 Local Area Agreements (LAAs) were drawn up by Local Strategic Partnerships and agreed with central government. Although LAAs were abolished in 2010, much of the preparation of the Knowsley Core Strategy was undertaken while the Knowsley LAA was in place. Knowsley's first LAA, entitled **Knowsley Local Area Agreement: Narrowing the Gap**<sup>36</sup> was produced in 2005 as part of a national pilot scheme, and subsequently refreshed in 2006. It contained a set of improvement targets which partners were committed to achieving and a delivery plan setting out what each partner is intending to do to achieve those targets. LAAs reflected the vision, priorities and objectives for the area as described in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.1.9 Knowsley's LAA provided some useful context for the development of the spatial strategy, particularly around setting the high-level vision and objectives which have shaped the strategy. Particular priorities include neighbourhood regeneration and boosting local employment. LAA indicators also provided a useful framework for collating indicators to monitor the spatial strategy. Finally, as the LAA was a partnership document, it provided useful context and clarity as to the priorities of the Council's key partners.

## 3.2 Housing

- 3.2.1 The Knowsley Housing Strategy, produced by the Knowsley Housing Partnership, has undergone several iterations during the preparation of the Core Strategy. Firstly, the **Knowsley Housing Strategy 2004 – 2010**<sup>37</sup>, set out the role of the Council in addressing key housing issues in Knowsley, recognising the changing role of the Council from landlord to provision of support services. In particular the strategy focussed on supporting the delivery of clearance and regeneration initiatives in urban areas suffering from low demand for housing. Issues of housing need and affordability were also recognised.
- 3.2.2 The **Knowsley Housing Strategy 2011 – 2014: Housing Choices for All**<sup>38</sup> represented a new iteration of the Housing Strategy, responding to new challenges arising from changing market conditions and changing political contexts. Three clear priorities were set: achieving the right quantity and quality within new housing, continuing to raise housing quality in existing neighbourhoods, and connecting people to the right housing offer. The Housing Strategy has strategic links with the development of the spatial strategy, particularly around the provision of new market and affordable housing, including links to the Homes and Communities Agency affordable housing programme. Ongoing and future physical regeneration programmes of residential areas are also supported.

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<sup>36</sup> Knowsley Local Area Agreement: Narrowing the Gap (Knowsley Partnership, 2005) (ELR: PG43)

<sup>37</sup> Knowsley Housing Strategy 2004 – 2010 (Knowsley Housing Partnership, 2004) (ELR: PG33b)

<sup>38</sup> Knowsley Housing Strategy 2011 – 2014: Housing Choices for All (Knowsley Housing Partnership, 2011) (ELR: PG33)

3.2.3 In response to national changes associated with the legislation within the Localism Act 2011, Knowsley Council has introduced a **Knowsley Strategic Tenancy Strategy**<sup>39</sup>. The purpose of the strategy is to supply broad objectives to be taken into consideration by affordable housing providers in Knowsley, when formulating the policies that will govern how they will implement new flexibilities to their operations, arising from reforms to social housing policy and legislation. This includes changing the way tenancies for social housing operate for new tenants. The implications of its implementation for planning priorities include the potential to make better use of existing affordable housing stock, supporting vulnerable households and aid the building of more stable and cohesive communities. These implications have influenced the spatial strategy in ensuring that the approach to housing provision, particularly for affordable housing, reflects changing legislation and the likely priorities of the Borough's Registered Providers of social housing.

### 3.3 Economic regeneration

3.3.1 The **Knowsley Economic Regeneration Strategy**<sup>40</sup> was produced by consultants Regeneris for the Council and its partners in 2008. The strategy was strongly linked to the Core Strategy, setting out the types of economic development activity being sought to secure economic regeneration, and therefore need to be accounted for in future plans. The strategy in particular recognised the strategic economic links between Knowsley and its surrounding area: this has been a key influence on the development of the spatial strategy within the Core Strategy. Central themes of the strategy include capturing the full economic potential of the Borough's communities, stimulating innovation and growth of enterprise, providing the infrastructure for growth and investment, and ensuring that Knowsley is an attractive location for relocation. These priorities have strongly influenced the development of the spatial strategy, particularly around regeneration of existing and underused employment areas, and providing the right land and infrastructure for economic investment.

3.3.2 A renewed Knowsley Economic Regeneration Strategy, called **Knowsley – A Good Investment: Knowsley's Economic Regeneration Strategy 2012 - 2015**<sup>41</sup> was prepared within similar timescales to the final Core Strategy Proposed Submission Version. This document was required to reflect the changing economic circumstances, both locally and globally, since the first document was published in 2008, and to provide shorter term priority actions to support economic growth and investment in the Borough. The strategy's strategic goals relate to promoting conditions for sustainable economic growth, empowering residents to realise their economic potential and establishing Knowsley as a location of choice for residents, businesses and investment. Key priorities are established around target growth sectors,

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<sup>39</sup> Knowsley Tenancy Strategy 2012 (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: PG34)

<sup>40</sup> Knowsley Economic Regeneration Strategy: Final Report (Regeneris Consulting, 2008) (ELR: PG32a)

<sup>41</sup> Knowsley – A Good Investment: Knowsley's Economic Regeneration Strategy 2012 - 2015 (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: PG32)

boosting marketing and promoting greater partnership working and enabling activities between the Council, its partners and the private sector. Greater recognition is also given to working with partners within the Liverpool City Region, recognising the economic geographies associated with the Local Enterprise Partnership, etc. Again, these priorities, and those associated with specific areas of Knowsley targeted for business growth, are strongly reflected in the Core Strategy.

### 3.4 Environment

- 3.4.1 The **Knowsley Green Space Strategy 2010 – 2014**<sup>42</sup> sets out the Council's approach to the management and development of green and open spaces within the Borough, including local standards and service implementation plans. The strategy's vision of provision of a linked, preserved and enhanced network of good quality green spaces is reflected in the spatial strategy's approach to maintaining strategic green links throughout the Borough. However, the strategy also recognises the development pressures arising within Knowsley, and therefore recommends that in areas of quantitative over-provision of greenspace (in accordance with set standards), should be assessed to determine their suitability for other uses.
- 3.4.2 Knowsley's **Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2009**<sup>43</sup> was produced by the Council and its partners in 2008. The strategy focuses on the Council's role as estate manager, service provider and community leader in seeking to reduce carbon emissions and manage the potential impacts of climate change. In addition, the economic opportunities associated with the transition to a low carbon economy are emphasised. This strategy, alongside national policy relating to climate change, has influenced the development of the Core Strategy in a number of ways, including the establishment of target economic growth sectors, emphasising the importance of environmental sustainability and the role of planning policy in delivering renewable energy production as part of new development.
- 3.4.3 The Council and its partners are currently reviewing the **Climate Change Strategy for Knowsley**<sup>44</sup>, and producing a complementary **Carbon Management Plan**<sup>45</sup> for the Borough. The Climate Change Strategy sets out the Council's proposals for reducing carbon emissions, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and monitoring risks associated with a changing climate. The Strategy also prioritises the development of a low carbon economy, including through new development and investment, and skill development in the local workforce. These priorities are reflected in the Core Strategy, through emphasis on environmental protection, development of low carbon technologies, and design policies relating to new development. The complementary Carbon Management Plan sets out how the Council intends to reduce emissions from its own estate, helping to tackle the impacts of climate

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<sup>42</sup> The Knowsley Green Space Strategy 2010 – 2014 (Knowsley MBC, 2010) (ELR: PG35)

<sup>43</sup> Knowsley Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008/09 (Knowsley MBC, 2008) (ELR: PG41)

<sup>44</sup> Draft Knowsley Climate Change Strategy 2012-2016 (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: PG39)

<sup>45</sup> Knowsley Carbon Management Plan (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: PG40)

change, and also reduce expenditure on energy and fuel. Again, the priorities of this plan have been accounted for in the Core Strategy, in particular emphasising the role of planning in ensuring development is energy efficient and promotes the use of renewable energy.

### 3.5 Age Groups

- 3.5.1 **Children and Families Strategic Plan 2009 to 2011**<sup>46</sup> updates the previous version of the plan, published in 2007. This supports the health, safety, enjoyment and achievement of young people, as well as encourages them to make a positive contribution to their communities and achieve economic well-being. Whilst this document does not have as strong links with the development of the spatial strategy as some of the other Council plans and strategies, the needs and aspirations of young people, including through the provision of community infrastructure and housing and job opportunities, has been central in the development of the Core Strategy.
- 3.5.2 **Knowsley Children and Families Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014**<sup>47</sup> (Knowsley MBC, 2011) provides a further update to the Plan, setting out how the Council is seeking to make continued improvements. Again, the key link to the Core Strategy is the document's role in setting out how children and young people can achieve economic well being, and can be supported by the relevant range of services and infrastructure.
- 3.5.3 The Council has recently completed its “future schools” programme, using funding provided (prior to 2010) by the government's “Building Schools for the Future”. A strategy for the project, entitled **Future Schooling in Knowsley – A Strategy for Change 2008 – 2010**<sup>48</sup> was published to guide this programme, which has since transformed secondary education in Knowsley, including the rationalisation of the number of schools, completion of seven new school buildings and adoption of new learning environments. Although the last secondary school was completed in 2010, this strategy and its outcomes have influenced the development of the spatial strategy, due to their impact on the strategic community infrastructure in Knowsley.
- 3.5.4 Knowsley's Older People's Voice group produced an Older People's Strategy entitled **A Positive Age 2009 – 2011**<sup>49</sup>. This strategy sets out priorities for Knowsley's community of older people, including economic wellbeing, health, transport, housing, leisure and culture and the environment. This has influenced the spatial strategy through recognising the specific needs of an increasingly older population within the Borough. The strategy was updated in 2011<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Children and Families Strategic Plan 2009 to 2011 (Knowsley MBC, 2009) (ELR: PG36)

<sup>47</sup> Knowsley Children and Families Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014 (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: PG42)

<sup>48</sup> Future Schooling in Knowsley – A Strategy for Change 2008 – 2010 (Knowsley MBC, 2008) (ELR: PG37)

<sup>49</sup> A Positive Age 2009 – 2011 (Knowsley Older People's Voice / Knowsley Age Concern, 2009) (ELR: PG38a)

<sup>50</sup> A Positive Age 2011 – 2013 (Knowsley Older People's Voice / Knowsley Age Concern, 2009) (ELR: PG38)

### 3.6 Existing Local Planning Policy

3.6.1 Although the Knowsley Core Strategy represents the central planning policy document for the Local Plan, there are a number of existing adopted planning policy documents in Knowsley. Some of these are “carried over” from the previous plan making system (e.g. the Unitary Development Plan), whilst others have been produced alongside Core Strategy production. These documents are important as they provide detail of the existing local planning context, reflect recent planning priorities within the Borough, and have influenced to varying degrees within the development of the spatial strategy.

#### *Adopted Documents*

3.6.2 The **Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan**<sup>51</sup> (The UDP) was adopted in summer of 2006 and has represented part of the adopted development plan for Knowsley during the period of preparation of the Core Strategy. Although the adoption of the UDP was after the introduction of legislation which replaced UDPs with Local Development Frameworks, the Council considered it worthwhile to pursue its adoption in the short term. In the period after its completion and adoption, the Council completed several supporting Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and then began work on the Core Strategy.

3.6.3 Although the UDP is a different type of planning document than the Core Strategy, it has been prepared relatively recently and many of its policies remain relevant. Reflecting this, the majority were “saved” from expiration under an order from the Secretary of State in 2009<sup>52</sup>. The development of the spatial strategy reflects the continued relevance of the UDP policies, particularly around the continued focus on prioritising urban regeneration.

3.6.4 It is important to note that the Core Strategy will be replacing some, but not all, UDP policies, and hence some remaining and generally more detailed policies will continue to be implemented during the Core Strategy plan period, until such a time as they are replaced by policies within other Local Plan documents, or deleted as they are no longer required.

3.6.5 The UDP also introduced a replacement **Proposals Map**<sup>53</sup> for Knowsley, which set out site allocations for the Borough in accordance with UDP policies. This will remain the adopted Local Plan Proposals Map for Knowsley until such a time that the policies within other Local Plan documents make provision for changes to the Map.

3.6.6 As noted, the Council has adopted several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) since the legislation for their production was introduced in 2004. This includes both area-based SPDs (based on UDP action areas) and

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<sup>51</sup> Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Knowsley MBC, 2006) (ELR: PP01)

<sup>52</sup> Replacement Unitary Development Plan – Saving Direction (Knowsley MBC, 2009) (ELR: PP03)

<sup>53</sup> Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map (Knowsley MBC, 2006) (ELR: PP02)

SPDs based on particular policy themes. Some of these documents remain relevant to implement alongside the Core Strategy, in their original form, or with some alterations. This reflects the relatively recent dates of their adoption (i.e. reflecting ongoing planning priorities) and that there is a recognised role for detailed supplementary guidance to support Core Strategy policies in some areas. In particular, the area-based SPDs include regeneration initiatives which have not yet been fully implemented – hence the content of the SPDs has been reflected in the development of the spatial strategy.

