A joint venture between

WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY

WIRRAL

muse

Outreach Consultation Report

Investing in Birkenhead Town Centre

On behalf of Wirral Growth Company
September 2019

Investing in Birkenhead Town Centre
Statement of Consultation

Barton Willmore LLP

Tower 12,
18/22 Bridge St,
Spinningfields,
Manchester
M3 3BZ

Tel: 0161 817 4900

Ref: 29343/A5/SC/HW/GD/jc

Email: greg.dickson@
bartonwillmore.co.uk

Date: August 2019

© The contents of this
document must not be copied
or reproduced in whole or in
part without the written consent
of Barton Willmore LLP.

Contents

Introduction	4
Approach to Community & Engagement	6
Summary of Feedback	14
Summary of Findings and Action Plan	25

Appendices

Appendix A: Media Launch Press Releases	26
Appendix B: Display Boards	37
Appendix C: Comments Form	45

Introduction

Purpose of this Statement

During May, June and July of this year, the Wirral Growth Company (WGC) undertook a wide-ranging programme of stakeholder and community consultation to start a public discussion about the future of Birkenhead Town Centre. The purpose of this work was to identify themes which will help to accelerate growth through the delivery of new development projects that bring new life and investment into the town.

This Outreach Consultation Report identifies the activities undertaken as part of the consultation process, provides a summary of the responses received and details the key considerations and priorities that need to be addressed in preparing the masterplan moving forward.

Wirral Growth Company

WGC is a 50:50 joint venture partnership between Wirral Council and Muse Developments. It was formally established earlier this year to deliver regeneration across the Borough over the next 10-15 years, through a range of schemes providing commercial, retail, leisure and residential accommodation.

Muse was selected as the Council's development partner on the strength of their track record of working collaboratively with the public sector and its ability to deliver a variety of successful regeneration projects throughout the UK in partnership with local authorities. In the North West, Muse has successfully delivered projects in Blackpool, Chester, Colwyn Bay, Salford, Stockport and Warrington amongst others.

Why Birkenhead?

The steady decline of traditional port-related industries over the past 50 years has had an impact on Birkenhead. Whilst the docks at Seacombe and North Birkenhead remain an important source of local employment and provide opportunities for a wide range of local business activity, Birkenhead is no longer providing an attractive business offer for operators looking to take up office, digital and creative spaces.

Furthermore, fundamental changes in the retail sector and the continuing decline of the high street, as well as competition from other centres and out-of-town facilities has affected the retail core of the Town Centre over recent years. Birkenhead's health as a town centre has declined markedly, it's vitality and viability has become compromised by factors such as high vacancy rates.

The town, however, remains the historic industrial and commercial heart of the Borough and, therefore, it has been identified as a key focus area for investment. WGC has ambitions for Birkenhead to once again be a thriving town with neighbourhoods of choice with a strong commercial heart generating footfall and visitors alongside a revitalised retail and leisure provision with new streets and squares.

The WGC is committed to informing, involving and consulting with the local community. By listening to the views of stakeholders and the community, WGC plan to use this information to shape a new masterplan for the town centre to ensure it will benefit local businesses, improve opportunities for residents and deliver a new town centre which everyone will enjoy and be proud of.

Statement Structure

The following sections of this Statement are structured as follow:

- **Section 2** summarises the methods used to advertise the consultation as well as the methods used to engage with people from across the Wirral;
- **Section 3** provides a breakdown the comments received during the consultation period; and
- **Section 4** summarises the key considerations and priorities that need to be addressed when preparing the masterplan.

Approach to Community & Engagement

Introduction

The local community is at the heart of WGC's vision and ambitions for Birkenhead Town Centre. The purpose of the consultation was to understand views of local residents and stakeholders to help solve the challenges and enable WGC to create a masterplan which will lead to new opportunities, new developments, sustainable growth and prosperity for all.

WGC acknowledge that a flexible approach to engagement and consultation is important so that any issues, concerns, suggestions and ideas identified throughout the engagement process can be considered as part of the drafting of the masterplan moving forward.

With that in mind, the main objective of the consultation was to communicate WGC's ambition for the Town Centre and to build up an understanding of what people currently like and don't like about Birkenhead to determine how these issues could be addressed as part of any future masterplan.

To generate awareness, interest and support for the WGC's regeneration activity in Birkenhead, a meaningful programme of communication and engagement with stakeholders was deployed. The methods of consultation undertaken by WGC included:

- **A Media Launch;**
- **Presentations to Elected Members of Wirral Council;**
- **Website;**
- **Pop-up Events in Birkenhead Town Centre;**
- **Event for Birkenhead Market Traders;**
- **Workshop with The Hive Wirral Youth Zone; and**
- **Ongoing consultation with Wirral Chamber of Commerce, Wirral Metropolitan College and the Multi-Cultural Association.**

Further information on each of the approaches is set out opposite.

Media Launch

The procurement process for the creation of the WGC was advertised in the local and national property press in 2017. In February 2018, Muse Developments were announced as the Council's preferred development partner following approval at the Council's Special Cabinet Meeting. This press release was shared by media outlets including Wirral View, Wirral Globe, Wirral Chamber of Commerce, the Liverpool Echo and Insider Media.

A press announcement was subsequently issued in late March 2019 to the local and regional press. This confirmed that Wirral Council and Muse Developments had completed legal negotiations to form the WGC. The articles went onto reference that consultation activity (including events with traders and residents) was scheduled to commence in May 2019.

Separate press releases were shared by Place North West, Wirral Globe, the Liverpool Echo, the Business Desk and Insider Media. Copies of the press articles are included at Appendix A for reference.

Presentation to Elected Members of Wirral Council

Members of Wirral Council have been engaged with the process of formulating the WGC since its inception in 2017. Notwithstanding this, there was a local election in May 2019 which resulted in several new members being elected. In addition, as representatives of the local community it was important that Members were briefed on the proposed consultation strategy for the Birkenhead Town Centre project so that elected Members were informed prior to any public consultation events taking place.

On 29 May 2019, the WGC project team gave a presentation to Members of Wirral Council. This included the wider Wirral area, However it was primarily to outline the ambitions for Birkenhead Town Centre and the proposed outreach activities during May, June and July 2019.

The format of the presentation was as follows:

- The objectives of the WGC;
- WGC ambitions for regeneration in the Borough;
- How the WGC will deliver change;
- Background to the tender process and the partnership agreement;
- Background to Muse Developments and the delivery of schemes in Salford, Warrington, Blackpool and Stockport Exchange;
- Approach to consultation with stakeholders and local people;
- The need for regeneration in Birkenhead Town Centre;
- Proposed outreach activity in Birkenhead Town Centre;
- Ways for people to have their say; and
- Next steps.

At the briefing Members were also offered the opportunity to ask the project team any questions they may have following the presentation. A summary of the Q&A is enclosed at Section 3 of this report.

Website

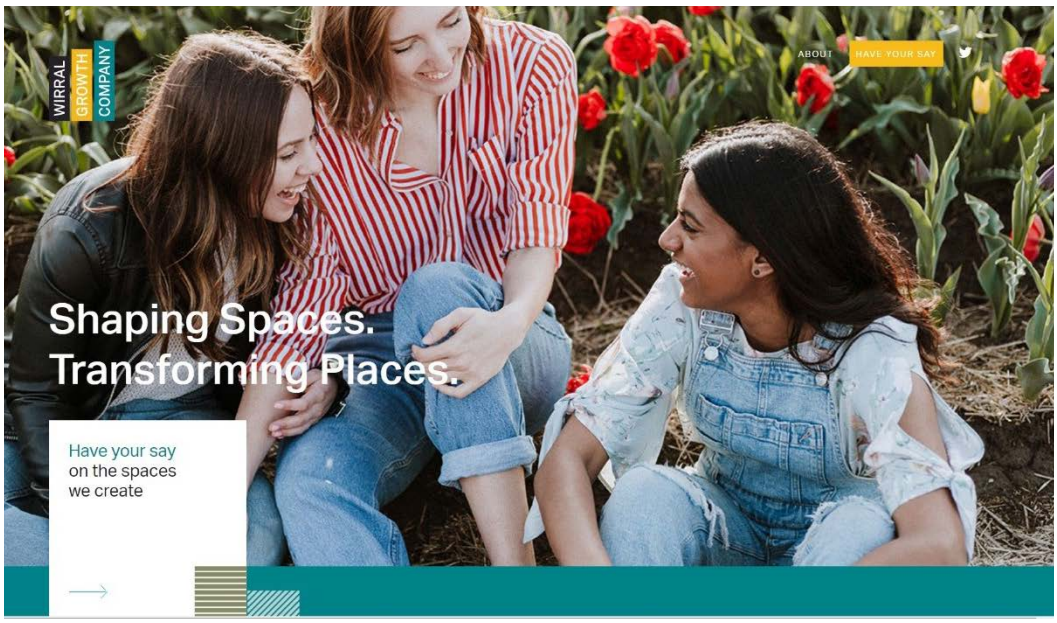
Prior to the first pop-up event a dedicated consultation website was created at https://wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk/. The purpose of the website was to provide all interested parties with the opportunity to view information on the WGC and to raise awareness of the opportunity to submit feedback.

