

Local Plan Team
Wirral Council
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17 October 2024

BY EMAIL ONLY

RE: Consultation on the Wirral Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. The following consultation response is submitted by Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Property Services (NHSPS).

Background

Cheshire and Merseyside ICB commissions (plans, designs and purchases) many of the health services that local people use, including medicines, hospital care, urgent and emergency services, mental health care, GP services, Community Pharmacy, dentistry and general ophthalmology (eye care services) and many community services.

NHSPS is part of the NHS and is wholly owned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). NHSPS manages, maintains and improves NHS properties and facilities, working in partnership with NHS organisations to create safe, efficient, sustainable and modern healthcare environments. We partner with local NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and wider NHS organisations to help them plan and manage their estates to unlock greater value and ensure every patient can get the care they need in the right place and space for them.

Consultation response

Our detailed comments are set out below and refer to the Statement of Common Ground with Wirral Council completed in July 2023 and a subsequent email dated 11 January 2024 relating to text amendments recommended by the Local Plan Inspectors. These are attached to this email response for reference.

Main Modification MM18

We are pleased to note that Policy WS10 Infrastructure Delivery at Parts L and M incorporates the agreed changes as set out in the Statement of Common Ground. These modifications now ensure that on-site provision as well as financial contributions can be secured towards healthcare infrastructure.

The delivery of new and improved healthcare infrastructure is significantly resource intensive. The NHS as a whole is facing significant constraints in terms of the funding needed to deliver healthcare

services, and population growth from new housing development adds further pressure to the system. New development should make a proportionate contribution to funding the healthcare needs arising from new development. Health provision is an integral component of sustainable development – access to essential healthcare services promotes good health outcomes and supports the overall social and economic wellbeing of an area.

We also welcome the proposed wording of Policy WS10 that now enables sufficient flexibility in relation to the re-provision of services or facilities elsewhere, as agreed in the Statement of Common Ground. The ability to continually review the healthcare estate, optimise land use, and deliver health services from modern facilities is crucial. The health estate must be supported to develop, modernise, or be protected in line with integrated NHS strategies.

Main Modification MM19

We note that new paragraphs are proposed to be inserted after paragraph 3.230 relating to education and healthcare infrastructure provision. We can see that there are references to Clinical Commissioning Groups, which were abolished by the Health and Social Care Act 2022. Due to this, for accuracy and effectiveness, this should be amended throughout the Plan to refer instead to the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Main Modification MM67

We acknowledge that Main Modification 67, paragraph 10.40 onwards sets out the approach agreed in an email dated 11 January 2024 with the Council following recommendations from the Local Plan Inspectors. We therefore support the approach taken forward in the Local Plan in relation to the calculation of developer contributions towards healthcare infrastructure.

Conclusion

NHSPS thank Wirral Council for the opportunity to comment on the Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation and we trust our comments will be taken into consideration. If you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

NHSPS would be grateful to be kept informed of the progression of the Local Plan and any future consultations via our dedicated email address, town.planning@property.nhs.uk.

Yours faithfully,

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For and on behalf of NHS Property Services Ltd