- 3.6.7 The **North Huyton Action Area SPD**<sup>54</sup> was adopted by the Council in 2007, and covers the Action Area identified in the UDP, including several neighbourhoods in the residential areas to the north of the town centre within Huyton. This area has had a history of physical and social deprivation, coupled with residential vacancy and an unbalanced housing market. Reflecting this, the area was granted New Deal for Communities status. The SPD outlines these issues, and sets out a range of planning-related actions for the area. It was also supported by a substantial outline planning application and master plan for the area.
- 3.6.8 Since the adoption of the SPD, The North Huyton area has been subject to a partly-completed physical regeneration programme, involving clearance and replacement of a large number of dwellings, as well as investment in infrastructure and refurbishment. The regeneration programme has had some significant successes but remains incomplete, partly due to issues related to the recession and the slowing down of the housing market. Therefore the completion of the required regeneration, including the replacement of already cleared dwellings, remains a priority for the Council. This has been a significant influence over the development of the spatial strategy, due to the need to reflect this ongoing priority. The Core Strategy therefore seeks to maintain the North Huyton area as part of a wider designated “Principal Regeneration Area”. The overall spatial strategy has been influenced by this, in its efforts to focus on regeneration in urban areas, particularly on previously developed or brownfield land. It is anticipated that the SPD will remain in place, although with a review mechanism, to support the policies within the Core Strategy.
- 3.6.9 Similarly to North Huyton, the Tower Hill residential neighbourhood within the town of Kirkby was identified within the UDP as an Action Area. The **Tower Hill (Kirkby) Action Area SPD**<sup>55</sup> was adopted by the Council in 2007, to provide planning guidance for the regeneration of the area. This was focussed on tackling issues associated with a relatively deprived and dispersed residential community, whose local environment was poor and lacking in key infrastructure investment. However, the majority of actions outlined in the SPD remain unimplemented, partly due to a lack of developer interest in the area, and to a lack of public finance to support key projects within the area. This means that the regeneration of the action area remains a priority for the Council, and therefore the Tower Hill neighbourhood is identified as a

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<sup>54</sup> North Huyton Action Area Supplementary Planning Document (Knowsley MBC, 2007) (ELR: PP05)

<sup>55</sup> Tower Hill (Kirkby) Action Area Supplementary Planning Document (Knowsley MBC, 2007) (ELR: PP06)

regeneration area within the Core Strategy. Again, the continued priority to achieve the aims and objectives of the SPD are reflected in the spatial strategy's commitment to support urban regeneration in the deprived areas of Knowsley, and focus on brownfield land as a key location for new homes and infrastructure. This SPD may be reviewed in line with the Core Strategy policies.

- 3.6.10 Also in 2007, the Council adopted a **Greenspace Standards and New Development SPD**<sup>56</sup> which supported UDP policies relating to the provision of different types of green and open space to accompany new development. This included setting charges for both provision and maintenance of green spaces, according to the application of standards of provision in different areas within Knowsley, known as "substantial residential areas". Charges depended on whether the area was in excess or deficit of the prevailing standards, and were applied to new development in the form of planning obligations using the tool of Section 106 agreements, including in the form of Unilateral Undertakings.
- 3.6.11 The revised standards for greenspace within the Core Strategy have been influenced by the updated evidence from the Council's Greenspace Audit<sup>57</sup>. In this regard it was identified that the variations in quality and access necessitate a focus on targeted improvements in the future. However, the existing quantity standard for provision for children and young people was considered to be too high to achieve these priorities, given a general lack of progress relative to achieving quantitative standards despite recent targeted investment that has addressed previously identified quantity, quality and accessibility deficits. The provision standards have therefore been lowered from 0.2 ha per 1 000 residents to 0.1 ha per 1,000 residents accordingly.
- 3.6.12 In addition to the above, the **Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy 2012**<sup>58</sup> has informed revised standards for outdoor sports provision, which are now based upon localised pitch and non-pitch requirements relative to identified needs. These revised standards are considered more appropriate to reflect future needs than the general provision standards of 1.85 ha per 1 000 residents existing, reflecting a more effective approach in prioritising qualitative and accessibility enhancements. In this regard, the quantity standards have been lowered to between a range of 1.11 ha - 1.22 ha per 1 000 residents for the four individual Community Areas of Kirkby; Huyton; Prescott, Whiston, Cronton and Knowsley Village; and Halewood. In contrast, the existing accessibility standard of 6 km has been lowered to 2.4 km to reflect the self contained nature of provision within the Community Areas.
- 3.6.13 As a consequence of the alterations to the greenspace standards within the emerging Local Plan, the Greenspace Standards and New Development SPD will need to be reviewed in line with the Core Strategy policies. This is also

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<sup>56</sup> Greenspace Standards and New Development Supplementary Planning Document (Knowsley MBC, 2007) (ELR: PP07)

<sup>57</sup> Knowsley Greenspaces Audit (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: EB21)

<sup>58</sup> Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy 2012 (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: EB22)

essential noting that Section 206 of the Planning Act 2008<sup>59</sup> and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)<sup>60</sup> introduce the potential to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy within Knowsley and in any case alter the scope of Section 106 contributions that can be collected from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

- 3.6.14 Adopted in 2007, the **Householder Developments SPD**<sup>61</sup> has had little influence over the development of the spatial strategy, as its focus is on providing guidance for householder planning applications, rather than on strategic spatial planning matters. However, the Council anticipates that this SPD will remain relevant after the adoption of the Core Strategy, providing detailed guidance which will be updated or replaced by subsequently produced planning policy documents.
- 3.6.15 The Council adopted the **Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD**<sup>62</sup> in 2010. Although the document covers Knowsley Borough, it was developed in partnership with neighbouring Merseyside authorities to ensure a joined up approach to securing access to new development via a variety of modes of transport. The document sets out standards for parking and accessibility across a range of new development, and guidance on the use of tools such as transport statements, transport assessments and travel plans.

#### *Process Documents*

- 3.6.16 In addition to the above-mentioned planning policy documents, which contain policy guidance, a number of process documents are also in place. These have not influenced the spatial strategy in policy terms per se, but have influenced the drafting process of the Core Strategy, including project schedules and consultation standards.
- 3.6.17 The **Local Development Scheme**<sup>63</sup> is the formal project plan for planning policy document preparation, setting out the purposes of different documents and the timescales for their production. The Council has produced four iterations of the Local Development Scheme since 2005. These documents, which have been gradually updated, reflect the Council's commitment to a timetable for Core Strategy production, and therefore have shaped the time and resources available to complete the spatial strategy. The most recent Local Development Scheme was adopted by the Council in early 2013. To supplement this, the Council also provides "live" updates regarding progress with the preparation of documents on its website<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Planning Act 2008 (c. 29) (ELR: LR02)

<sup>60</sup> The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (ELR: LR05b)

<sup>61</sup> Householder Developments Supplementary Planning Document (Knowsley MBC, 2007) (ELR: PP08)

<sup>62</sup> Ensuring a Choice of Travel Supplementary Planning Document (Knowsley MBC, 2010) (ELR: PP09)

<sup>63</sup> Knowsley Local Development Scheme (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: PP10)

<sup>64</sup> See <http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/LDF>

- 3.6.18 The Council's **Statement of Community Involvement**<sup>65</sup> was adopted in 2007, and sets out the standards for community input to the planning process sought by the Council. This includes the processes around formal and informal consultation on the development of planning documents, including the Core Strategy. This has influenced the spatial strategy through its provision of consultation standards which have been adhered to, allowing for input from local people, business and other stakeholders to the Core Strategy preparation process. In turn, this input has been influential in developing various policy elements of the spatial strategy.
- 3.6.19 Since 2005, the Council has produced **Annual Monitoring Reports**<sup>66</sup>, which sought to report on planning related matters on an annual basis, through a series of key monitoring indicators. The Reports are published each December covering the previous financial year (i.e. report published in December 2010 covers period April 2009 – March 2010). These Reports covered a diverse range of matters focussed on planning performance, including progress with and impacts of implementation of adopted planning policies. The set of Annual Monitoring Reports also offer a useful source of information to identify key trends in Knowsley, which have helped to inform approaches within the spatial strategy, for example to housing land availability within the Borough.
- 3.6.20 It is the Council's intention to continue to use Monitoring Reports, produced on an annual basis, to assess the performance of its planning policies. The Local Plan Monitoring Indicators and those from the Sustainability Appraisal will be incorporated into the annual reports, and used to reflect upon the successes of, and inform any review of, policies in due course. The Monitoring Framework may be further amended by the monitoring requirements associated with future Local Plan documents.

#### *Emerging Documents*

- 3.6.21 In addition to the Core Strategy, the Council, along with its Liverpool City Region partner authorities (including Liverpool, Sefton, St.Helens, Wirral and Halton Councils), have since 2005 been involved in the preparation of a **Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan**<sup>67</sup> (previously also known as the Joint Waste Development Plan Document or DPD). The preparation of the document has been led by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service on behalf of the district authorities. The purpose of this plan, and the joint working approach, is to set out a range of waste management policies and site allocations for the city region, allowing the area to work towards net self-sufficiency in waste management terms. The process of preparing the Waste Local Plan has been undertaken alongside the preparation of Core Strategies in all of the participant authorities, in order that these documents are in compliance with each other and adopt mutually supportive roles. This has been accounted for through the recognition of the role of the Waste Local

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<sup>65</sup> Knowsley Statement of Community Involvement (Knowsley MBC, 2007) (ELR: PP15)

<sup>66</sup> Knowsley Annual Monitoring Report 2005 - 2012 (Knowsley MBC, various) (ELR: PP16 – PP23)

<sup>67</sup> Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan – Submission Version (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, 2012) (ELR: PP04)

Plan in removing the need for districts to deal with detailed waste management policies in their Core Strategies, and the development of common wording relating to waste management, for inclusion in all Core Strategies across the plan area.

- 3.6.22 The Waste Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2012, with its Examination in Public commencing shortly after this. Hearing sessions were held in June 2012. Modifications to the Waste Local Plan were published for comments between November 2012 and January 2013. The Inspectors Report was published in March 2013 and finds the Plan to be sound subject to these modifications being made. At the time of writing this report, it is anticipated that the six local authorities in Merseyside and Halton will adopt the Waste Local Plan in summer 2013.
- 3.6.23 The Waste Local Plan has had a particular influence is affirming the suitability of some of Knowsley's industrial areas for waste management uses through its site allocations. In addition, the detailed policies on waste management in the Waste Local Plan complement those set out within the Core Strategy. Therefore it represents a complementary strategy within a document which will form an important part of Knowsley's Local Plan.
- 3.6.24 The Council has also undertaken preparatory work for a number of **additional Supplementary Planning Documents**, covering both area-based and thematic issues. The requirement for additional SPDs has been identified during the period since the adoption of the UDP. The SPDs either supplement existing UDP policies, or have been prepared in support of Core Strategy policies yet to be adopted. Driving factors for their preparation include responding to evidence which indicates that additional planning policy guidance would be welcome or responding to a particular regeneration opportunity which would be benefitted by additional specific policy guidance, perhaps in greater detail than could be provided in the Core Strategy. The SPDs are at varying stages of completion – some only being in their initial inception stages, while others are fully drafted, but awaiting the adoption of the Core Strategy before they can progress to consultation and adoption themselves.
- 3.6.25 The **Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks SPD** is being prepared in response to the regeneration opportunities identified within the **Delivering a New Future for Knowsley Industrial Park – Strategic Framework**<sup>68</sup>. It is anticipated that the SPD will provide supplementary advice to the Core Strategy policy regarding the development of this area, and will be brought forward for consultation and adoption subsequent to the Core Strategy. The SPD will support the regeneration of the Knowsley Industrial and Business Park area, providing detailed guidance for restructuring and investment in these significant employment areas. The adoption of the SPD will support the deliverability of the regeneration aspirations for this area, and therefore will be important for the deliverability of the overall spatial strategy.

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<sup>68</sup> Delivering a New Future for Knowsley Industrial Park: Strategic Framework (DTZ, Arup and Taylor Young, 2011)

- 3.6.26 A draft SPD is also being prepared for the **Stockbridge Village** area of the Borough. Once adopted, this SPD will set out detailed planning guidance for the regeneration of Stockbridge Village, a community of Knowsley identified as having opportunities for physical renewal. The SPD will draw heavily on the content of the draft master plan prepared for this area by consultant. Both the master plan and the SPD are being prepared in several stages, in close consultation with the residential communities within the area. It is expected to be adopted subsequent to the Core Strategy, supplementing a strategic regeneration policy for this area. It is expected that this SPD will represent a key deliver tool for achieving the Council's regeneration aspirations for this area.
- 3.6.27 A draft **Design Standards in New Development SPD** has been prepared to provide supplementary guidance to development plan policies relating to the design of new development in Knowsley. The SPD has been consulted upon in terms of overarching design principles and it is intended that subsequent sections will be prepared prior to adoption of the SPD around the time of adoption of the Core Strategy. These sections will include specific guidance relating to new residential development, shop fronts, designing out crime and trees / landscaping, The SPD will supplement thematic design-led elements of the Local Plan.
- 3.6.28 The Council has identified a need to provide supplementary guidance in the form of an SPD relating to **Hot Food Takeaways**. The SPD will provide additional guidance in relation to the development of hot food takeaway and other uses within the local, district and town centres in Knowsley. This additional guidance has been identified as being required in order that the Council can exercise control over the proliferation of such uses within Knowsley's communities, due to their potentially detrimental impact on the local environment, health and the vitality and viability of the Borough's centres. The SPD is at an early stage of preparation, but it is expected that it will come forward for consultation and adoption subsequent to the adoption of the Core Strategy. It is unlikely that the SPD will have any significant impact on the delivery of the spatial strategy, save for its potential positive impacts on the viability of retail centres.
- 3.6.29 The requirement for a **Sustainability in Design and Construction SPD** has been identified, to support the Core Strategy policies which set out the Council's aspirations for new development in terms of sustainability credentials. The SPD will be adopted after the Core Strategy. The SPD will help the Council achieve its wider aspirations for new development to be sustainable and to prevent and/or mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 3.6.30 The Council, along with the other Merseyside authorities and Halton, are considering developing a **Surface Water Management SPD** to supplement Local Plan policies concerning sustainable drainage systems. If this document is progressed it will take account of emerging national guidance on this issue.