Throughout the consultation period, the WGC website was updated with the consultation material displayed at the pop-up events and an interactive questionnaire was created for people to submit their comments online.

Details of the web address were provided on all the consultation material with an interactive screen also made available at the pop-up events. It was also advertised through a range of platforms including the press release, comments forms and posters.

The website will continue to operate throughout the lifetime of the project from this initial outreach phase to the submission of a formal planning application and throughout the delivery of development. It will be updated and used to maintain communication with key stakeholders and local people. Any future updates will be advertised and tweeted by WGC. A screenshot of the consultation homepage is included in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Screenshot of WGC Homepage



Pop-up Events in Birkenhead Town Centre

Given the geographical scope of Birkenhead and its role as the largest town in the Borough (providing a wide range of shopping, service, leisure, business as well as public administration facilities), it is important that WGC collates feedback from local people that engage with the town regularly as well as members of the wider community that currently decide not to visit Birkenhead to work, shop or live.

To reach as wide an audience as possible the pop-up consultation events were publicised via a variety of communication channels including:

- **The Liverpool Echo** – a digital and print media outlet with an average daily circulation of 35,038 across Merseyside;
- **Wirral View** – a digital and print media outlet with 13,290 subscribers (as of 1 September 2019) to Wirral View weekly email and posted to 15,000 letterboxes across the Wirral. Averaging 12,679 users per month in 2019; February saw a peak of 27,000 users. 30% of users visit the site directly, 28% visit via email (Wirral View weekly), 20% visit via social ;
- **Wirral Globe** – a local digital media outlet;
- **BBC Merseyside** – a regional digital media outlet;
- **Bus Stop Advertisements in Birkenhead Town Centre** – advertising the location, times and dates of the pop-up events;
- **Digital adverts at local Sainsbury's (Upton) and Asda stores (Birkenhead, Arrowe Park, Bromborough and Liscard)**
- **Posters in The Pyramids Shopping Centre** - advertising the location, times and dates of the pop-up events;
- **Social Media** - Tweeted by WGC (@WirralGrowthCo) on 29th and 31st May and 5th and 18th June to 129 followers. The tweets were retweeted by Wirral Globe, Wirral Waters and the Liverpool Echo on 28th May;

Advertisement in the pop-up unit – advertising the times and dates of the pop-up events;

WGC website – advertising the location, times and dates of the pop-up events as well as providing information in relation to WGC, the purpose of the consultation and how people can get involved; and

Leaflets posted by Birkenhead Residents Association.

Figure 2: Advertising

4 pop-up events were held at staggered times over a period of 3 weeks in May and June 2019 to allow for people to attend an event at a time convenient for them. The pop-up events were held in Unit 1, St. John's Pavement in the Pyramids Shopping Centre. This location was chosen due to its central location within Birkenhead Town Centre. The dates and timings of the events were as follows:

- Friday 31st May 2019 from 1pm to 6pm
- Thursday 6th June 2019 from 11am to 4pm
- Saturday 8th June 2019 from 10am to 3pm
- Wednesday 19th June 2019 from 3pm to 8pm

The pop-up events provided key stakeholders and local people with the opportunity to meet the project team, discover more information about WGC and for them to understand what people currently like and don't like about Birkenhead Town Centre. Display boards explaining the proposals were provided at the event. A copy of the display boards is included at Appendix B for reference.

The consultation events were led by key members of the project team. Staff were available throughout the sessions to talk to members of the public about their thoughts on Birkenhead and to discuss any queries and assist with any questions.

A comments form was made available at each event to afford those who attended the pop-up events with the opportunity to express their thoughts and views on the Town Centre. Questions on the form included:

- Age;
- How do you feel about Birkenhead Town Centre on a scale of 1-10? 1 being negative and 10 being positive;
- What do/don't you like about Birkenhead?
- Shops
- Office space
- Leisure
- Market
- Quality of Environment
- Open Space
- Food and Drink
- Services
- Other
- What do you think Birkenhead Town Centre needs to make it a better place?
- Do you have any ideas for the future of Birkenhead Town Centre?

Those who attended the event were encouraged to complete and return the form at the event or return it after via freepost by 30th June 2019. The form also included the website address to allow people to submit their views online. A copy of the comments form is included at **Appendix C** for reference.

The event was attended by local people from across the Borough as well as key stakeholders including Local Councillors, the Wirral Chamber of Commerce (COC), Birkenhead Business Improvement District (BID) and Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

During the pop-up events members of the WGC project team distributed comments cards to shops and stalls within The Grange and The Pyramids Shopping Centre. The Friends of Hamilton Square Conservation Area and Birkenhead Residents Association also distributed over 150 comments cards to those living near the Town Centre. An interactive version of the comments form was also available within the unit for people to complete on the day. Photographs of the event are included at **Figure 3** below.

Figure 3: Photographs from the pop-up event

Event for Birkenhead Market Traders

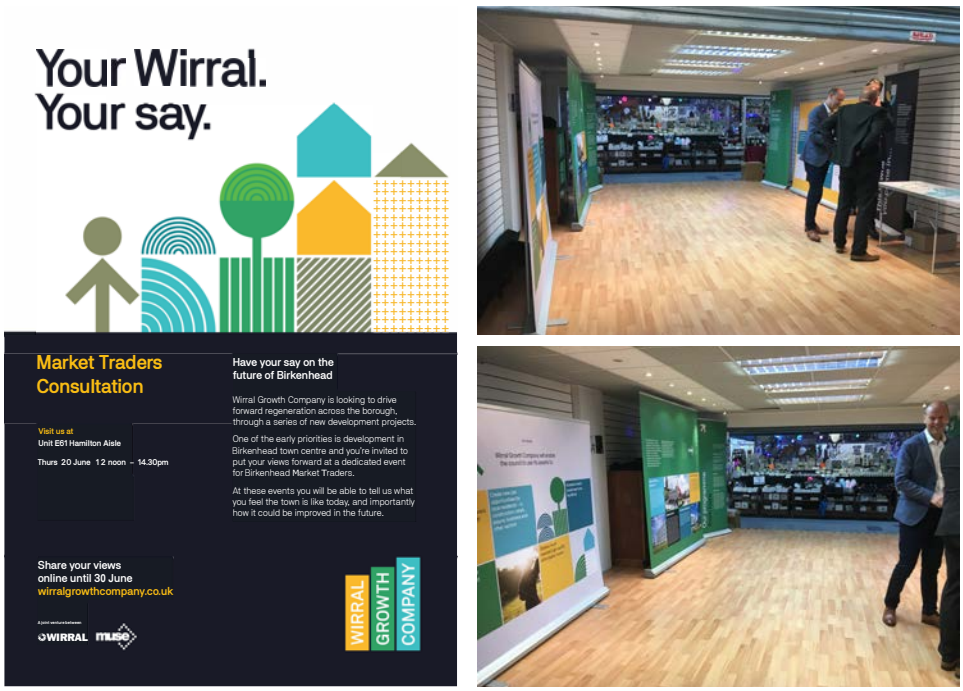
Birkenhead Market Hall sits at the heart of the Town Centre and is an important and valued asset for many members of the local community. It was, therefore, important for WGC to engage with local traders and users of the market to understand what they currently like and dislike about the Market Hall and how it could potentially be improved for both traders and shoppers.

A dedicated consultation event was held in Unit E61 of the Market Hall on Thursday 20th June 2019 between 12 noon and 2.30pm. This location was chosen so traders could pop in at a time convenient for them that was close to their place of work. A leaflet advertising the event was displayed in the Market Hall and distributed to traders 7-10 days before the event **(see Figure 4 below).**

At the event itself, the same display boards **(Appendix B)** used at the pop-up event were utilised and the comments forms **(Appendix C)** were made available to afford those who attended the event with the opportunity to express their thoughts on the Market Hall and also the Town Centre more generally.

During the event members of the WGC project team went to individual market stalls around the market to hand out comments forms and to engage in verbal discussions regarding their aspirations for the Market Hall moving forward. A copy of the consultation leaflet and photographs of the event are included in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Consultation leaflet and photographs of the market traders' event



Workshop with The Hive Wirral Youth Zone

To actively engage with the future residents and workforce of Birkenhead, a focused workshop was held on Monday 8th July 2019 from 4pm to 6.30pm at The Hive Wirral Youth Zone with young people aged 10-19.

The Hive is a purpose-built facility that provides a safe environment where young people from across the Borough can go and enjoy themselves. Members have access to a wide range of facilities including a fitness centre, dance studio, indoor rock climbing, arts and crafts, media studio, music room as well as support to develop enterprise skills.

At the workshop members of the WGC project team sought to find out what young people thought about Birkenhead Town Centre, what could be improved and what facilities they might want to see in the future. As shown in Figure 5 below, to make the event less formal, those that attended the workshop were asked to write down their ideas on large sheets of paper.

Figure 5: Photographs from the workshop at The Hive Wirral Youth Zone

Ongoing Consultation

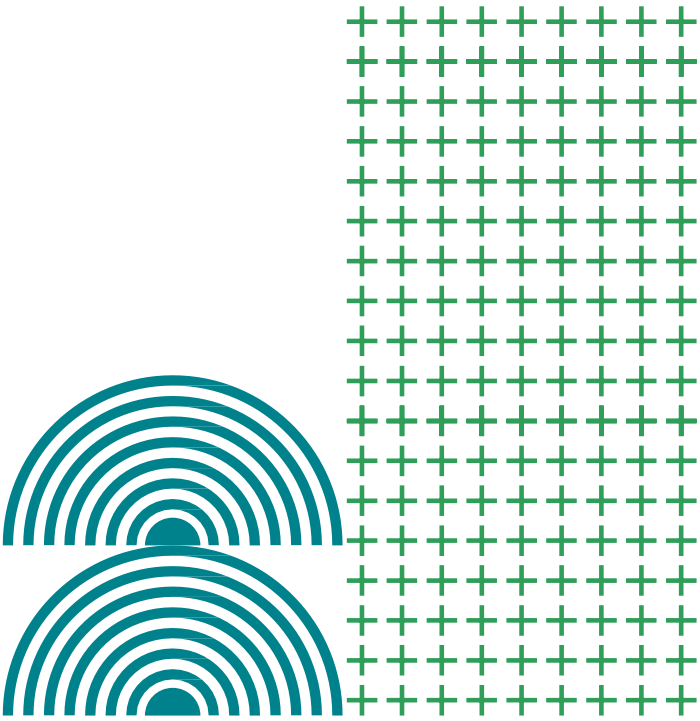
WGC is committed to a continuous process of consultation regarding the proposals for Birkenhead Town Centre. Moving forward, it is proposed that a further stage(s) of consultation will be held in advance of progressing the final masterplan or any planning application. Further details on the next stage of consultation will be published/advertised during the autumn of 2019.

In the meantime, WGC will continue to engage with the Wirral Chamber of Commerce, Wirral Metropolitan College and the Multi-Cultural Association. A provisional workshop has been arranged with the College for September 2019 and presentations to the Chamber of Commerce and Multi-Cultural Association are also being scheduled for September of this year.

Summary

The incorporation of WGC represents a landmark step for the Wirral. It presents an opportunity to build long term partnerships that can re-new and re-energise key sites and communities across the peninsula. The WGC acknowledge that this will only be achieved if communication is effective and provides evidence which can inform the development of projects and strategies that are better designed, developed and understood by the public.

The engagement process has utilised a range of activities to promote the WGC, to understand what people currently like and don't like about Birkenhead Town Centre and what they want to see happen in the future. WGC is committed to ensuring the local people of Wirral are kept informed as the masterplan progresses.



Summary of Feedback

Introduction

This Section summarises the feedback and comments received in response to the consultation.

The feedback collated is intended to be used in the preparation of the future masterplan for Birkenhead Town Centre. Feedback to the consultation was provided through the following means:

- At least 70% of elected members of Wirral Council attended the Briefing Presentation in May 2019, with all parties represented;
- Approximately 212 residents and stakeholders attended the pop-up events in May and June 2019;
- 219 comments forms received online via the WGC website;
- 59 comments forms returned at the consultation events or received via the freepost address;
- Approximately 15 traders attended the market traders' event in June 2019; and
- 37 young people attended the event at The Hive Wirral Youth Zone in early July 2019.

A summary of the discussions and comments received from the various events is set out below.

Members Briefing (May 2019)

Members of the WGC project team met with and presented to elected members of Wirral Council on 29th May 2019.

As detailed in Section 2, the purpose of the presentation was to primarily brief members on the WGC and the proposed consultation strategy for the Birkenhead Town Centre project prior to any public consultation events taking place. At the end of the presentation there was an opportunity for Members to express their views and ask any questions they may have on the proposals.

Table 1 below summarises the feedback received in response to the presentation.

Table 1: Summary of Comments from the Members Briefing

Theme	Summary of Comments
Engagement	The Members welcomed the plans to consult with local people on the future of Birkenhead Town Centre. A request was made for WGC to be open, honest and transparent when consulting with local people. It was also requested that the WGC project team make every effort to consult with a wide demographic of people. This includes the older population, the growing diverse community as well as young people. It was acknowledged that the proposed consultation at The Hive Wirral Youth Zone was a good idea and there is a need to encourage employment opportunities and apprenticeships, particularly for young people from deprived neighbourhoods in the Borough.
Economic	Members discussed the need to retain and expand on the existing business opportunities in Birkenhead and to help further each community across the Wirral. Specific questions included: How can we compliment the industries that we already have (on the Wirral)? Can WGC talk to our partners to ensure future strategies are grass roots led? It was agreed that WGC would engage with the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District to progress discussions. A focus was also placed on enhancing employment opportunities. The role of future apprenticeship schemes was also promoted by Members and WGC was advised to consider 'some of the best elements of the Biffa apprentice scheme'. There was a further request for WGC to work with the Council to identify opportunities for the younger people of the Wirral who have been victim of deprivation but have skills and show clear potential of being employed.

Theme	Summary of Comments
Sustainability	It was stated that the regeneration of Birkenhead Town Centre must be sustainable and must respond to issues relating to climate change. New buildings should achieve BREEAM criteria where appropriate and offer cycle parking and showers to encourage healthy living/ community. It is important that WGC seek to bring people back into the Town Centre and any future development should maximise opportunities to encourage people to travel by alternative modes than the private car. The absence of new car parking facilities was seen as positive.
Birkenhead Market	Members felt the Market was a 'unique' and important asset to the local community. However, it was acknowledged that the Market was in decline and needs to be improved. To increase footfall and create an atmosphere in this part of the Town Centre it was felt that the area around the Market should be at the heart of any future plans for the Town Centre.
Town Centre Offer	Members agreed that there are a high proportion of vacant retail units within the Town Centre. As a result, there is a need to diversify the current offer. This should include more leisure uses and new office developments.
Other Comments	Any future regeneration in the Town Centre must take a holistic approach and should not result in piecemeal development. Bringing bigger brands to the Town Centre would help attract other occupiers. There are some fantastic places and people in Birkenhead – Members would welcome WGC's work in progressing plans which capitalise on this and improve the town.

You said...

"We should aim to have people flocking to Birkenhead"

"Future regeneration should take a holistic approach and not result in piecemeal development"

Pop-up Events in Birkenhead Town Centre (May and June 2019)

As set out in Section 2, four pop-up consultation events were held in Birkenhead Town Centre in May and June 2019. The primary purpose of the events was to obtain feedback from the key stakeholders and local people on what they think about the Town Centre.

The events were advertised widely in the local/regional press, posters around the Town Centre, through social media and online outlets and this has resulted in excellent attendance at the consultation event with 212 people attending the four events. It should, however, be noted that this is an approximate figure and the audience is based on information from the returned comment forms and it is inevitable that other people will have attended the event but not made themselves known to the team.
Full summary available at pages 19 & 20.

You said...

"There is a clear potential for more accessible Council Offices and public services (in Birkenhead)."

"A revitalised Market (in Birkenhead) has the potential to be transformational."

Figure 6: Location of Attendees

Those who attended the events and spoke to the project team were asked to mark their location on a map of the Liverpool City Region. A copy of this map is included at **Figure 6** above.

From this map it is apparent that most people who attended the events live in and around Birkenhead. However, some people travelled into Birkenhead from elsewhere in the Borough including Wallasey, New Brighton, West Kirby, Hoylake, Moreton and Bebington. There were also some people who travelled from elsewhere in the Liverpool City Region including Liverpool and Knowsley.