## 4.0 Regional and Sub-regional Policy

4.0.1 In addition to local policy, policy documents prepared at regional (North **West of England**) and sub-regional (Liverpool City Region<sup>69</sup>) levels have influenced the development of the Core Strategy. In particular, these documents have assisted in identifying the appropriate role for Knowsley and its settlements within the spatial context of surrounding authorities and urban areas. In addition, regional policies have provided targets for housing and employment growth, to be adopted within the district.

### 4.1 Regional Policy

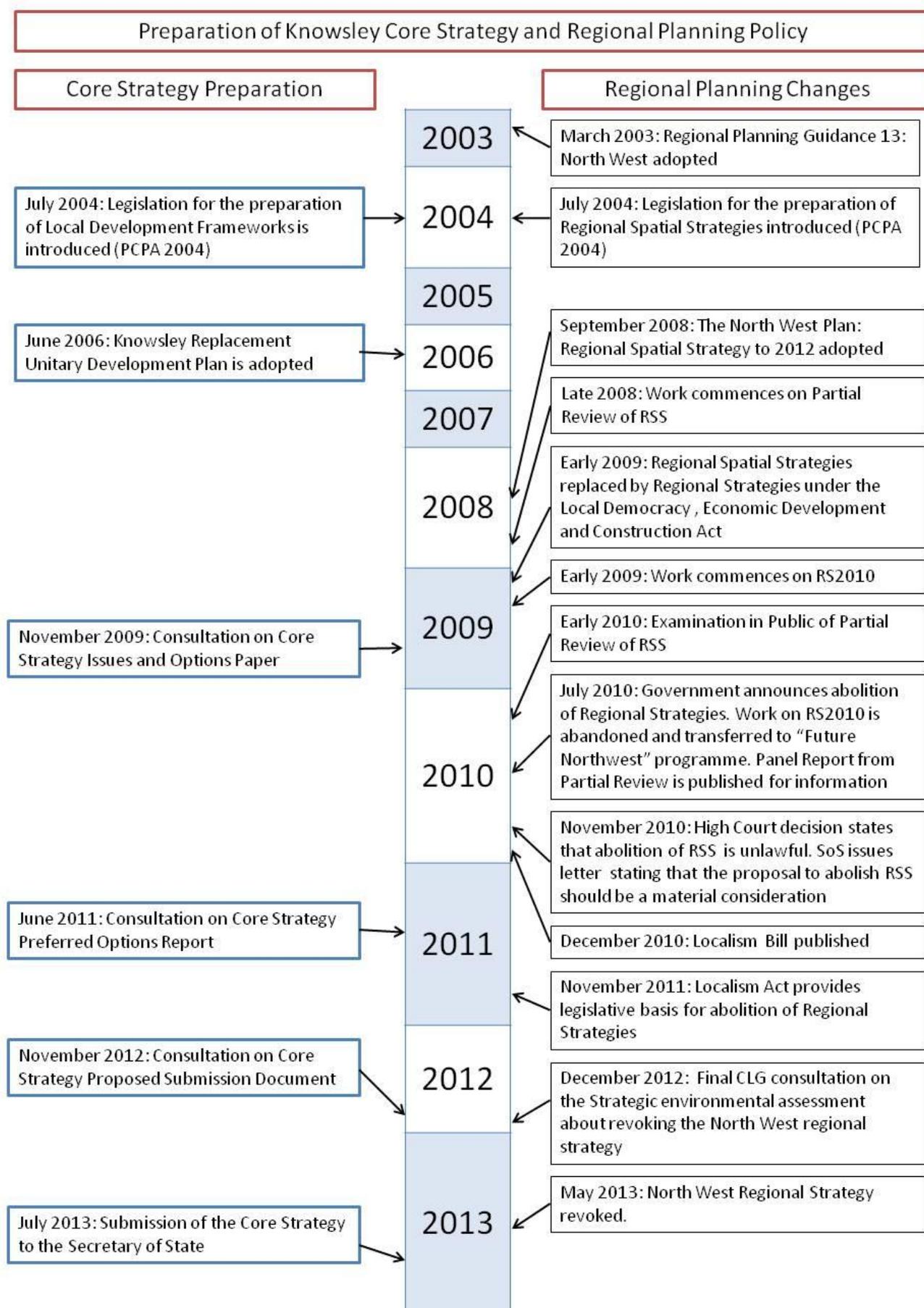
4.1.1 For the majority of the preparation period of the Core Strategy, regional planning policy has been in place. For the period from the adoption of the UDP (2006) up to September 2008, this took the form of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG13). From September 2008 onwards, this was replaced by the North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS). The Regional Spatial Strategy was re-designated as a Regional Strategy in 2009, which also incorporated the Regional Economic Strategy. Work began at the regional level on a replacement Regional Strategy known as RS2010. In 2010, the new Government indicated its intention to revoke Regional Strategies. The legislation to enable this was enacted in early 2012 under the Localism Act.

4.1.2 Figure 4.1 below illustrates the changes to regional planning policy over the period from 2003 to 2013, and cross-references these to the key points in the preparation of the Knowsley Core Strategy.

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<sup>69</sup> Including the authorities of Halton, Liverpool, St.Helens, Sefton, Wirral and Knowsley. The term “Merseyside” is sometimes used, which refers to the previous Metropolitan County area, which excludes Halton.

**Figure 4.1 – Regional Policy Context**



- 4.1.3 This shows the changing regional planning context under which the Knowsley Core Strategy has been prepared. In particular, since the election of the coalition Government in 2010, there has been uncertainty about the role and status of the 2008 RSS, which has been a key influence over the development of the spatial strategy. The following paragraphs explain the influence that each regional planning policy document which was adopted or under preparation has had during the period of drafting of the Knowsley Core Strategy.
- 4.1.4 **Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13)**<sup>70</sup> was published by the Government Office for the North West in March 2003. It provided a strategic framework within which local development plans could be prepared and informed other regional and sub-regional strategies. Its central policy aim was to promote and support an urban renaissance within the region, focused on the metropolitan areas. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, adopted in 2004, introduced the legislative basis for a “Regional Spatial Strategy” to provide policies which would form part of the statutory local development plan. In the absence of such a new strategy, RPG13 became the formal interim Regional Spatial Strategy for the region, and hence was part of Knowsley’s development plan. RPG13 remained as such during the final stages of preparation of the Knowsley Replacement UDP, adopted in 2006.
- 4.1.6 RPG13 set the targets for housing growth that were adopted in the UDP, with provision at an annual average of 230 new dwellings starting in 2002. This figure was in addition to replacement of dwellings demolished through clearance programmes. RPG13, quoting the then adopted Regional Economic Strategy, also outlined the key economic target sectors for Knowsley, as well as criteria for the identification of strategic regional sites for economic investment (in the Knowsley UDP, one such site was designated at King’s Business Park near Prescot).
- 4.1.7 Initial work on the Knowsley Core Strategy was undertaken while RPG13 was in place. However, in 2006 work had already begun on a replacement Regional Spatial Strategy, and hence the Council was mindful of the likely changes arising from this future replacement. Knowsley Council, along with its Merseyside authorities, participated fully in the preparation of the replacement Regional Spatial Strategy, the process being led by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA, later known as 4NW). In particular, the Council’s participation was focussed around defining the most appropriate levels of housing and economic growth for the district, and ensuring that the regeneration and infrastructure priorities within Knowsley were incorporated in the Plan. **The North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021**<sup>71</sup> (RSS) was published by the Government Office for the North West in September

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<sup>70</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) (Government Office for the North West, 2003) (ELR: PG19)

<sup>71</sup> The North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (Government Office for the North West, 2008) (ELR: PG18)

2008. This wholly replaced RPG13 as the adopted regional spatial strategy for the North West region.

- 4.1.8 The preparation for the first formal stage of consultation on the Knowsley Core Strategy, the Issues and Options Paper, was undertaken when RSS was established as part of the development plan for Knowsley. This meant that the Issues and Options Paper was drafted under the restrictions of the RSS policies with regard to housing growth in Knowsley, employment land growth with the Liverpool City Region, and regional investment and infrastructure priorities. In particular, the need to accommodate the level of housing growth required by the RSS policy (at 450 dwellings per annum, net of clearance), accompanied by the Council's evidence base indicating a restricted long term housing land supply, pointed the Council towards consulting on an option to expand Knowsley's urban areas.
- 4.1.9 In 2008, work began on a "partial review" of the RSS, which focussed on the provision of regional planning policies relating to planning for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, and parking standards. This work progressed to an advanced stage, including several phases of consultation, and an Examination in Public, which took place from October 2009 until early 2010.
- 4.1.10 In 2009, under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, new legislation was introduced for the production of a single Regional Strategy, which was to combine Regional Spatial Strategies and Regional Economic Strategies. Work had already begun on such a new strategy for the North West region in advance of this legislation, led by 4NW and the North West Development Agency (NWDA), and known as "**RS2010**". Whilst this was being prepared, the adopted RSS became known as the adopted Regional Strategy. Several consultation stages were undertaken on the content of RS2010, including on a "Principles and Issues" paper (early 2009) and on a "Draft Part 1" Report (early 2010). The Council, along with its sub-regional partners, responded to these consultations.
- 4.1.11 However, in June 2010, after the general election and the formation of the coalition Government, the intention to abolish Regional Strategies was announced by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This meant that:
- The existing Regional Strategy (i.e. RSS from 2008) was abolished.
  - Work on RS2010 was halted. With the removal of the regional leaders board (4NW), work towards RS2010 was altered to become "**Future North West**"<sup>72</sup>, which took forward some of the established principles within RS2010 in a high-level strategic but non-statutory policy document. The evidence base for RS2010 was also made available via the 4NW archive website, including evidence relating to potential housing and employment growth across the region.

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<sup>72</sup> Future North West: Our Shared Priorities (4NW, 2010) (ELR: PG20)

- Work on the Partial Review of the RSS was halted. A Panel Report from the Examination was completed and published for information only, but was not formally published as the findings of the Partial Review process.

4.1.12 This major change to regional policy meant that the Council had to plan for a development plan which did not include the Regional Strategy, or any replacement for this. This resulted in a “policy void” for the Council in its preparation of the Core Strategy. Policies which had previously been relied upon, for example in relation to housing and employment growth, were deleted. This caused significant delay to the production of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, as the Council assembled evidence and technical reports to establish its range of policy positions in response to the regional policy void. For the spatial strategy for Knowsley, this created a great deal of uncertainty.

4.1.13 A further change came in 2011, when a High Court decision concluded that the Secretary of State’s decision to abolish Regional Strategies had not been undertaken lawfully, and that they should be reinstated until a legislative basis for their removal was provided and that due process had been followed. This meant that the Regional Strategy (i.e. RSS from 2008) was re-established. For Core Strategy preparation, this meant that regional policy was back in place, albeit temporarily, as the Secretary of State confirmed the government’s intention to abolish regional planning, and such provision had been made in the draft Localism Bill, which at the time was progressing through parliament. This meant that the Council’s Preferred Options Report noted that the Regional Strategy was still in place, but made provision for the Council’s preferred policy positions to remain valid once the revocation had formally occurred. The preferred spatial strategy within the Preferred Options Report also recognised this.

4.1.14 The Localism Act (passed by parliament in late 2011) provided greater certainty during the final stages of preparation of the Core Strategy that regional planning policy would be removed. However, at the time of publication of the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy, the Government had yet to formally revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy. This was because the Government was continuing to progress and consult on the requisite assessments and appraisals relating to the likely impact of revocation. Therefore the regional tier of planning policy was still in place even at this late stage. The Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy (November 2012) reflected the then extant status of the Regional Strategy, while maintaining sufficient flexibility to remain valid once the formal planned revocation had taken place.

4.1.15 Other influential regional strategies included the **Regional Economic Strategy**<sup>73</sup>, which was adopted by the NWDA in 2006, and set out the key economic and investment priorities in the region. This identified King’s Business Park near Prescot in Knowsley as a Strategic Regional Site.