There were also several key stakeholders who attended the pop-up events. This included elected members, the Wirral Chamber of Commerce, Wirral Business Innovation District, Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership, Friends of Hamilton Square and Birkenhead Residents Association. The latter took over 150 comments forms to distribute locally to those living in and around Hamilton Square and the Town Centre.

A summary of the comment forms and verbal feedback received in response to the pop-up events is set out below.

Market Traders Consultation Event (June 2019)

The market traders event took place in an empty unit in Birkenhead Market Hall on Thursday 20th June 2019. The event was advertised locally within the Market Hall and leaflets were handed out to traders.

The event was attended by approximately 25 people and included a mix of traders as well as shoppers. Those who attended the event were asked to complete a comment form. A summary of the feedback received following this event and the pop-up events is set out in further detail below.

Several of the traders also offered additional comments and views verbally to the WGC project team at the event. These can be summarised as follows:

You said...

"The environment in Birkenhead often feels imposing, dirty and at times socially intimidating."

"As Wirral's capital – it should be an asset that its residents can be proud of. Somewhere safe, clean, attractive, lively and happening."

You said...

- *"The market is not visually attractive or welcoming to shoppers and is difficult to navigate once inside";*
- *"The market is too big and inefficient with lots of empty units.";*
- *"The rents are too high in comparison to trading environmental and opportunities.";*
- *"The expensive parking charges has reduced the number of people visiting the market."; and*
- *"There needs to be a wider variety of retailers, arts and crafts, music and food and drink offer to improve the vibrancy of the market."*

Comment Form Analysis

As set out above, the comments form was made available at each pop-up event, at the market traders' event and was distributed to shops within The Pyramid and The Grange Shopping Centre. An interactive version of the comments form was also made available on the WGC website.

A total of 278 comments forms were returned at the event, by post and online. 219 of the forms were received online via the WGC website and 59 returned at the consultation event or received via the freepost address. Attendees were given until the 30 June 2019 to return their comments by email and post.

Analysis of the responses received in relation to each of the questions set out on the comments form is set out below.

Question 1: Age

Of those who responded:

- **1% were aged 0-17;**
- **3% were aged 18-24;**
- **7% were aged 25-34;**
- **13% were aged 35-44;**
- **26% were aged 45-54;**
- **26% were aged 55-64; and**
- **24% were aged 65+**

Over 75% of the people that responded to the consultation were aged 45 and over with only 4% of respondents were aged 25 and under. These figures highlight the difficulties of engaging with younger people and the importance of holding specialised events to engage with this sector of the community.

Question 2: How do you feel about Birkenhead Town Centre on a scale of 1-10? (1 being negative and 10 being positive)

In responding to this question, 56% of respondents stated that overall they had a negative view of Birkenhead Town Centre (scoring 1-3). Only 5% of respondents gave a positive response scoring it between 7-9 out of 10. 37% of respondents were indifferent scoring it between 4-6 and 2% chose not to answer this question.

The clear majority of respondents felt negatively about Birkenhead as a place. There is therefore, a need to consider how Birkenhead Town Centre can be improved (via the feedback received) to create a safe place of choice with a strong commercial heart, attracting footfall and visitors alongside a revitalised retail and leisure provision and new streets and squares.

Questions 3 and 4: What do you like and not like about Birkenhead?

Table 2 summarises the responses received as a result of the consultation with local people and key stakeholders and identifies what people like and don't like about Birkenhead Town Centre.

Table 2: Response Summary Table to Questions 3 and 4

Feature	Summary of Responses
Shops	In total almost two fifths of respondents (39%) stated they liked the shops in Birkenhead and considered there to be "quite a good range of shops available". It was identified as the most liked feature within the Town Centre by respondents, with one specific respondent drawing reference to the presence of independent/niche music shops such as Apollo Music. In contrast, the shops were also identified as the most disliked feature within the Town Centre with 46% of respondents stating that they "did not like the shops in Birkenhead because there are too many empty units". It was felt by some that making the shopping area more compact and converting some of the outlying shopping areas into residential units would improve the retail core of the Town Centre.
Birkenhead Market	The Market was identified by 27% respondents as a feature of the Town Centre which they liked, but many commented negatively about its current form and several people said that "it needed to be improved." Aligned to this, 45% of respondents indicated that the Market was a feature they did not like, it was the second most disliked feature within the Town Centre. Some felt having more local/ artisan produce in the market would improve the town centre's appeal and would provide a different offer from Liverpool City Centre. **"A revitalised Market has the potential to be transformational, artisan offering, hosting farmers markets and specialist markets. There should be spaces opened up inside it where cafes and eating places can congregate, as well as spaces for pop-up traders."** The reopened Altrincham market and temporary market in Chester was identified as a good example of where this had happened and successfully attracted more people to visit the town centre. A key outcome from the consultation with the market traders was the need for the market to be "rehoused" to meet future needs of the town. The Market Traders who attended the event recognised that it was too large in its current form. The vacant M&S unit was suggested as an appropriate new location in the short to medium term.
Food and Drink	43% of respondents indicated that they do not like food and drink offer in Birkenhead, only 15% of people stated that they did. Several respondents commented that there was nothing open in the Town Centre after 5pm and a better variety and more upmarket food and drink offer would improve vitality and vibrancy into the evening.
Leisure	In total over a third (34%) of respondents disliked the current leisure provision within the Town Centre. It was felt by one respondent that the existing leisure facilities e.g. cinema is too far away and disconnected from the Town Centre. It was also noted by people attending both the pop-up unit and the event at The Hive that there is nowhere near the cinema to eat and a lack of family friendly leisure options.
Offices	Only 2% of respondents like the current office accommodation within the Town Centre. Comments were made about how the town centre is not currently a desirable location for offices but that their introduction would bring multiple benefits. Members of the public said it would help the local retailers if there were more offices present.
Open Space	27% of respondents stated they don't like the public open space in the Town Centre; however, 21% of people identified it as a feature they do like. When providing additional feedback, several commented that more open space with greenery and seating was needed in the Town Centre. One person stated: **"Imagine a cosier version of Liverpool One with the addition of green spaces, trees, bushes, benches, ponds and canals."** It was noted by people attending the pop-up unit that the town centre does not have any outdoor event space which could be used for seasonal markets, ice-rinks or music events.

Feature	Summary of Responses
Services	Over a quarter of those who responded (26%) stated they do not currently like the provision of services within the Town Centre, with only 9% of respondents stating that they did. One person commented: **"There is clear potential for more accessible Council Offices and public services (in Birkenhead). Including those to help the homeless, drug abuse, vulnerable people, start up business and community groups."** Another person commented: **"A cultural hub would also be beneficial with library/arts/social space for groups would be good for social inclusion."** There was also a suggestion for the inclusion of a central library within the Town Centre. On the flip side, attendees of the pop-up unit commented that they liked the existing library and did not want to lose it as a community building.
Quality of Environment	This question was answered by 23 respondents, and only 15 of the total respondents indicated that they liked the environment in the Town Centre. More specifically, 8% suggested they did not like the quality of the environment. The feelings of one respondent were that: **"The area is run down, shabby and depressing, with litter and fly tipping problems."** Another stated: **"The environment in Birkenhead often feels imposing, dirty and at times socially intimidating."** Moving forward, someone suggested that Birkenhead should aspire to be: **"…Wirral's capital – an asset that its residents can be proud of. Somewhere safe, clean, attractive, lively and happening."**
Other	There were several other features that respondents indicated they like and don't like about the Town Centre. These include: • Hamilton Square • Views from the Woodside • Birkenhead Park • Priory • Heritage and history of the town An overwhelming feature of comments made at the pop-up unit, the event at the Hive and the event with market traders was the issue of anti-social behaviour and rough sleepers. It was said on numerous occasions that there needed to be somewhere for the homeless people to go. People did not like feeling unsafe in the town centre, particularly after dark.

To summarise, the shops and the market were both identified as features which respondents liked the best in the Town Centre. However, it was acknowledged that improvements are needed to differentiate the offer in Birkenhead from Liverpool City Centre to attract more people into the Town Centre. Some respondents also felt there was a need to provide better access to employment and services. In addition, it was felt that a cultural hub would be good for social inclusion.

In terms of the food and drink offer and leisure facilities, respondents confirmed that there was nothing open in the Town Centre after 5pm which meant the Town Centre was deserted in the evening. It was suggested that if there was a better variety of leisure facilities and more upmarket food and drink offer (including leisure and food and drink facilities for families) it would improve vitality and vibrancy in the evening. Having these all in one location was also seen as a benefit.

Turning to the quality of the environment, many people expressed their fondness of Hamilton Square and Birkenhead Park but went on to express a feeling that felt the Town Centre looked run down and shabby and its aesthetic appearance could be improved with high quality buildings, more open space, greenery and seating.

Overall it was felt that any future regeneration should:

"Bring something interesting, new and unique to the town that makes people want to come here."

Ultimately, the people want Birkenhead Town Centre to:

"Go from 'I have to go there because…' to 'Let's spend an afternoon there'"

Question 5: What do you think Birkenhead Town Centre needs to make it a better place?

Question 6: Do you have any ideas for the future of Birkenhead Town Centre

Questions 5 and 6 are both open-ended questions asking people what Birkenhead needs and what would make it a better place in the future. It is not possible to refer to every written response, therefore, similar responses have been grouped together to enable easy interpretation.

Moreover, many of the responses related to features identified in Questions 3 and 4, and comments made in relation to these features have been referred to in our summary of responses above. Other themes that have arisen from the comments received are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Response Summary Table to Questions 5 and 6

Feature	Summary of Responses
Tourism	The waterfront was identified by 5 respondents as a key asset to Birkenhead which should be capitalised upon to attract tourists coming over from Liverpool. The following is a selection of comments received relating to the waterfront: **"We should aim to have people flocking to Birkenhead from the cruise ships and enjoying the beautiful views we have of the City"** **"Maximise the views across the waterfront, ideally to include a public space/building for everyone to enjoy"** **"And the waterfront – it's criminal that we hardly use the river. The views from the left bank are spectacular"**
Employment Opportunities	There was a lack of comments made by attendees of the event at The Hive about employment opportunities. However, attendees at the pop-up unit did refer to a need for Birkenhead to "punch its weight" economically. In particular a number of comments were made about how Birkenhead had good potential to be a focus for the creative sectors that are being priced out of Liverpool.
Connectivity	Several correspondents made reference to the Town Centre being too spread out, disjointed and disconnected. It was suggested that there was a need to improve pedestrian and cycling connections to encourage people to walk between different parts of Birkenhead, particularly between the Town Centre and the river. One respondent suggested the creation of a green walk/cycle way using the redundant railway line. In terms of public transport, it was also felt that, although Birkenhead is well served by public transport, it needs to make better connections to the rivers and the docks. The lack of bus routes from some parts of the town were also noted, which has resulted from the Avon bus company closing.

Feature	Summary of Responses
Community spaces	It was felt that there was a need for a large outdoor community space in the Town Centre that could be used for events, arts, live entertainment, big screen events, family time, socialising, Christmas markets, ice rinks and markets. This would improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre.
Sustainability	Some respondents commented on the need to improve sustainability in the Town Centre. This includes the need to consider renewable energy generation and promotion of recycling. One person commented: **"Birkenhead should aspire to be the greenest town in the north with a vision that matches the public mood around health, living and climate breakdown. There is now the opportunity to build a town centred around people and not traffic."** Another suggested: **"Birkenhead needs to embrace a future where the environment is taken seriously, and a decarbonised, waste free society is encouraged and demonstrated by the redevelopment.**
Car Parking	The price of car parking was raised as an issue by several respondents. It is thought that the parking in the Town Centre is too expensive and the cost should either be reduced or made free in the future. Attendees at the pop-up unit said that if the town centre wants to compete with the retail park at Bromborough it needs to provide free parking. However, one respondent felt there were too many car parks in the Town Centre.

To summarise, the key issues that were raised by local people and key stakeholders in relation to questions 5 and 6 related to improving tourism, connectivity, community spaces and car parking within the Town Centre. The need to take sustainability into account when developing the masterplan was also raised as an issue.

Workshop with The Hive Wirral Youth Zone (July 2019)

To ensure that the future residents and workforce of Birkenhead are engaged in the plans for the Town Centre, a focused workshop was held on Monday 8th July 2019 at The Hive Wirral Youth Zone with young people aged 10-19 from across the Wirral.

The workshop was attended by 26 people and as shown on Figure 6 below it was attended by young people from across the Wirral not just Birkenhead.

You said...

"The perception of Birkenhead needs to change"

"...there is a fear of anti-social behaviour in the town, especially in the evening."

Figure 6: Location of Attendees

Following discussions with the WGC project team, those who attended were asked to put their thoughts and ideas down on paper under the heading of:

- **Like;**
- **Dislike;**
- **Needs; and**
- **Ideas.**

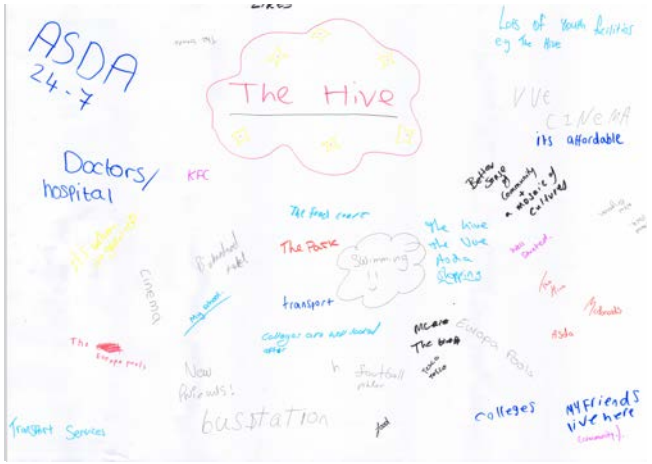
This method of consultation was chosen because it was interactive and was considered to be more engaging for young people. Copies of the completed comments sheets are included at **Figure 7** below.

Figure 7: Consultation responses from The Hive Wirral Youth Zone

DISLIKES

IDEAS

LIKES



NEEDS

To summarise, the cinema, shops, parks, Europa pool and The Hive were all amenities and facilities that the young people liked, and people felt the public transport facilities into the Town Centre were good. However, compared to Liverpool City Centre it was felt that the shops (especially retail and food and drink) is lacking in variety. It was also felt that there was a strong sense of community in Birkenhead.

It was evident from most responses that young people currently feel unsafe in the Town Centre, particularly at night and it was felt that there are problems related to crime, anti-social behaviour, drugs and homelessness. It was also felt that the visual appearance of the Market and the Town Centre in general could be improved.

It has been suggested that there is a need for more leisure and social spaces for families, children and teenagers including football pitches. People also identified a need to provide more bins, a homeless shelter in the Town Centre as well the need to have more police on the streets to improve safety.

In terms of ideas for the future, it was suggested that there is a need for better public access to WIFI, more family friendly restaurants and places for young people to hang around. One respondent identified a need for more family housing and for improvements to be made to Europa pool.

Summary of Findings and Action Plan

In May, June and July 2019, WGC carried out a wide-ranging programme of stakeholder and community consultation to open up a conversation and dialogue on the future of Birkenhead Town Centre and the opportunities that may exist to accelerate growth through the delivery of development projects that will bring new life and investment into the town.

The main objective of the consultation was to communicate WGC's ambition for the Town Centre and to build up an understanding of what people currently like and don't like about Birkenhead to determine how these issues could be addressed as part of any future masterplan.

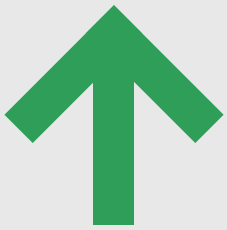
To generate awareness, interest and support for any future regeneration activity, WGC has undertaken a meaningful programme of communication and engagement with stakeholders. This included presentations to elected members, four pop-up events in Birkenhead Town Centre, an event with market traders and a workshop with The Hive Wirral Youth Zone.

To date, over 300 people from across the Borough and the wider City Region have engaged in the consultation process. This has included a wide range of people, a mix of young and old and generally the feedback received from the local community and key stakeholders can be broadly described as supportive of change within the Town Centre. However, there were several specific areas identified where it was felt there was need for improvement.