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<sup>73</sup> Regional Economic Strategy for the North West (North West Development Agency, 2006) (ELR: PG21)

## 4.2 Sub-regional policy

4.2.1 Although lacking the development-plan status of the regional tier of planning policy, various sub-regional strategies have influenced the development of the Core Strategy. These include strategies prepared jointly between neighbouring authorities, and other strategies prepared by third party bodies such as the Integrated Transport Authority<sup>74</sup>.

4.2.2 The **Second Local Transport Plan**<sup>75</sup> (LTP) for Merseyside was in place during the initial stages of Core Strategy drafting from 2006 onwards. Its long term strategy aimed to give Merseyside a safer, sustainable, efficient and integrated transport network, accessible to all, and delivered £230m of transport investment and service improvements. For Knowsley, the Plan promoted investment at Knowsley Rail Freight Terminal in Kirkby, a new train station and line extension at Headbolt Lane, and the Merseytram scheme, which was proposed to include an initial line from Liverpool to Kirkby. The Plan also identified the need to address poor accessibility from different parts of Knowsley including key facilities such as Industrial Estates and hospitals. Sub-regional priorities included improvements to rail infrastructure in Liverpool, and road projects at Liverpool Airport, Switch Island and Edge Lane.

4.2.3 The **Third Local Transport Plan: A New Mobility Culture for Merseyside**<sup>76</sup> was finalised in 2011, covering the period from 2011 until 2025, and includes short term action plans. This replaced the Second LTP and refocused on delivering a new “mobility culture” for Merseyside. A central priority is the provision of a transport network which supports sustainable economic growth across the sub-region, and allows ease of connection to employment, education and other essential services. The Plan also aims to ensure that this network is sustainable in terms of reducing emissions and promoting health and well being through travel options like walking and cycling. Specific actions in the Plan included:

- Prioritising maintenance programmes
- Expand the range of public transport services including examining the role of other providers
- Begin to implement the next generation of technology
- Work with the Freight Quality Partnership and other parties to develop and enhance the freight and logistics network
- Implement the Active Travel Strategy, implement the Low Emissions Strategy
- Increase promotion of sustainable travel and behaviour change
- Confirm the role of the Road Safety Partnership and introduce measures to control excessive speed on the highway network

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<sup>74</sup> This body covers the Merseyside area, including Liverpool, St.Helens, Sefton, Wirral and Knowsley

<sup>75</sup> Second Local Transport Plan for Merseyside (Merseytravel, 2006) (ELR: PG23a)

<sup>76</sup> Third Local Transport Plan: A New Mobility Culture for Merseyside (Merseytravel, 2011) (ELR: PG23)

- Fully integrating the LTP with the Local Development Frameworks (Local Plans) and Community Strategies
- Prepare a complementary strategy that seeks to reduce reliance on oil
- Collaboration and co-operation
- Maximise funding opportunities

4.2.4 The Local Transport Plan has an important influence over the Core Strategy. It outlines priorities for investment in infrastructure which are reflected in Core Strategy policies and in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Core Strategy reflects the themes of the Local Transport Plan with regard to provision of sustainable transport options for all, including for members of the public (e.g. walking and cycling) as well as for vehicles and goods.

4.2.5 The **Merseyside Freight Strategy**<sup>77</sup> identifies the key assets and infrastructure in the Merseyside area which contribute to the freight and logistics sector. This includes a range of port, rail and road facilities, many of which are outlined for expansion or improvement, linked to the “SuperPort” proposal for freight and passenger operations in the Liverpool City Region. For the Core Strategy, this influenced employment, transport and infrastructure policies, as well as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

4.2.6 The **Liverpool City Region Low Emissions Strategy**<sup>78</sup> focuses on ambitions to reduce emissions from vehicles across the sub-region, by promoting low emission travel options, facilitating the use of new technologies (e.g. low emission vehicles) and incentivising travel choices producing lower emissions. This strategy influenced the Core Strategy’s approach to planning for the transport network and travel options.

4.2.7 The **Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** was formally set up in 2012. This body is led by a private sector led Board with political leaders representing the six local authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

4.2.8 The LEP has identified four key sectors that have potential to create new jobs and investment opportunities namely: knowledge economy; Liverpool SuperPort; Low Carbon Economy; and Visitor Economy. Further details concerning these priorities are set out in the Mersey Partnership Economic Review<sup>79</sup>. An action plan for each of these priorities has been produced which can be viewed on the LEP website at [www.liverpoollep.org](http://www.liverpoollep.org). Although prepared at a relatively late stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy these documents have had a key influence (as evidenced by the supporting text to policy CS4 "Economy and Employment").

4.2.9 The **Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside 2008**<sup>80</sup> (ELR: PG32) updated the original Waste Management Strategy, adopted in 2005. The strategy sets out the strategic vision for management of municipal

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<sup>77</sup> Merseyside Freight Strategy (Merseytravel LTP Support Unit, 2011) (ELR: PG24)

<sup>78</sup> Liverpool City Region Low Emissions Strategy (Merseytravel, 2011) (ELR: PG27)

<sup>79</sup> Mersey Partnership Economic Review 2012 (TMP,2012) (ELR: LC10)

<sup>80</sup> Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside 2008 (MWDA, 2008) (ELR: PG29)

wastes, including improving sustainability within the waste hierarchy, and continually improving local services through working in partnership. The strategy responds to European, national and regional requirements. Although it is most strongly reflected in the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan it has also influenced the Council's approach within the Core Strategy.

#### 4.2.10 **Resources Merseyside 2011-2041: Joint Recycling and Waste**

**Management Strategy for Merseyside**<sup>81</sup> presents a revised sub-regional strategy for delivering sustainable waste management, moving towards greater resource efficiency. The aims of the strategy include reducing environmental impacts of waste management, maximising economic activity associated with waste management, and moving waste towards reduction, alongside increased reuse and recycling. The strategy also promotes the provision of sufficient capacity for waste management activity. The aims of the strategy are reflected in the Joint Waste Local Plan and in the Core Strategy.

4.2.11 The **Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy**<sup>82</sup> was produced in 2007, and provides a framework for housing investment to support regeneration and economic growth in the sub-region. This was published by the Mersey Partnership. The Strategy provides a basis for local authority plans for new housing, and previously also provided sub-regional input towards regional policy development. The Strategy drew on available evidence to outline strategic housing market areas for the sub-region and identified vulnerable housing market areas. The Strategy identified that Knowsley fell within the "Northern" housing market area, along with neighbouring authorities of Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral and West Lancashire. The Strategy also identified that a number of residential areas within Knowsley as "Vulnerable Housing Market Areas"; these included North Huyton and Stockbridge Village and parts of Kirkby. This helped to determine Knowsley's place within the sub-regional housing market, which informed the nature needed to determine the amount and type of new housing required in Knowsley.

4.2.12 The **Liverpool John Lennon Airport Master Plan**<sup>83</sup> was produced in 2007, led by the private sector airport owner, in partnership with a range of public bodies, including local authorities. The Master Plan was produced in response to the national requirement for all airports to produce long term plans to 2030. The Plan set out a range of short and long term priorities for the Airport, including expansion of passenger terminal and cargo facilities, runway extension and infrastructure and access improvements. For Knowsley, the location of the airport at the southern end of the local authority area (in the neighbouring district of Liverpool), represents a strategic sub-regional asset, particularly for local businesses, for whom access to air transport options could represent a valuable advantage. Knowsley is also affected by the potential Eastern Access Transport Corridor, which is proposed to improve road access to the Airport from the east, including access from Knowsley's strategic road network.

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<sup>81</sup> Resources Merseyside 2011-2041: Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside (MRWA, 2012) (ELR: PG30)

<sup>82</sup> Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy (GVA Grimley, 2007) (ELR: PG28)

<sup>83</sup> Liverpool John Lennon Airport Masterplan (Liverpool Airport, 2007) (ELR: PG22, PG22a)

4.2.13 A key sub-regional initiative is the **Atlantic Gateway**<sup>84</sup>. A private-sector led partnership; the Atlantic Gateway represents a range of key projects and priorities, stretching from Manchester to the mouth of the Mersey at Liverpool and Wirral. The Atlantic Gateway is a key opportunity to develop strategic synergies between development and infrastructure projects across a wide area, focussing on attracting investment to the area. It is also an opportunity to develop strategic collaboration and leadership in the context of the loss of such leadership at the regional level; this is reflected in the fact that the Atlantic Gateway area cuts across three Local Enterprise Partnership areas. Whilst there are limited key priority projects identified within Knowsley, there are several within neighbouring authorities which are of significance to planning for the development of the Borough. These include the Mersey Gateway Bridge, expansion of the port and canal network (in Liverpool and along the Manchester Ship Canal), airport expansion and development (in Liverpool and Manchester), improvements to rail infrastructure, and key developments at Daresbury and Media City in Salford. The effect of these projects, in particular the synergies they represent across a large area, represent an important influence on the spatial strategy for Knowsley, to seek to capitalise on new investment and infrastructure improvements.

### 4.3 Neighbouring authority planning policy and regeneration plans

4.3.1 Each of Knowsley's neighbouring authorities has developed or is developing their own Local Plan, Core Strategy or equivalent set of planning policy documents. Knowsley Council has taken an active role as a consultee at different development stages for these documents, particularly where synergies can be sought between the plans, or where there are competing objectives between neighbouring or nearby areas. The scale and type of new development, regeneration programmes and infrastructure projects within nearby authorities can have a bearing on the successful delivery of Knowsley's own planning objectives; therefore it is important that across neighbouring areas, plans are complementary. Equally, Knowsley has sought to engage neighbouring authority partners in the development of plans for Knowsley, as explained in the sections of this report which outline the impacts of formal and informal consultation on the development of the spatial strategy.

4.3.2 More information about joint working on evidence base, and through consultation events, is given in the following sections of this report.

4.3.3 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a duty to cooperate with neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies in the preparation of development plans. This duty is focussed on addressing strategic matters which affect more than one local authority area. The details of how Knowsley Council has complied with this duty are set out in the Council's Duty to Co-operate Statement.

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<sup>84</sup> For further information see: <http://www.atlanticgateway.co.uk> (ELR: PG26)

## 5.0 Evidence base

5.0.1 National policy (including the NPPF and prior to this, PPS12) requires the policies within a Core Strategy to be founded on a robust, credible and proportionate evidence base. The Council has developed this evidence base since 2007 in all key areas to inform its approaches to a variety of spatial planning matters. Evidence has been collated to inform an understanding of the key issues and challenges within the Borough and suggest solutions to identified policy issues. Whilst many evidence base studies have been undertaken within the confines of Knowsley, others have been undertaken on a sub-regional basis, or in partnership with one or more neighbouring authorities, to support authorities' respective plans (as discussed above). The full range of evidence base is discussed below, grouped under key headings.

### 5.1 Spatial context

- 5.1.1 In 2007, Knowsley Council commissioned Regeneris Consulting Ltd. to undertake a **Core Evidence Base**<sup>85</sup> study which comprehensively examined economic, social and environmental conditions in the area, including recent changes across a wide range of issues, and assessed the likely future direction of the area. It provided data and analysis for the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership to help plan activities by identifying key challenges and opportunities. This study, alongside existing intelligence from Annual Monitoring Reports, informed initial discussions around the potential key issues and policy challenges for the Knowsley Core Strategy.
- 5.1.2 The Council's **corporate intelligence** about Knowsley also formed a useful evidence base to help understand the spatial context of the Borough and key planning issues. This has helped identify key issues for different neighbourhoods in Knowsley, through ward and Area Partnership Board profiles. Such information is updated regularly, so has fed into the development of the Core Strategy at different stages, ensuring that evidence and policies are informed by the most appropriate and up-to-date information. This approach helps to ensure coherence with the Council's other evidence base and monitoring work.
- 5.1.3 The **Knowsley Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**<sup>86</sup> describes the future health, care, and wellbeing needs of local communities, enabling local people and service providers to plan in partnership and shape local services. This assessment covers a wide range of factors which are related to spatial planning, including for example identifying needs for specific types of accommodation, ensuring equality of opportunity with regards to employment and the requirement to provide health promoting environments to tackle a range of health problems. This has been strongly reflected in the Core Strategy and in its supporting Health Impact Assessment.

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<sup>85</sup> Knowsley Core Evidence Base (Regeneris Consulting Ltd, 2007) (ELR: EB26)

<sup>86</sup> Knowsley Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Knowsley Council / NHS Knowsley, 2011) (ELR: EB24)

5.1.4 The **Knowsley Partnership Needs Assessment**<sup>87</sup> reviews the social, economic, health and wellbeing issues affecting the Borough and its communities. The assessment informs strategies including the Sustainable Communities Strategy, as well as priority setting for the Council and its Partners. The document includes a variety of data to help inform the Core Strategy, relating to the economy, housing, local communities and the environment. This provides a useful background for the Core Strategy evidence base and supporting assessments. Many of the issues highlighted in the needs assessment are addressed through the policy approaches within the Core Strategy.