To summarise, as a result of the consultation the following themes have been identified for further consideration:

1. Diversification of uses within the retail core alongside improvements to the leisure, food and drink offer to improve the vitality of the Town Centre in the evenings;

2. Potential for adaptation of the existing main shopping area to reduce the number of vacant units;



3. The Market was identified as being a key feature of the Town Centre. However, there was a desire for the Market to be better integrated with the retail core and the diversity of retailers improved to attract more visitors. [N.B. Market traders suggested that the vacant M&S unit or Europa car park could provide an appropriate home for the market and would provide the opportunity for the existing market to be redeveloped];

5. Regeneration activity provides opportunities for job creation, business relocations and economic development in the town centre with a focus on accessibility to ensure that outcomes are available to the broadest diversity of people that live in Birkenhead but also provides communities across the Wirral

4. Enhancements to the existing green space assets (such as Birkenhead Park, Hamilton Square and the Waterfront) especially for families, children and teenagers to make these places as accessible and inclusive as possible;

6. Improvement of community facilities in the Town Centre, potentially including the provision of a new ‘hub’ to provide new library facilities, Council services and central space for community activity;

7. Upgrades to the physical appearance of streets, buildings and spaces in the Town Centre. It was suggested that this should also include the availability of flexible outdoor space for live

9. The Town Centre is considered by many to be too spread out, disjointed and unconnected. It has been suggested that the Town Centre needs to upgrade pedestrian and cycle connections to improve accessibility by non-car modes;

8. Infrastructure and transportation system that will stand the test of time. It was acknowledged that communities across the Wirral benefit from a network of bus routes but there was a frustration that the frequency and availability of services reduces into the early evening. The number of car parking spaces and the cost of parking was also highlighted as an issue for further consideration; and

10. New development to be of high-quality design, incorporate sustainable methods of construction and provide opportunity for technological advancements (especially where it provides a better alternative to an existing solution or approach).

Moving forward, WGC plan to use the information gleaned from this consultation to shape their masterplan proposals for Birkenhead Town Centre to ensure they will benefit local businesses, improve opportunities for residents and deliver a new Town Centre which everyone will enjoy and be proud of.

In the meantime, WGC will continue to consult and engage with the people of Wirral regarding the proposals for Birkenhead Town Centre. It is envisaged that in advance of progressing the final masterplan or any planning application, further consultation will be completed, and press releases published where appropriate to advertise the consultation.

Appendix A: Media Launch Press Releases

CONTRACT SIGNED TO ESTABLISH WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY

21 Mar 2019 **North West** **Property** **Matthew Ord**

The regeneration of Birkenhead town centre and the surrounding areas have moved a step closer after contracts were signed to officially establish the Wirral Growth Company.

Muse Developments was selected as the preferred bidder to partner on the proposed £1bn regeneration opportunity in February last year, as revealed by *Insider*. The project is set to provide new homes, commercial, retail and leisure developments, thousands of jobs and a boost to property values, as well as help attract further investment.

Now, the company has struck an agreement with Wirral Council to form the 50:50 joint venture.

One of the first projects for Wirral Growth Company will focus on Birkenhead town centre, where the company will look to develop a business district of grade A offices, alongside retail/leisure space and extensive public realm improvements.

It will also look to bring forward schemes in areas such as Bebington, Moreton and Bromborough through a range of commercial, retail, leisure and residential developments.

Mike Horner, development director at Muse Developments, said: "This is the first step of a long journey to bring high-quality development and sustainable, transformational regeneration to the peninsula.

"We look forward to further strengthening our partnership with the council, as well as engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders as plans progress."

Leader of Wirral Council Phil Davies added: "This is a momentous occasion for the borough. Getting Wirral Growth Company officially off the ground, after months of detailed negotiations, is fantastic news for all our residents.

"We can now get on with the job of building the homes, offices and leisure developments which will transform our local economy and create thousands of opportunities for local people and businesses. I can't wait to get started."

The next step for Wirral Growth Company will be a full public consultation on initial plans, including traders' and residents' events, which is due to begin in May 2019.

CONTACT US

Got a news story for us? Contact us using the details below

Matthew Ord, Senior Digital Staff Writer
T: 0161 907 9715
E: matthew.ord@newsco.com

Interested in advertising with Insider? Contact us on:

Adrian Simcox, Sales Director
T: 0161 907 9745
E: adrian.simcox@newsco.com

How YOU can shape what now happens to Birkenhead as £1bn scheme takes off

SHARE

A huge amount of money is set to be spent on regeneration in Birkenhead - but how?

By **Tom Houghton** Business Reporter
05:00, 29 MAY 2019

See news near you

In YourArea

Enter your postcode

Go

Birkenhead Market

massive project on the town centre.

They want to hear what people in the town like and dislike, as well as how to attract more people and businesses, as part of a public consultation.

The plans so far could include a new business district of "high-quality" offices, leisure space, a new market, shops, and "extensive public realm improvements".

Birkenhead town centre

Cabinet member for regeneration and growth, Cllr Tony Jones, said: “We want to hear your ideas, your hopes and - yes - your criticisms of the town centre to help redefine the future of Birkenhead and decide what happens next.

"We know some things that we really want to do - create new prosperity, jobs, and homes, create office space to attract employers, and this is our first step.

READ MORE

"It is crucial that this is a real conversation with as many people as possible about their very genuine concerns about Birkenhead so their ambitions for the town can be addressed."

Watch children at The Hive in Birkenhead perform for Harry and Meghan:

CHILDREN AT THE HIVE IN BIRKENHEAD PERFORM FOR HARRY AND MEGHAN

A pop-up shop will start on Friday at the Pyramids shopping centre.

In total, there will be four events between May 31 and June 19, with views also to be taken online once the consultation begins.

Mike Horner, development director at Muse Developments, said: "We're really looking forward to engaging with the community, speaking to residents and other key stakeholders about their thoughts on Birkenhead, to find out how we can help them deliver their vision for a vibrant and attractive future town centre.

Pyramids Shopping Centre. Photo by James Maloney

“This is a key step for any successful programme of regeneration that will help shape development in the area, and enable the growth company to bring forward transformational schemes that deliver a real sense of place.”

The Wirral Growth Company is a 10-year plan that began in March last year. Birkenhead town centre is one of the first projects, with others including future schemes in Bebington, Bromborough and Moreton.

Commercial district planned by the Growth Company in Birkenhead

Wirral Growth Company eyes May consultation for £1bn plan

20 Mar 2019, 11:58 Jessica Middleton-Pugh

Wirral Council and Muse Developments have completed legal negotiations in order to form the Wirral Growth Company, a 50:50 joint venture created to take forward a £1bn regeneration plan across the borough.

The council selected Muse as its preferred development partner in March 2018 for the 10-year partnership, with the potential to extend for a further five years.

Subscribe to our

Don't miss like this

Keep in the pl with the Place

Subscribe

One of the first projects for Wirral Growth Company will focus on Birkenhe centre, where there are plans to develop a business district of grade A offic retail and leisure, and extensive public realm.

The next step for Wirral Growth Company will be a full public consultation including traders' and residents' events, which is due to begin in May.

The timeline for the project has already slipped; at a launch event last sum council said it hoped the first planning applications would be in by the end

reports to a cabinet meeting in November said a start on site was planned by spring 2019.

A change in Wirral's political leadership is also imminent and could challenge the progress of the development. Council leader Phil Davies is due to step down ahead of the local elections in May, leaving a potential rift at the head of the council and Labour Group, while earlier this month deputy leader Bernie Mooney was deselected as a candidate leading her to suggest she was the victim of a "hard-left stitch up". Political commentators are suggesting Wirral could become the UK's first Momentum council. Although a hard left council is not expected to be pro-development, there are suggestions that Cllr Angie Davies, who has worked closely on the progress of the Wirral Growth Company, could take over from Cllr Davies as leader.

While Muse declined to comment on the political situation in Wirral, Mike Horner, development director at Muse, said: "This is the first step of a long journey to bring high-quality development and sustainable, transformational regeneration to the peninsula.

"We look forward to further strengthening our partnership with the council, as well as engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders as plans progress."

Alongside Birkenhead, Wirral Growth Company will also look to bring forward schemes in areas such as Bebington, Moreton and Bromborough through a range of commercial, retail, leisure and residential developments.

Legal agreement will kickstart regeneration of town centre

Birkenhead town centre

Property | March 20 2019 | Michael Ribbeck

The regeneration of Birkenhead town centre has moved a step closer following the signing of legal agreements.

Wirral Council and Muse Developments have agreed to form a new joint venture called Wirral Growth Company.

Following a major competition, the council selected Muse as its preferred development partner for the 10 year partnership with the potential to extend for a further five years.

One of the first projects for Wirral Growth Company will focus on Birkenhead town centre, where the new venture will look to develop a new business district of grade A offices, alongside new shops and extensive public realm improvements.

Mike Horner, development director at Muse Developments, said: "We're delighted to have reached this milestone with Wirral Council and officially form Wirral Growth Company.

"This is the first step of a long journey to bring high-quality development and sustainable, transformational regeneration to the peninsula.

"We look forward to further strengthening our partnership with the council, as well as engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders as plans progress."

Alongside Birkenhead, Wirral Growth Company will also look to bring forward schemes in areas such as Bebington, Moreton and Bromborough through a range of commercial, retail, leisure and residential developments.

Leader of Wirral Council Phil Davies said: "This is a momentous occasion for the borough. Getting Wirral Growth Company officially off the ground, after months of detailed negotiations, is fantastic news for all our residents.