## 5.2 Regeneration areas

5.2.1 Commissioned by the Council and its partners and completed in 2010, a study entitled **Delivering a New Future for Knowsley Industrial Park – Strategic Framework**<sup>88</sup> sets out the strategic regeneration opportunities offered by the employment location and infrastructure at Knowsley Industrial Park to the east of Kirkby. Whilst highlighting issues of decline and vacancy in some areas of the Park, the Framework also identifies opportunities for investment and restructuring. It supports the identification of Knowsley Industrial Park as part of a Principal Regeneration Area within the Core Strategy's strategic spatial policies. In addition, the study outlines key priorities for action which have informed the detailed policy approach for the area.

5.2.2 The Council has long-recognised the need to improve **Kirkby town centre**, and in particular the retail offer, due to the town's underperformance in retail retention, and some significant vacancies within the town centre area. The "Destination Kirkby" scheme in 2006/7 sought to couple town-centre regeneration and retail investment with the re-location of a major football stadium to the town centre. Despite this scheme being unsuccessful in gaining planning permission, the Council remained committed to the town centre's regeneration and in 2011, approved a retail-led regeneration scheme for the area.

5.2.3 **Prescot town centre** is also in need of intervention and investment to ensure it fully utilises the potential of its historic environment, whilst appropriately serving the needs of its local area. The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) will last for five years and be supported by £1.85 awarded to the Council by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Prescot Town Centre THI programme will focus on the existing Prescot Conservation Area within which it will promote: the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings and public spaces; and creation of a high quality, attractive environment which will encourage investment, new enterprise and employment opportunities. These objectives are consistently reflected in relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

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<sup>87</sup> Knowsley Partnership Needs Assessment (Knowsley Partnership, 2012) (ELR: EB25)

<sup>88</sup> Delivering a New Future for Knowsley Industrial Park – Strategic Framework (DTZ, 2011) (ELR: EB17)

### 5.3 Housing

- 5.3.1 It was important for the Council in developing its Core Strategy to assess the quantity of housing land that is available within the Borough. This was undertaken through a **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**<sup>89</sup> (SHLAA). The Council first undertook a SHLAA with an April 2008 base date, in conjunction with Sefton and West Lancashire Councils. This was published in March 2010. This was updated with a second SHLAA with a base date of April 2010, in March 2011. A third update, with an April 2011 base date, was completed in May 2012. It is anticipated that the SHLAA will be further updated at regular intervals.
- 5.3.2 Each of these SHLAAs have involved a “call for sites”, within which the Council has asked developers, landowners and other interested parties to suggest sites which may be suitable for housing uses in the future. Collating the suitable examples, alongside accounting for “commitments” (i.e. UDP site allocations and sites with planning permission) identified in the AMR, it is possible for the Council to estimate the amount of housing land which could come forward for development. The SHLAA process requires that this supply is “phased” over five year periods. The Council has applied a risk assessment to the process, so that the ability of the market to deliver all of the identified housing sources is recognised. The SHLAA process is also informed by engagement with a consortium of housing partners (including developers) and is subject to public consultation. Knowsley Council continues to work alongside Sefton and West Lancashire Councils on this evidence base.
- 5.3.3 The findings of the SHLAA have been extremely influential over the spatial strategy, as they have identified locations for housing growth to address the long term shortage of housing land within Knowsley. The first SHLAA identified that this was the case when considering the Borough’s ability to meeting annual housing targets as set within the Regional Strategy, and prompted the Council to consider through its Issues and Options Paper, options for meeting such targets. Subsequent SHLAAs have confirmed that Knowsley cannot identify significantly more than a five year supply of housing land, based on RSS-level targets, and would need to identify alternative sources of housing land in order to meet appropriate housing growth targets over a Core Strategy plan period of 15 years from adoption.
- 5.3.4 The **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**<sup>90</sup> (SHMA), completed by consultants David Couttie Associates in March 2010, represented a key piece of evidence in establishing housing needs and demands in Knowsley. The SHMA included a range of contextual information, relating to the housing market in Knowsley and the sub-region, and interpretation of primary data collected through the Knowsley Housing Needs Survey and subsequently updated Assessment<sup>91</sup>. Using a Communities and Local Government-devised methodology, the SHMA also included a quantitative assessment of the

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<sup>89</sup> Knowsley Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Knowsley MBC, Various) (ELR: EB01, EB02 and EB03)

<sup>90</sup> Knowsley Strategic Housing Market Assessment (David Couttie Associates, 2010) (ELR: EB04)

<sup>91</sup> Knowsley Housing Needs Assessment (David Couttie Associates, 2009) (ELR: EB05)

amount of affordable and market housing which would need to be required to meet outstanding and arising needs within Knowsley. This has helped to shape the spatial strategy by supporting the Council's position regarding planning for housing growth. In addition, the study has provided evidence that an affordable housing planning policy (i.e. a planning obligations policy) is required in Knowsley to help meet outstanding needs for social rented and intermediate housing.

- 5.3.5 Knowsley Council participated in a joint study, a **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment**<sup>92</sup> (GTAA) along with neighbouring authorities in the Merseyside area, undertaken by Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit in 2008. The purpose of the study was to assess the needs and demands for additional accommodation (i.e. transit and permanent pitches) for gypsies and travellers, so that these could be accommodated by local planning authorities within their development plans. This study helped to inform the Council about the number and scale of potential locations for gypsies and travellers which may need to be provided within Knowsley. This study did not have a significant impact on the spatial strategy, as a very small need was identified; however this has informed the Council's approach to planning to meet gypsy and traveller needs through a criteria-based policy within the Core Strategy.
- 5.3.6 In order to update the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, a new study is being commissioned by a group of Liverpool City Region authorities. This will seek to revise the evidence for estimating needs for new accommodation (including sites and pitches) for travelling people, and will be used, alongside Core Strategy policies, to identify and allocate sites in Knowsley to accommodate travelling communities, as required. It is expected that this study will be complete in 2013, and will be accounted for in subsequent stages of the Knowsley Local Plan preparation process.

## 5.4 Employment

- 5.4.1 Knowsley Council, along with neighbours Sefton, Halton and West Lancashire, commissioned consultants BE Group to undertake a **Joint Employment Land and Premises Study**<sup>93</sup> (JELPS), which was completed in 2010. The study provided an assessment of the quantity and quality of employment land in four of the Liverpool City Region local authority areas – Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire. The study considered a significant base of evidence, including historic trends and econometrics forecasting, to draw together findings about the existing and potential future markets in the study areas. It made recommendations about the future employment land requirements, to facilitate local economic growth and support the wider regional economy.
- 5.4.2 The findings of the JELPS have been extremely influential over the spatial strategy, as they have identified locations which are suitable and appropriate

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<sup>92</sup> Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit, 2008) (ELR: LC04)

<sup>93</sup> Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2010) (ELR: EB07)

for economic investment / employment development by type. It also established a shared methodology for assessing employment land requirements in terms of a deliverable supply of sufficient quantity, range and choice, whilst identifying the extent of long term shortages of available land and priorities to address these issues.

5.4.3 The **Liverpool SuperPort Economic Trends Study**<sup>94</sup> was commissioned by the Mersey Partnership in 2009 to provide an evidence base and action plan relating to the potential economic contribution to be made by the growth and expansion of the “SuperPort” in the Liverpool City Region. This involves bringing together port, airport and freight activities to create a more efficient and effective business environment, and boost the competitiveness of Liverpool and its surrounding areas in the national and international context. Although there are no specific sites within Knowsley included in the SuperPort pipeline projects, the study has informed the spatial strategy due to the proximity of Liverpool John Lennon airport and 3MG (Halton) and the need for sub-regional support including enhancements to shared infrastructure, together with the potential links to the expansion / improvement of the Knowsley Rail Freight Terminal.

## 5.5 Green Belts

5.5.1 The **Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study**<sup>95</sup> represents a key evidence base study underpinning the spatial strategy for Knowsley. The study was commissioned in 2010 in association with specialist consultants Envision UK, in response to identified pressures on land supply within the urban area, arising through the SHLAA and JELPS, within both Knowsley and Sefton (alongside the neighbouring district of West Lancashire which also had identified a shortage of development land supply). The study was undertaken by Council officers and then verified and validated by Envision UK. The basis of the study is an impartial assessment of the performance of areas of currently designated Green Belt land, in terms of the potential suitability for future development. The study included a detailed methodology for joining small Green Belt areas together in distinct “parcels”, and scoring these against various criteria in different rounds. These criteria included the ability to meet the purposes of the Green Belt as outlined in PPG2, as well as constraints like environmental designations, agricultural value, and flood risk. At the draft study stage, those parcels which scored highest and were not discounted were taken forward as the Council’s preferred potential locations for Green Belt release within the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. In response to the Preferred Options consultation, assessment work and additional evidence, these locations were refined through the final Green Belt study and then included within the final version of the Core Strategy.

5.5.2 Through the provision of evidence of which Green Belt locations would be most suitable for future housing and employment development within Knowsley, the Green Belt Study has played a substantial role in developing

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<sup>94</sup> Liverpool SuperPort Economic Trends Study (MDS Transmodal / Roger Tym and Partners, 2009) (ELR: PG25)

<sup>95</sup> Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study – Knowsley Report (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: EB08)

the spatial strategy. This process worked iteratively – the Green Belt study both influenced and supported the selection of locations which the Council has identified to form the longer term urban extensions within Knowsley. Further information about the role of the Green Belt study in determining the shape of the spatial strategy is given in the Technical Report: Green Belts, alongside those technical reports which relate to planning and housing growth.

## 5.6 Town centres and retail

5.6.1 Knowsley Council commissioned consultants Roger Tym & Partners to provide a **Town Centres and Shopping Study**<sup>96</sup> to support the Core Strategy. The study was undertaken in two parts, Part 1 (finalised in 2009) and Part 2 (finalised in 2010).

5.6.2 The findings of the Knowsley Town Centres and Shopping Study have influenced the Spatial Strategy by providing an up to date assessment of the health of Knowsley's centres, considering the pattern of provision against local needs, identifying gaps or surpluses in provision and making recommendations for action to address weaknesses in the quality and quantity of local shopping provision, including assessment of the scope for diversification of uses.

## 5.7 Environment

5.7.1 The Knowsley **Landscape Character Assessment**<sup>97</sup> was undertaken by consultants 2020 Knowsley in 2006. The study describes the special character and distinctiveness of the Borough's rural landscape, and classifies and names landscape character areas at a Knowsley level. It informs the Local Plan and assists judgements within evidence base documents such as the Green Belt Study and wider strategies such as the Mersey Forest Plan relating to issues such as environmental protection and prudent resource use.

5.7.2 Knowsley Council commissioned consultants Atkins to undertake a **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (level 1)**<sup>98</sup> in 2008. This was undertaken jointly with Sefton Council. The study clarifies and refines available flood risk information to inform the planning process, including decisions regarding locations for development and growth. This enables the local authority to define flood zones, and apply appropriate sequential and exception tests in compliance with national policy. The study also recommends flood risk management measures, and further flood risk assessments to be undertaken in specific locations. This study has been utilised in the development of the Council's evidence base, including identifying locations for housing and employment growth. The findings of the assessment have also been reflected in the Council's strategic policies relating to flood risk in Knowsley.

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<sup>96</sup> Knowsley Town Centres and Shopping Study (Part 1) (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009), Knowsley Town Centres and Shopping Study (Part 2) (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010) (ELR: EB12 and EB13)

<sup>97</sup> Knowsley Landscape Character Assessment (2020 Knowsley, 2012) (ELR: EB20)

<sup>98</sup> Knowsley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1) (Atkins, 2009) (ELR: EB14)

- 5.7.3 In 2012, the Council also commissioned consultants Capita Symonds to complete a later stage of flood risk work, in the form of a **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (level 2)**<sup>99</sup> study. This study built upon the previous Level 1 assessment, completed in 2009. This additional work provides detailed site level assessments for a range of locations potentially being promoted for development through the Local Plan (either by the Council or by third parties as alternative sites). It provides information on flood depth, velocity and hazard and identifies appropriate flood risk management measures that could be implemented to manage flood risk at these sites. Again, this assessment is designed to facilitate the application of the sequential and exception tests. The findings of the study were used to assess the ability of various locations to contribute to growth within Knowsley, including in the evidence base, as well as policies relating to Green Belt locations and flood risk.
- 5.7.4 In order to meet the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, the Council prepared a **Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment**<sup>100</sup>. The study reviewed available information on past flooding incidents and their consequences and assessed the potential consequences of future flooding. This included working with the Environment Agency and United Utilities.
- 5.7.5 The **Knowsley Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Options Study**<sup>101</sup> was completed by consultants on behalf of the Council in 2009. The study identifies opportunities and constraints to the potential development of renewable or low carbon technologies in Knowsley, including biomass, combined heat and power, wind energy, solar thermal, photovoltaic and ground source heat pumps. This localised study provided evidence for policy approaches within the Core Strategy relating to renewable energy and energy efficient design in new development. It informed the approach taken to renewable energy development in the regeneration of Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks.
- 5.7.6 The **Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study**<sup>102</sup> is a joint study between the districts within Liverpool City Region (Halton, Liverpool, Sefton, St.Helens, Wirral and Knowsley), and in addition West Lancashire and Warrington. The study was completed by specialist consultants in 2011, building upon the above-mentioned Knowsley study, forming part of the evidence base for each district's Local Plan. The study supports the development of the city region towards a low carbon economy: Stage 1 demonstrated how the sub-regional renewable energy targets which were at that point set by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West could be met; while Stage 2 provides a common policy framework for the study area. It also provides more detailed guidance for each local authority, and identifies a series of potential "priority zones" for combined heat and power and areas of least constraint for wind energy.

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<sup>99</sup> Knowsley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 2) (Capita Symonds, 2012) (ELR: EB15)

<sup>100</sup> Knowsley Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: EB16)

<sup>101</sup> Knowsley Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Options Study (Arup, 2009) (ELR: EB19)

<sup>102</sup> Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (Arup, 2011) (ELR: LC01 and LC02)

- 5.7.7 The **Knowsley Open Space, Recreation and Sports Needs Assessment**<sup>103</sup> and Strategy was completed in 2005 by consultants PMP on behalf of Knowsley Council. The study includes an audit of all open space provision throughout the borough and also provides a vision, priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and a direction for the allocation of future resources.
- 5.7.8 In 2011, the Council undertook work towards an updated **Greenspace Audit**<sup>104</sup> for the Borough, which was finalised in 2012. This evidence identifies all open spaces of public benefit including formal sports pitches and parks, informal open spaces, children's play areas, allotments, wildlife habitats and corridors to support local quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards, to inform the Spatial Strategy in terms of priorities for investment and enhancement in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. This evidence influences the Spatial Strategy by informing the local standards within the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.7.9 In addition to the Greenspaces Audit, the Council also produced an updated **Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy**<sup>105</sup>, also finalised in 2012. This document is important as it provides up to date evidence relating to current and forecast supply, needs and demand for playing pitch sports, specifically: cricket, football, hockey, rugby league and rugby union. This evidence influences the Spatial Strategy by informing the local standards within the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.7.10 Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service produced the **Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework**<sup>106</sup> on behalf of the Liverpool City Region district Councils, including Knowsley, during 2011. The Framework identifies biodiversity assets, and provides guidance to reduce the loss of and / or fragmentation of habitats and the protection of such assets. This evidence has influenced the Spatial Strategy in terms of the approach and priorities for biodiversity, geodiversity and ecological networks.
- 5.7.11 Greater Manchester Geological Unit and Urban Vision consultants were commissioned in 2008 to produce the **Evidence Base for Minerals Planning in Merseyside**<sup>107</sup>, on behalf of the city region authorities. This study provides a detailed evidence base for a minerals policy framework across the authorities. It identifies locations of minerals deposits, where safeguarding policies may be applied, and also gauges the likely commercial interest in exploiting these resources during the period to 2020.

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<sup>103</sup> Knowsley Open Space, Recreation and Sports Needs Assessment (PMP, 2005) (ELR: EB23)

<sup>104</sup> Knowsley Greenspace Audit (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: EB21)

<sup>105</sup> Knowsley Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: EB22)

<sup>106</sup> Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, 2012) (ELR: LC06)

<sup>107</sup> The Evidence Base for Minerals Planning on Merseyside (Greater Manchester Geological Unit and Urban Vision, 2008) (ELR: LC05)

## 5.8 Waste

5.8.1 Since the waste planning policies for the Knowsley Local Plan are to be contained within the Merseyside and Halton Waste Joint Waste Local Plan, the evidence base relating to waste planning has been assembled as part of this process. This includes a full range of evidence in relation to capacity, needs assessment and site scoring, as well as outcomes from consultation exercises and various assessments, including statutory assessments relating to sustainability and habitats<sup>108</sup>. The evidence base has enabled a thorough understanding of the requirements for additional waste planning facilities in the sub-region up to 2027, including their capacity, design and location. In addition, the evidence has supported a range of criteria-based policies which will be used to deal with planning applications and to guide investment decisions relating to waste infrastructure. This evidence is reflected in the Waste Local Plan, as well as in the common policy approach drafting for inclusion in each of the district Core Strategies (i.e. Knowsley Core Strategy Policy CS25).

## 5.9 Deliverability

5.9.1 A key piece of evidence for the wider Core Strategy is the **Economic Viability Assessment**<sup>109</sup>, undertaken by consultants Keppie Massie for Knowsley Council in 2012. This study assessed the ability of new development within Knowsley to contribute to the provision and/or maintenance of infrastructure in the Borough. This focussed on calculating the baseline viability of different types and sizes of new development in different areas, hence working out whether there would be any capacity within the development cost to make a financial or in kind contribution to infrastructure provision or other developer contributions. This accounted for the range of “policy asks” as well as clear planning obligations policies, set out within the Core Strategy. This important study sets out key evidence for the Council in determining whether the Core Strategy policies, individually and when taken as a whole, are viable.

5.9.2 A key document for supporting the Core Strategy is the **Knowsley Infrastructure Delivery Plan**<sup>110</sup>, an iteration of which has been produced by the Council to support the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Version in 2012. This key document sets out the existing infrastructure provision in Knowsley, establishes ongoing and planned infrastructure projects, and uses available standards of infrastructure provision to determine any excesses or shortfalls in provision. This is supplemented by an infrastructure priority list, which sets out the key projects planned for the period up to 2028, across a wide range of infrastructure types. The scope includes physical infrastructure like highways and utilities, as well as social infrastructure like schools and health services. Green infrastructure is also included, as is sub-regional infrastructure which may impact on Knowsley. This document establishes that the spatial policies set out in the Core Strategy can be supported at the plan

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<sup>108</sup> The evidence base is available in full at: <http://www.wasteplanningmerseyside.gov.uk>

<sup>109</sup> Knowsley Economic Viability Assessment (Keppie Massie, 2012) (ELR: EB06)

<sup>110</sup> Knowsley Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: SD06)

level by appropriate infrastructure, including where appropriate including specific references to the key projects, for example relating to transport. The document also sets out an evidence base for informing policies relating to developer contributions.

- 5.9.3 The Council commissioned specialist consultants Aecom to prepare deliverability evidence in the form of a **Transport Feasibility Assessment**<sup>111</sup>. This study provides initial transport assessments for the locations being promoted for development through the Core Strategy and wider Local Plan, and identifies any transport issues which may arise from the development of these sites. The study focussed on the implications of development within proposed regeneration areas, as well as the broad locations assessed within the Green Belt. The methodology includes consideration of access possibilities, constraints and public transport. It also considers cumulative impact on the highway network over time, using previous runs of the city region transport model. In summary, the report concludes that there are no key issues in principle which would preclude the ability to deliver the policy aspirations promoted by the Council through the Core Strategy. However some on or off site works may be needed to facilitate the development at selected locations, which it is considered could be undertaken at the development stage. In addition, some strategic capacity issues may need to be considered in more detail through Transport Assessments in association with planning applications for new development. This study informed the Council's approach to determination of the most appropriate regeneration and growth locations within the Core Strategy. It also informed the Council's approach to transport and infrastructure policies, including an emphasis on the need to work with developers to resolve any potential transport and highways issues affecting development sites.
- 5.9.4 The **Core Strategy Transport Modelling Report**<sup>112</sup> was commissioned by the Council in 2012, to complement the Transport Feasibility Assessment work also undertaken. This report involved running the Liverpool City Region Transport Model, which is a multi-modal transport model, comprising a link-based highway model, a public transport model and a variable demand model. The model was run for two scenarios to support the Knowsley Core Strategy, including one at the "baseline" level (under existing UDP Policy) and one Core Strategy scenario, which additionally tested the impacts of development in Green Belt locations. The conclusions of the study highlight the capacity issues which may be experienced under the two scenarios, including potential hotspots where infrastructure investment may be required. However, it is not envisaged that such investment would come up against major feasibility issues. Again, this study provides important evidence to justify the approach taken in the Core Strategy with regard to the potential development of Green Belt locations.

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<sup>111</sup> Knowsley Transport Feasibility Assessment (AECOM, 2012) (ELR: EB10)

<sup>112</sup> Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Transport Modelling Report (Mott MacDonald, 2012) (ELR: EB11)

5.9.5 The **Liverpool City Region Housing and Economic Development Overview Study**<sup>113</sup> represents a key piece of sub-regional evidence which was completed to support approaches to housing and economic growth within district Core Strategies. The Liverpool City Region authorities (Halton, Liverpool, Sefton, St.Helens, Wirral and Knowsley) all participated in the study which was completed by independent consultants in 2011. The study provides an overview of the existing and available evidence for approaches to planning for growth, including in particular land availability and needs assessments. This was combined with information regarding past and future population, housing and economic growth, including looking at trends, projections and forecasts. This was contextualised with information regarding previous regional targets for growth, as set within the Regional Strategy. The study then assessed the comparative ability of each district to meet their growth requirements within their district area, and estimated the ability of neighbouring districts to work together to meet outstanding needs. The study represents an important influence for the Knowsley spatial strategy, as it provides the evidence for the position that Knowsley's outstanding needs, which cannot be met in the existing urban area, cannot be practically met in a neighbouring district. This enabled the Council to firmly discount the policy option that excess housing and employment growth could be directed to a neighbouring area, which would have capacity to accommodate this growth. Therefore this pointed the Council towards the policy position that requirements for housing and employment growth would need to be met on land within Knowsley, and hence the policy approach in the Core Strategy to review areas of existing Green Belt designations for future development.

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<sup>113</sup> Liverpool City Region Housing and Economic Development Overview Study (GVA Grimley, 2011) (ELR: LC03 and LC03a)

## 6.0 Technical Reports

6.0.1 In addition to the comprehensive evidence base listed above, the Council has produced a range of Technical Reports to support the Core Strategy. These have been drafted to accommodate additional information and explanation which help to justify the range of policy approaches taken. In particular, they bring together elements of the Core Strategy evidence base for interpretation, and where evidence is conflicting or unclear, for resolution. Their purpose is to strengthen the evidence base and hence the policy approaches within the Core Strategy, and aid understanding of how the Council's position on a variety of policy matters has been established.

### 6.1 Planning for Housing Growth

6.1.1 The requirement for a technical report relating to housing growth was established following changes to regional planning policy which cast uncertainty around the targets for housing growth which the Borough should be planning for within its Core Strategy. This meant that in order to support the policy positions in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, and subsequently final version, there was a need to collate evidence and data in a coherent report, which explained the Council's position on the levels of housing growth which it is advocating within the Core Strategy. The **Planning for Housing Growth Technical Report**<sup>114</sup> accounts for a wide range of local evidence, including the AMR, SHLAA, SHMA, Green Belt Study, but also looks to evidence produced at the national level (population and household projections) and regional level (growth scenarios produced as part of the work towards RS2010). The Report comprehensively examines the levels of housing growth achieved in the past, the levels of housing which Knowsley needs to accommodate (e.g. to meet outstanding housing needs), the land available in Knowsley to accommodate housing growth and the risks to housing delivery. Following on from this examination, the Report investigates the implications of planning for different levels of housing growth (i.e. different annual targets) on the ability to meet housing needs and on availability of land. Various evidence-based scenarios are tested, before the report concludes which level represents the best balance between meeting needs and land availability. The final stages of the report explain the impacts of these findings on the Knowsley Green Belt, before recommending a policy outcome to be incorporated within the Core Strategy. This recommends that the housing target should be the same as that set out within the previous Regional Strategy (i.e. RSS 2008) but running for a revised period from 2010 until 2028.

6.1.2 This report plays an extremely important role in both influencing and underpinning the Core Strategy's policies relating to housing growth. This means that it is very important for the development of the spatial strategy. Establishing the levels of housing growth, and enshrining these in a housing target policy, has influenced the amount of development which must be accommodated within the urban area, and due to established issues with land

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<sup>114</sup> Technical Report: Planning for Housing Growth in Knowsley (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: TR01)

shortages, through a review of the Green Belt. It is fully recognised that setting a housing target at a lower level would reduce the need to accommodate new development within the Green Belt in the long term; however, the report concludes that this approach would undermine the soundness of the strategy through failing to meet housing needs and requirements.

## 6.2 Planning for Employment Growth

6.2.1 In order to support the policy positions in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, and subsequently final version, there was a need to collate evidence and data in a coherent report, which explained the Council's position on the levels of employment growth which it is advocating within the Core Strategy. The **Planning for Employment Growth Technical Report**<sup>115</sup> accounts for a wide range of local evidence, including the AMR, JELPS, Green Belt Study, but also considers evidence produced at a regional level (growth scenarios). The Report examines the levels of employment growth achieved in the past through historic trends and assesses the levels of employment which Knowsley requires based upon different methodologies to meet future needs (e.g. projections based upon historic trends and econometrics), the land suitable, available and deliverable in Knowsley to provide an appropriate range and choice of sites to accommodate employment growth and the risks to employment delivery.

6.2.2 This report plays an extremely important role in both influencing and underpinning the Core Strategy's policies relating to employment growth. This means that it is very important for the development of the Spatial Strategy. Establishing the levels of employment growth, and enshrining these in an employment policy, has influenced the amount of development which must be accommodated within the urban area, and identified issues with land shortages within Knowsley. It is fully recognised that setting an employment target at a lower level would reduce the need to accommodate new development within the Green Belt in the long term; however, the report concludes that this approach would undermine the soundness of the strategy through failing to meet employment needs and requirements.