"We can now get on with the job of building the homes, offices and leisure developments which will transform our local economy and create thousands of opportunities for local people and businesses. I can't wait to get started."

The next step for Wirral Growth Company will be a full public consultation on initial plans, including traders' and residents' events, which is due to begin in May 2019.

News 21st March

Development company chosen to breathe new life into Birkenhead

Artist's impression of proposed development in Birkenhead

3 comments

PUBLIC consultation on plans to regenerate Birkenhead and other areas of Wirral is due to take place later this year.

It follows the signing this week of legal agreements between Wirral Council and Muse Developments to form Wirral Growth Company.

The authority selected Muse as its preferred development partner for the 50:50 joint venture scheme, after a major competition, in March last year for a 10-year partnership.

Its plan for Birkenhead town centre features development of a new business district of grade 'A' offices, plus new retail and leisure space.

Alongside Birkenhead, the company also plans to bring forward schemes in areas of Bebington, Moreton and Bromborough.

Full public consultation is promised on the initial plans with events due to begin in May.

Council leader Cllr Phil Davies said: "This is a momentous occasion for the borough. Getting Wirral Growth Company officially off the ground, after months of detailed negotiations, is fantastic news for all our residents.

"We can now get on with the job of building the homes, offices and leisure developments which will transform our local economy and create thousands of opportunities for local people and businesses.

ADVERTISING

Appendix B: Display Boards

Shaping Spaces.
Transforming Places.

Wirral Growth Company (WGC) has been established to deliver new developments and regeneration across the peninsula over the next 10-15 years, through a range of schemes providing commercial, retail, leisure and residential accomodation

Our Vision

Wirral Growth Company is here to deliver new developments and long term regeneration for communities across the Wirral.

Why is Wirral Growth Company different?

Wirral Council announced its intention to create Wirral Growth Company back in 2017. The company has been set up to enable the council to use its land assets to secure local economic growth, community benefits and environmental improvements.

Following a competition and procurement exercise, Wirral Council selected national urban regeneration specialists, Muse Developments, as its partner in 2018. Muse was selected on the strength of its track record of working collaboratively with the public sector and its skills and experience of delivering successful regeneration projects throughout the UK in partnerships with local authorities.

Wirral Growth Company is a 50:50 joint venture partnership between Wirral Council and Muse Developments. It was formally established earlier this year to lead the regeneration of key sites across the borough.

WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY

A joint venture between

WIRRAL muse

Our Goals

Wirral Growth Company will enable the council to use its assets to:

Bring forward new development and regeneration in different areas of the borough

Create new job opportunities for local residents – in construction, retail, leisure, business and other sectors

Increase inward investment into the Wirral

Improve the built environment and revitalise local communities

Deliver much needed high-quality affordable homes

Your say

To achieve this, we are gathering your insights and perspectives to shape our thinking.

Is there a need for regeneration in Birkenhead Town Centre?

Do we need high quality offices to attract new businesses?

Is there a need for new housing, leisure or retail development in the Town Centre? If so, what would you like to see as part of the future Birkenhead?

What do you like about Birkenhead?

Does Birkenhead provide the right conditions for new employment opportunities?

How should we approach the future of Birkenhead's public spaces and places?

What are the key facilities and services that would help to improve the health and wellbeing of Birkenhead for local residents and businesses?

Your opinion is important for the future of Birkenhead.

Wirral Growth Company wants to plan the future of Birkenhead Town Centre having listened to the views of local people.

Before we put pen to paper on plans for the future of Birkenhead, we want to hear and understand your views of the existing Town Centre and what you like and don't like.

That's why we're here.

We want to involve residents from across the Wirral, as well as local traders, businesses and community organisations and other stakeholders, to show what's possible when people share their views and collaborate together.

Ensuring inclusivity

We will create opportunities to hear from people all across the Wirral, and we will welcome thoughts from the borough's rich diversity of perspectives, identities and backgrounds.

Enhancing learning

We think learning starts by listening – carefully and closely. This means developing our plans in conversation with the people of Wirral and ensuring that we consider and reflect the aspirations of local residents and stakeholders.

Building relationships

We wish to build and maintain strong relationships with community partners. If we nurture and invest in these relationships, our plans for Birkenhead will be better informed and the community will be stronger too.

The Challenges of Today

The future of Birkenhead stands at an important cross roads

The Wirral is generally seen as offering a fair quality of life but there are marked contrasts between different parts of the Borough.

Birkenhead benefits from access to areas of high environmental quality. The coastline is also a special feature, high in value for recreation, nature conservation and tourism.

Key employment sectors include retail and distribution, public administration, education and health. The local economy also plays a strong role in the production of chemicals and food and drink products. The number of tourism related jobs and spending is also significant.

Despite these strengths, recent Investment Strategies have identified that Birkenhead's social, economic and environmental performance has declined. The trends set out opposite are becoming a major concern.

- A fall in the national retail rankings
- A limited food, drink and hotel offer
- Loss of key retailers and high vacancy rates have lead to a reduction in visitors to the Town Centre
- Total number of jobs in Wirral is not sufficient to employ the resident population of working age.
- Outdated and poor quality office space struggling to attract new businesses
- Predominance of "value" fashion retailers
- Relatively low rents (when compare to other town centres across the North of England)
- The need to improve quality of the physical environment within the Town Centre

Track record

Muse Developments is one of the UK's leading names in mixed-use development and urban regeneration, with more than 30 years' experience of delivering high-quality, transformational schemes in the communities they work. Through development agreements and joint ventures, Muse breathes new life into towns and cities, creating sustainable working, living and leisure spaces for all.

Muse has successful projects throughout the UK and the North West, including schemes in Blackpool, Bolton, Chester, Salford, Stockport and Warrington. Many of their schemes have been benchmarked against the finest in the region and Muse have won the prestigious Insider media 'Developer of the Year' award four times in the last five years.

Talbot Gateway, Blackpool

Muse has developed a comprehensive masterplan with Blackpool Council for Talbot Gateway providing a new central business district and civic quarter with 1.1 million sq ft of development that includes hotels, grade A office space, a supermarket, retail units, café/ restaurants and a new transport interchange. The first phase of development - a new 125,000 square foot council office building, a 120,000 sq ft supermarket for Sainsbury's and a refurbished 650 space multi-storey car park have been delivered. There is 20,000 sq ft of retail space on the ground floor of the MSCP and a further 10,000 sq ft on the ground floor of the council office building. The next phase of development due to start in 2020 will provide a 144 bedroom hotel for Holiday Inn and a new tram terminus.

Stockport Exchange

Muse is Stockport Council's development partner for Stockport Exchange, a £145m gateway site, which is creating a new business district in the town, while linking the railway station and the retail core of the Town Centre. Phases one and two of the development, which include a 1,000-space multi-story car park, a 50,000sqft, five-storey office building, a 115-bedroom Holiday Inn Express and a new public space have been delivered. Phase three is currently under construction, which brings forward 61,502 sq ft of commercial space through the second office development, along with an extension of the open space to improve accessibility to the Town Centre.

Salford Central

Salford Central will regenerate over 50 acres of Salford's civic and historic centre, over two key sites – Chapel Street and New Bailey. Chapel Street is a new gateway site, and the former historic centre of the city, where Muse through its partnership with the English Cities Fund has delivered major infrastructure works, including traffic calming, public realm improvements, retail and leisure space, along with a range of homes at three award-winning residential schemes – Vimto Gardens, Timekeepers Square and Carpino Place. New Bailey is an exciting new mixed-use district just a stone's throw from Salford Central train station that connects directly to the adjacent Spinningfields area of Manchester city centre. Since work began in 2013, 125,000 sq ft commercial space, 1,235 parking spaces over two multi-storey car parks, along with leisure units, a 143-bedroom Premier Inn and 225 apartments at The Slate Yard have been delivered. Currently under construction are a further three office developments at 190,000 sq ft, 157,000 sq ft and 11,000 sq ft respectively, along with the third residential building at The Slate Yard, with more in the pipeline for 2019 across the two key sites.

Time Square, Warrington

Muse is working in partnership with Warrington Council to deliver the £107 million mixed-use Time Square scheme in the heart of Warrington Town Centre. The project will transform the Town Centre, providing a new retail and leisure quarter with a new cinema, restaurants and public square, council offices and a modern home for the much-loved, award-winning market. Construction of the scheme is nearing completion, whilst the market continues to operate in its temporary home and a new 1,200-space multi-storey car park has already opened to the public.

Muse is delighted to have reached this milestone with Wirral Council and officially form Wirral Growth Company. This is the first step of a long journey to bring high-quality development and sustainable, transformational regeneration to the peninsula.