## 6.3 Planning for Retail in Knowsley

6.3.1 The **Planning for Retail in Knowsley Technical Report**<sup>116</sup> has been completed primarily to inform the Knowsley Local Plan, with a particular emphasis on informing the development of the Knowsley Core Strategy. The report informs the Spatial Strategy by identifying the shopping needs and demands in Knowsley's settlements. It informs priorities to ensure that the offer of retail and services is sufficiently attractive, diverse and accessible for local residents. This supports a link to economic growth by identifying a hierarchy of retail centres in Knowsley with assessment of the appropriate policy approaches to ensure that centres maintain sufficient viability and

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<sup>115</sup> Technical Report: Planning for Employment Growth in Knowsley (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: TR02)

<sup>116</sup> Technical Report: Planning for Retail in Knowsley (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: TR04)

vitality of retail function and individuality to satisfy local needs. This includes identification of capacities and appropriate distributions of growth of main town centre uses during the plan period.

## 6.4 Green Belts

6.4.1 The **Technical Report: Green Belt**<sup>117</sup> sets out a range of relevant influences affecting the Council's identification of "broad locations" within the Green Belt to support longer term residential and employment growth. The Report appraises locations identified from the Council's evidence base, in particular the Green Belt Study, and a range of locations within the Green Belt promoted by landowners and developers during public consultation on the Core Strategy. The methodology within the Report calls on existing policy, a range of sub-regional and local evidence, as well as the statutory assessments undertaken to support the Core Strategy, in particular the appraisal of Green Belt locations under the Sustainability Appraisal. It also assesses the ability of locations to contribute positively towards the wider objectives of the Core Strategy. The report sets out conclusions as to which of the Green Belt locations are the most appropriate and sustainable having regard to the Sustainability Appraisal of Green Belt locations and the potential mitigation measures available via existing and emerging local planning policy. It also suggests which use would be most appropriate at each of the sustainable Green Belt locations. This study is particularly influential over the development of housing, employment and Green Belt policy as set out the Core Strategy, including the selection of Green Belt locations which are identified on the Key Diagram as locations for reservation from the Green Belt for development in the longer term. The study provides a central element of the evidential basis for these decisions.

## 6.5 Spatial Context

6.5.1 The **Technical Report: Spatial Profile**<sup>118</sup> describes the Borough of Knowsley, its role in the Liverpool City Region, and the key issues and opportunities which affect the Borough and each of its communities. This covers the Borough's historic and present day context across a range of themes, including deprivation, housing, economy, retail and the environment. It also sets out profiles for each of the Borough's township areas of Huyton and Stockbridge Village; Kirkby; Prescott, Whiston, Cronton and Knowsley Village; and Halewood. The report uses a range of data, including from national sources, as well as that collected locally by the Council. The document has a key influence over the Core Strategy, as it brings together and summarises a wide evidence base, helping the Council to identify the key issues for the plan to tackle in the longer term. Issues such as population decline, multiple deprivation, unemployment, skills, and health are over Knowsley as a whole and for each of its communities.

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<sup>117</sup> Technical Report: Green Belt (Knowsley MBC, 2013) ELR: TR03

<sup>118</sup> Technical Report: Spatial Profile (Knowsley MBC, 2013) ELR: TR05

## 7.0 Consultation and governance

7.0.1 The various stages of preparation of the spatial strategy have been carried out in compliance with relevant governance arrangements and requirements concerning the various stages of consultation on the plan. The views of specific stakeholders and the general public have been taken into account in the key stages as summarised below.

### 7.1 Initial engagement

7.1.1 The **Plan Knowsley Workshops** were a series of interactive stakeholder engagement workshops facilitated by Vision Twentyone on behalf of Knowsley Council during July 2008. The primary objective of the 'Plan Knowsley' workshops was to establish an initial understanding of the views of key local stakeholders, working towards the creation of a vision for the emerging Core Strategy. Reports summarising the findings of the workshops were published in August 2008<sup>119</sup>.

7.1.2 Additional informal stakeholder involvement was undertaken with a wide variety of colleagues and partners within the Council and the Strategic Partnership during the initial stages of Core Strategy preparation. This included regular meetings with the Council's own officer Steering Group for the Local Plan.

### 7.2 Issues and Options

7.2.1 Between late 2008 and mid 2009, the Council began the process of drafting the first consultation version of the Core Strategy: known as the **Issues and Options Paper**<sup>120</sup>. This presented key issues and potential policy options to deal with these. The drafting of the Paper drew on available evidence and the initial consultation exercises undertaken. The central issue being consulted on in the Paper was the how the spatial strategy for the Borough could be progressed, while accommodating the competing priorities identified through the evidence base and national and regional policy. Approval was gained at the Knowsley Cabinet meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 to publish the Issues and Options Paper for a period of public consultation.

7.2.2 The formal period of public consultation was undertaken from November 2009 until January 2010. This consultation accorded with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (the appropriate regulations at the time)<sup>121</sup>. The activities associated with this period of public consultation exceeded the requirements of the Knowsley Statement of Community Involvement, as the Council sought to engage with as many local people and stakeholders as possible in this early stage of Core Strategy preparation. The consultation focused on the

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<sup>119</sup> Plan Knowsley Workshops (Knowsley MBC / Vision TwentyOne, 2008) (ELR: EB27)

<sup>120</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy – Issues and Options Paper (Knowsley MBC, 2009) (ELR: CS05)

<sup>121</sup> These regulations have now been amended. The Issues and Options Consultation period can be considered to represent the requirement under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

content of the Issues and Options Paper, and in particular on presenting policy options for tackling the strategic challenges in Knowsley. This included a potential spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for the development of the Borough, alongside a range of policy options for dealing with area-based and theme-based issues. A summary leaflet was produced, which focused on the spatial strategy, including the three potential broad spatial options which the Council sought feedback on.

7.2.3 The Issues and Options consultation phase included a wide range of consultation methods, including:

- Events – in libraries, leisure centres and One Stop Shops
- Presentations – to partnership meetings; to specialist groups; to local Councils; to internal officer groups.
- Publication of materials – in Council libraries and One Stop Shops; on the Council's website
- Information dissemination – summary leaflets<sup>122</sup> sent to all households; communication on business newsletter; public notice; press coverage
- Direct communications – letters and emails to LDF consultation database
- Online consultation – use of consultation portal; use of Council website; use of social networking facilities

7.2.4 The consultation period resulted in a wide range of responses, which are detailed in the Core Strategy **Issues and Options – Report of Consultation**<sup>123</sup>. This report summarises the responses made to the summary leaflet and full document, and the discussions held at various internal and external consultation events which the Council held with a wide variety of groups and organisations. In particular, both qualitative and quantitative feedback was given regarding the broad spatial options which featured in both the full Issues and Options Paper and also in the supporting Summary leaflet. This influenced the development of the spatial strategy to a large degree, indicating which of the options was preferred by the majority of stakeholders who responded to the consultation. Additional feedback also influenced different elements of the Core Strategy, including around the selection of regeneration priorities, and the introduction of potential new policy areas, such as for affordable housing.

### 7.3 Preferred Options

7.3.1 Following on from the Issues and Options stage, the Council drafted a **Preferred Options Report**<sup>124</sup>. This Report drew on the findings of the Issues and Options consultation, results of initial technical assessments, as well as additional evidence collated by the Council. The Report also responded to changing circumstances, both in terms of national and regional policy (as discussed above) and rapidly changing economic circumstances. The Preferred Options Report represented a logical step forward, presenting a

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<sup>122</sup> Core Strategy Issues and Options: Consultation leaflet (Knowsley MBC, 2009) (ELR: CS07)

<sup>123</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper – Report of Consultation (Knowsley MBC, 2010) (ELR: SD05)

<sup>124</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: CS04)

draft spatial strategy and preferred policy approaches for consultation purposes. The Report made it clear how alternative policy options has been rejected, and also included a range of supporting text which supported and justified the policy approaches put forward by the Council. The Council's Cabinet gave the appropriate approval on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011 for the Preferred Options Report to be published for a period of consultation.

7.3.2 Formal consultation on the Preferred Options Report was undertaken from June 2011 until September 2011. This accorded with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008<sup>125</sup>, and essentially was a second phase of "Regulation 25" consultation, following on from the previous Issues and Options consultation (see above). The activities associated with this period of public consultation again exceeded the requirements of the Knowsley Statement of Community Involvement. At this important stage the Council sought to engage again with as many local people and stakeholders as possible. The Preferred Options Report was in the form of a draft Core Strategy, including a vision, strategic objectives and a range of "preferred policy options", including for spatial strategy policies, area-based regeneration policies and thematic policies. Each policy was supported by a range of alternative but discarded options, as well as supporting materials about how the implications of the previous Issues and Options stage have been taken into account. The consultation focused on the content of the Preferred Options Report and in particular on the preferred spatial strategy and its potential impacts on Knowsley's townships. This was reflected in a summary leaflet which was produced to support the consultation, which included the preferred spatial strategy, key diagram and area priorities, as well as details of how to participate in the consultation.

7.3.3 The Preferred Options consultation included a wide range of consultation methods, including:

- Events – in town centres including Kirkby, Prescott, Huyton, Halewood and Whiston
- Presentations – to partnership meetings; to specialist groups; to internal officer groups; to local Town and Parish Councils
- Publication of materials – in Council libraries and One Stop Shops; on the Council's website
- Information dissemination – summary leaflets<sup>126</sup> sent to all households; communication on business newsletter; public notice; press coverage
- Direct communications – letters and emails to LDF consultation database
- Online consultation – use of consultation portal; use of Council website; use of social networking facilities

7.3.4 The consultation period resulted in a wide range of responses, which are detailed in the Core Strategy **Preferred Options – Report of**

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<sup>125</sup> These regulations have now been amended. The Preferred Options Consultation period can be considered to represent the requirement under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

<sup>126</sup> Core Strategy Preferred Options – Consultation leaflet (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: CS05)

**Consultation**<sup>127</sup>. This report summarises the responses made to the summary leaflet and full Preferred Options Report document, and also summarises the responses made to key supporting documents such as the draft Green Belt Study – Knowsley Report.

7.3.4 Subsequent to the production of the Report of Consultation for the Preferred Options stage, the Council produced a further document, entitled **Accounting for Preferred Options Consultation**<sup>128</sup>. This document considered each of the responses made to the Preferred Options consultation, and outlined the Council's response to each point. This included identifying whether each of the issues raised through consultation resulted in a change being made between Preferred Options and the subsequent version of the Core Strategy. Where no change was forthcoming, the Council explained its position, and why it considered its original approach was the most appropriate. This exercise fulfilled the Council's requirement under Regulation 22 (c) (iv) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, in ensuring that the Council has demonstrated that the representations made under the Preferred Options consultation have been taken into account, when drafting the subsequent version of the Plan.

## 7.4 Proposed Submission

7.4.1 Following the consultation on the Preferred Options Report, in late 2011, the Council drafted the **Proposed Submission Version**<sup>129</sup> of the Core Strategy. This is the version of the Core Strategy which the Council will seek to progress through Examination to adoption. The drafting process drew on the findings of the Preferred Options consultation, including the production of key documents which detailed the Council's response to the main issues raised by those responding to the consultation (see paragraph 7.3.4). The process also included accounting for the recommendations arising from the interim technical assessments including the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment (see paragraph 8.4.4). During this phase, the Council also prepared and finalised its Core Strategy evidence base, with the findings of new studies and technical reports feeding into the Proposed Submission version report. Again, the Council also had to account for a range of changes at the national level in drafting the final policies (see sections of this report relating to the NPPF).

7.4.2 The full Knowsley Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012 approved the publication of the Local Plan Core Strategy for a period of public consultation and its subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for Examination.

7.4.3 Publication consultation was undertaken on the Proposed Submission Version between 8<sup>th</sup> November and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012. This consultation period was

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<sup>127</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options Report: Report of Consultation (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: SD04)

<sup>128</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy: Accounting for the Preferred Options Consultation (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: SD17)

<sup>129</sup> Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: CS03)

undertaken under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulation 19 (i.e. publication of a Local Plan).

- 7.4.4 The consultation period was more formal than the previous Issues and Options and Preferred Options consultations. In accordance with the Statement Of Community Involvement a more limited range of consultation activities were undertaken. The emphasis was on encouraging appropriately submitted representations from members of the public and other parties. The range of consultation methods used included:
- Publication of materials – in Council libraries and One Stop Shops; on the Council's website
  - Information dissemination – communication on business newsletter; public notice; press coverage
  - Direct communications – emails and letters to those on the Local Plan database, including those who presented comments to previous consultation stages (including petition signatories);
  - Presentations – to key partnership groups; to Town and Parish Councils
  - Online consultation – use of consultation portal; use of Council website; use of social networking facilities
- 7.4.5 The consultation period resulted in a large number of responses to the Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy, and to a number of evidence base documents, e.g. Duty to Cooperate Statement.
- 7.4.6 To reflect in greater detail on the consultation process for the Core Strategy, the Council produced and updated a **Statement of Previous Consultation**<sup>130</sup>. This document, which is supported by the Reports of Consultation for the Preferred Options and Issues and Options stages, sets out the activities undertaken at each of the statutory consultation stages, and outlines the response received by the Council. This document was updated following the conclusion of the Proposed Submission consultation in late 2012, again explaining how many representations were received, and what main issues were raised by these (in detail, in an Appendix). The Statement of Previous Consultation satisfies parts (i), (ii), (v) and (vi) of Regulation 22 (c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 7.4.7 Following the Proposed Submission consultation, the Council produced a Report of **Representations**<sup>131</sup>, which compiled in full all of the representations received during the consultation period.

## 7.5 Governance

- 7.5.1 The Council's arrangements for resourcing and governance during the preparation of the Core Strategy have been in accordance with the details in the Local Development Scheme and the Council's constitution. The planning

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<sup>130</sup> Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Statement of Previous Consultation (Knowsley MBC, 2012 and 2013, (ELR: SD03)

<sup>131</sup> Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Proposed Submission: Report of Representations (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: SD02)

policy team met frequently to resolve policy and process-related issues during the preparation of the Core Strategy and its supporting evidence base. The process was overseen by the Local Plan Steering Group which includes senior managers from across the Council.

- 7.5.2 Full Council approval to publish the Plan and submit it to the Secretary of State was obtained at the Council meeting on 19 September 2012. More minor decisions (e.g. concerning the publication of supporting documents to the Core Strategy) were made at various stages by senior officers in consultation with the Cabinet portfolio holder for Regeneration, Economy and Skills.

## 8.0 Assessments

### 8.1 Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 8.1.1 A Core Strategy must undergo a “Sustainability Appraisal” as it is being prepared. This process identifies the economic, social and environmental impacts of the strategy, and ensures that any necessary changes are made to the strategy to maximise the contribution the strategy makes to sustainable development. Under UK and European Law<sup>132</sup>, the Sustainability Appraisal process must include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which formally assesses the effects of the plan on the environment. For the Knowsley Core Strategy, the Sustainability Appraisal process has been intertwined with plan preparation, with assessments taking place at different stages as detailed below.
- 8.1.2 The Council appointed consultants Urban Vision to undertake work on the **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**<sup>133</sup> for the Core Strategy and the wider Local Development Framework. The role of this document was to establish the type and scope of sustainability issues affecting Knowsley or likely to affect Knowsley in the future, including social, economic and environmental issues. This document also established a Sustainability Appraisal Framework and objectives, which have been used in assessing the sustainability impacts of policies and strategies within the Local Development Framework, including draft Core Strategy policies. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was prepared during early 2009, and was subject to consultation with the specific consultation bodies (Government Office for the North West, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England). The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was completed in May 2009 and later revised in October 2009, to be made available at subsequent stages of public participation on the Core Strategy, and in the appropriate Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal report. This work was completed prior to the consultation on the Issues and Options Paper in late 2009 / early 2010.
- 8.1.3 Subsequent to this scoping exercise, the Council commissioned consultants to undertake an **Interim Sustainability Appraisal**<sup>134</sup> on the content of the Issues and Options Paper. This was undertaken in two distinct phases: firstly the assessment of the broad strategic options being consulted on at the Issues and Options stage, and secondly of the thematic areas presented for discussion within the Issues and Options Paper. This exercise assessed the relative social, economic and environmental sustainability of the range of potential policy options presented within the Issues and Options stage. The recommendations of this stage of the Sustainability Appraisal were included within the Preferred Options Report, and assisted the Council in determining a preferred spatial strategy for Knowsley, based on the most sustainable policy approaches. The Interim Sustainability Report for the Issues and Options

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<sup>132</sup> European Union Strategy Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EEC

<sup>133</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Urban Vision, 2009) (ELR: SD10b)

<sup>134</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal: Interim Version (Issues and Options Paper) (Urban Vision, 2009) (ELR: SD10)

stage was also published in full as a supporting assessment for the Preferred Options consultation.

- 8.1.4 The Council then commissioned a further **Interim Sustainability Appraisal**<sup>135</sup>, which assessed the proposals within the Preferred Options Report. This identified the sustainability implications of the different preferred policies within the Report. The second interim assessment was published alongside the Preferred Options Report to help consultees to a) draw conclusions about the sustainability of the Council's approach and b) recognise the Council's commitment to considering sustainability implications at every stage of plan preparation. This Interim assessment report helped the Council to refine its preferred policy approaches within the subsequent Proposed Submission version of its Core Strategy. During the final stages of Core Strategy preparation, it was extremely important for the Council to demonstrate how policy options have been scrutinised in terms of their sustainability and hence how sustainability considerations have been taken into account.
- 8.1.5 To support the publication of the Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy (in November 2012), the Council published a **Final Sustainability Appraisal Report**<sup>136</sup>. This set out the final position with regard to the whether the plan achieves the appropriate social, environmental and economic objectives. The assessment was undertaken on a pre-consultation version of the Core Strategy, with the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal process accounted for within the Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy (within a separate document - see paragraph 8.4.4 below). The recommendations of the process included the incorporation of changes to policies relating to the spatial strategy, regeneration areas and thematic policies.
- 8.1.6 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Version was also accompanied by a further report, entitled: **Sustainability Appraisal: Green Belt**<sup>137</sup>. This report assessed the ability of each of the Green Belt locations being promoted by the Core Strategy, as well as alternative locations promoted by developers and landowners. This appraisal fed into the Technical Report: Green Belt (see paragraph 6.4.1 of this Report above).

## 8.2 Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 8.2.1 European Law<sup>138</sup> also requires the Core Strategy to be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment as it is being prepared. This must assess the impacts of the strategy on "European sites"<sup>139</sup>. Although Knowsley does not contain

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<sup>135</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal: Interim Version (Preferred Options Report) (Urban Vision, 2011) (ELR: SD09)

<sup>136</sup> ELR: SD07

<sup>137</sup> ELR: SD08

<sup>138</sup> European Union Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

<sup>139</sup> A European site in this context means a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a site which is on a draft list for protection as outlined in the Habitats Regulations 1994. Ramsar sites are also included.

any such sites, there are several in surrounding districts (e.g. Mersey Estuary and Sefton Coast) which could be affected by the policies of the Knowsley Core Strategy, particularly “in combination” with policy initiatives within different areas.

- 8.2.2 The first formal stage of Habitats Regulation Assessment was undertaken on the Preferred Options Report by consultants URS Scott Wilson. URS Scott Wilson was appointed on behalf of several local authorities in the Liverpool City Region to ensure a joint approach to Habitats Regulation Assessments. During the Preferred Options consultation period an **Interim Habitats Regulation Assessment**<sup>140</sup> was published for comments. The report includes both a screening process, to identify which elements of the plan are likely to have a significant effect, and then an assessment process, which evaluates the likely impacts of the remaining elements of the plan on identified sites. This includes consideration of impacts of the Core Strategy in combination with a range of other plans and strategies across the sub-region. The Interim Report enabled consultees at the Preferred Options stage to consider the proposals within the Core Strategy in the light of their likely impact on important sub-regional habitats. The recommendations from this stage of the Assessment were considered as part of the drafting of the Proposed Submission Version Core Strategy (within a separate document - see paragraph 8.4.4 below).
- 8.2.3 The Council commissioned a final **Habitats Regulation Assessment**<sup>141</sup> to accompany the Proposed Submission Version Core Strategy. This set an appraisal of the pre-consultation Core Strategy policies in terms of their impacts on protected sites, individually, in combination, and in combination with other plans and strategies.

### 8.3 Health Impact Assessment

- 8.3.1 Undertaking a Health Impact Assessment on the Core Strategy is a non-statutory process, but is considered best practice in order that the potential impacts of the Core Strategy on human health and well-being are investigated. This approach recognises the links between health and the physical environment, and national guidance which highlights that human health must be a key consideration in planning for sustainable communities.
- 8.3.2 Working with NHS Knowsley, the Council undertook a rapid Health Impact Assessment of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report. This was published alongside the Preferred Options consultation as an **Interim Health Impact Assessment**<sup>142</sup>. The process identified a range of potential impacts on health arising from the Core Strategy, including direct impacts (e.g. housing, accessibility and transport) and indirect impacts (e.g. access to healthy food). Recommendations for changes to the Core Strategy policies

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<sup>140</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Habitats Regulation Assessment: Interim Version (Preferred Options Report) (MEAS / Scott Wilson, 2011) (ELR: SD11a)

<sup>141</sup> ELR: SD11

<sup>142</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Health Impact Assessment: Interim Version (Knowsley PCT / Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: SD12a)

were made to better account for these potential impacts. The Council considered these recommendations when drafting the subsequent Proposed Submission Version Core Strategy.

- 8.3.3 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Version was accompanied by a **Final Health Impact Assessment**<sup>143</sup>. This report set out a final assessment of the health and wellbeing implications of the pre consultation policies within the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy.

## 8.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.4.1 To identify the potential impacts of the Core Strategy on the different sections of the population, the Council committed to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment. This identified potential impacts on population groups including women, those with a disability, LGBT communities, older people or religious groups.

- 8.4.2 To support the Preferred Options consultation, the Council undertook an **Interim Equalities Impact Assessment**<sup>144</sup>, which scoped out the potential impacts of the range of preferred policy areas on different groups. This identified the initial impacts which were envisaged, resulting from the implementation of preferred policy approaches. The assessment recommended that a further, more detailed impact assessment be undertaken on a subsequent version of the Core Strategy.

- 8.4.3 The Council also published a **Final Equalities Impact Assessment**<sup>145</sup>, which assessed the equality and diversity implications of the pre consultation policies within the Core Strategy. This detailed assessment considered the full implications for different population groups arising from the different aspects of the Core Strategy. Its recommendations were accounted for in the final Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy.

- 8.4.4 To account for the statutory and non-statutory assessments produced at the interim stage, the Council published a report which set out the Council's response to the recommendations of each of the assessments. This report was published to support the Proposed Submission consultation on the Core Strategy, and was entitled **Accounting for Assessments**<sup>146</sup>.

## 8.5 Peer reviews and best practice

- 8.5.1 The Council initiated several peer reviews during the preparation process for the Core Strategy. This process involved calling on different agencies to give their expert views regarding the Plan and related project management processes. The sessions offered opportunities to learn from best practice and

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<sup>143</sup> ELR: SD12

<sup>144</sup> Knowsley Core Strategy Equality Impact Assessment: Interim Version (Knowsley MBC, 2011) (ELR: SD13a)

<sup>145</sup> ELR: SD13

<sup>146</sup> Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Accounting for Assessments (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: SD16)

the previous experience of those who had already been through the plan preparation process. These included:

- Planning Officers Society Enterprises Critical Friend Support (2008)
- Planning Officers Society Enterprises Critical Friend Support (Emerging Issues and Options, 2009)
- CABE Local Development Framework Workshop (2010)
- Planning Advisory Service Peer Review (2011)

## 8.6 Self assessments

8.6.1 In addition, the Council undertook a range of self assessment exercises for the Plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State. This included:

- Planning Advisory Service Soundness self-assessment toolkit
- Planning Advisory Service Legal Requirements self-assessment toolkit
- Statement of Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework
- Duty to Cooperate Statement

8.6.2 The **Soundness Self Assessment**<sup>147</sup> used a template provided by the Planning Advisory Service, and assessed the various aspects of the plan in terms of their compliance with the soundness requirements set out in national policy (NPPF, paragraph 182), i.e. positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The exercise enabled the Council to satisfy itself that all of the requirements of national policy have been met through the plan's policies, evidence base and preparation process. This was accompanied by a **Legal Requirements Self Assessment**<sup>148</sup>, also using a Planning Advisory Service template. This enabled the Council to consider whether its approach to plan preparation and policy content complied with the legal requirements set out in legislation and regulations. Both of these self assessments were published alongside the Submission Version of the Core Strategy. It is intended that they will also provide a useful information source for the Inspector appointed to conduct an Examination in Public into the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy.

8.6.3 In addition, the Council completed a **Statement of Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework**<sup>149</sup>. This exercise supplemented the Soundness Self Assessment mentioned above, and examined in further detail the extent to which the approach within the Core Strategy complies with national planning policy in the NPPF. This document also identifies in summary form the extent to which the Unitary Development Plan policies (proposed to be saved as part of the adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy) comply with the NPPF.

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<sup>147</sup> Local Plan Core Strategy Soundness Self Assessment (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: SD19)

<sup>148</sup> Local Plan Core Strategy Legal Requirements Self Assessment (Knowsley MBC, 2012) (ELR: SD18)

<sup>149</sup> Local Plan Core Strategy Statement of Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (Soundness Self Assessment - Appendix B, SD19)

8.6.4 To demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Localism Act<sup>151</sup> and NPPF for the Duty to Cooperate, the Council prepared a **Duty to Cooperate Statement**<sup>152</sup>, a draft of which was published for public consultation alongside the Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy. A final version was then published alongside the Submission version. The Statement sets out how the Council has “cooperated” with other local planning authorities and prescribed public bodies when preparing the Core Strategy and its evidence base. In particular, it considers how the Council has cooperated on a range of planning issues considered to be strategic priorities, including the provision of new homes and jobs, and supporting infrastructure.

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<sup>151</sup> Through its amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

<sup>152</sup> Duty to Cooperate Statement (Knowsley MBC, 2013) (ELR: SD14)

**For more information log on to**  
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