We look forward to further strengthening our partnership with the council, as well as engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders as plans progress.

Mike Horner, Development Director,
Muse Developments

Help us plan the future Birkenhead.

A key focus for Wirral Growth Company is to create a strong and vibrant Birkenhead Town Centre. Birkenhead is the largest town in Wirral and should be the beating heart of the borough, drawing on connections with parts of Cheshire, North Wales and the wider Liverpool city region. However, like many other urban centres in the North of England, it faces a number of challenges.

The purpose of the consultation is to understand views of local residents and stakeholders which will help us solve the challenges and enable us to create a masterplan which will lead to new opportunities, new developments, sustainable growth and prosperity for all.

The Future Opportunities

There is an opportunity to transform Birkenhead Town Centre into a truly special urban environment.

There are opportunities to re-shape the future of the Town Centre, and to look at the development of a new commercial district to attract new businesses and employment opportunities alongside a refreshed retail, leisure and cultural offer.

The Town Centre is easily accessible from all parts of the Wirral by public transport and benefits from a relatively modern bus station in the heart of the shopping area adjacent to Birkenhead Market. Conway Park and Birkenhead Central stations also offer frequent train services on the local Merseyrail network.

Wirral Growth Company is looking to deliver the ambition for Birkenhead to become a thriving town centre of choice; a destination in its own right, with a strong commercial heart generating footfall and visitors alongside a revitalised retail and leisure provision and new streets and squares.

- A redesigned retail centre?
- Enhanced or new public spaces?
- Development of new office space providing modern, flexible accommodation?
- Opportunities for new family housing and apartment developments?
- Potential to improve and enhance Birkenhead market?
- A new and improved leisure offer?
- Improved connectivity?
- Improved physical environment?

This is where you come in...

The more voices, perspectives, and ideas that come to the table, the better. That's why we want you to be a part of this project.

Please let us have your thoughts and views on the existing Town Centre and how you feel it could be improved.

By listening to you, we plan to shape a master plan for Birkenhead Town Centre, which will benefit local business, improve opportunities for residents and deliver a new town centre which everyone will enjoy and be proud of.

Ways to have your say

Go online

We want to make Birkenhead a better place for people of all ages and we want to share our thoughts and ideas with you. Throughout the year we will be posting new content to **www.wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk** where you can read about our approach, keep up to date with our proposals for Birkenhead and complete our consultation surveys.

Social Media

Keep up to date with our plans and events by following us on Twitter(**@WirralGrowthCo**) and Instagram (**@wirralgrowthco**)

Local Organisations

To engage with people of all ages and backgrounds, we will visit local schools/ colleges and businesses to discuss the role of Wirral Growth Company and to encourage involvement in the development of plans for the short, medium and long term.

Attend Pop up events

To learn more about Wirral Growth Company and to share your ideas for improving Wirral.

Our programme from here

Public consultation and engagement will inform and help shape our plans for the future of Birkenhead.

Stage One (Summer 2019)

Birkenhead Pop Up Shop.

Focussed events with students at Wirral Metropolitan College, Birkenhead High School Academy and Wirral Youth Zone will also take place.

We will also start to undertake focus group meetings with local businesses, traders and the Chamber of Commerce.

Stage Two

Following completion of the early stage consultation activity, we will review and take on board your comments and feedback. We will use the information to inform and prepare initial draft plans for the future of Birkenhead Town Centre.

Stage Three

Public exhibitions will be held on the draft plans for Birkenhead Town Centre later in the year. These events will offer you the chance to learn more and provide feedback on emerging plans for the Town Centre. Once scheduled, these events will be advertised via Wirral Growth Company website, social media platforms, press and poster adverts across the borough.

Birkenhead: Today and Tomorrow

The town remains the historic industrial and commercial heart of the borough, centred around the coastal and inland docks system dating back to the 1800s.

The town's previous prosperity is best demonstrated by the historic commercial area around Hamilton Square, which has been identified as a nationally significant conservation area, with the largest collection of Victorian Grade I listed buildings outside London including Birkenhead Town Hall.

The steady decline of traditional port-related industries over the past 50 years has had an impact on the town, but the docks at Seacombe and North Birkenhead remain an important source of local employment and provide opportunities for a wide range of local business activity.

It is, however, clear that Birkenhead is no longer providing an attractive business offer for operators looking to take up office, digital and creative spaces.

Fundamental changes in the retail sector and the continuing decline of the high street, as well as competition from other centres and out-of-town facilities has effected the retail core of the Town Centre over recent years. Birkenhead's health as a town centre has declined markedly, it's vitality and viability has become compromised by factors such as high vacancy rates.

Appendix C: Comments Form

Freepost RTTH-BXKX-GRHA
Wirral Borough Council
PO Box 289
Wallasey
CH27 9FP

Feedback form:
Birkenhead Town Centre

Your Wirral
Your say

WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY

A joint venture between

WIRRAL

muse

Wirral Growth Company is a 50:50 joint venture partnership between Wirral Council and national urban regeneration specialists, Muse Developments.

Together, we are committed to deliver a long-term vision for regeneration, which benefits communities across the peninsula. A vision that brings forward genuine growth, with a focus on delivering spaces that change the way we live and work.

We want to ensure that the future plans for Birkenhead are informed by local people and reflect your ideas, concerns and hopes.

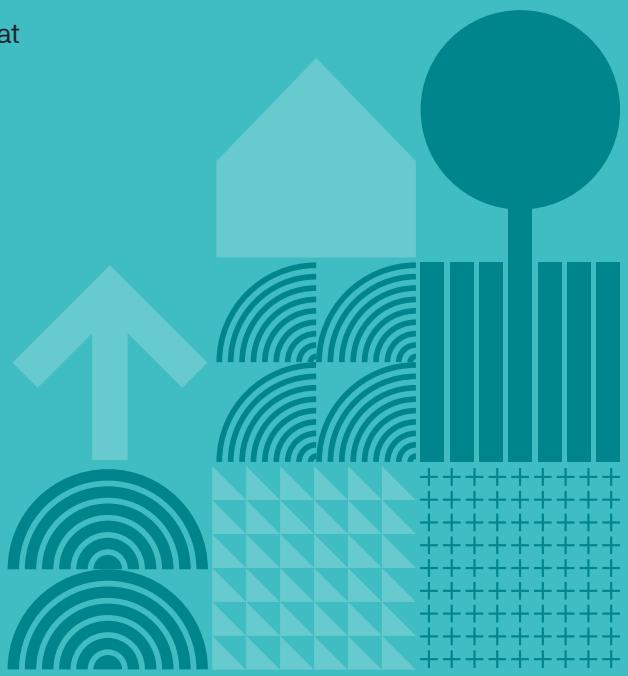
To achieve this, we need your insights and perspectives to shape our thinking.

You can also give your views online at www.wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk

We are keen to gather your views on the future of Birkenhead and would be grateful if you could spare a few minutes to record your comments opposite and return the form via freepost.

→

↑ Tear along this line and post back to us for free ↑



GDPR disclaimer:

The Wirral Growth Company is committed to respecting your privacy and to complying with all applicable data protection and privacy laws. The Wirral Growth Company, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Muse Developments and Barton Willmore will act in accordance with the Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Comments and information shared as part of this consultation will not be passed to any third parties, with the exception of the above-mentioned parties.

These details will only be retained for as long as necessary for the purposes of defining development projects to be brought forward by the Wirral Growth Company. By leaving any personal details you are giving consent to this use. If you wish to withdraw your consent, please email: hello@wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk

Your age:

☐ 0–17 ☐ 18–24 ☐ 25–34 ☐ 35–44
☐ 45–54 ☐ 55–64 ☐ 65+

How do you feel about Birkenhead Town Centre? (Circle where appropriate)

Negative Positive
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What do you like about Birkenhead?

☐ Shops ☐ Open Space
☐ Office space ☐ Food & Drink
☐ Leisure ☐ Services*
☐ Market ☐ Other
☐ Quality of Environment

(please write)

What don't you like about Birkenhead?

☐ Shops ☐ Open Space
☐ Office space ☐ Food & Drink
☐ Leisure ☐ Services*
☐ Market ☐ Other
☐ Quality of Environment

(please write)

What do you think Birkenhead Town Centre needs to make it a better place?

(please write)

Do you have any ideas for the future of Birkenhead Town Centre?

(please write)

*Services includes Post Office, banks, building societies, professional services (including health/medical services, estate agencies and employment agencies).

↑ Tear along this line and post back to us for free ↑

WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY

A joint venture between

WIRRAL

muse