



**New Ferry Regeneration
ACTION PLAN
2008**

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Foreword

by Mark Anthony Craig, Chair New Ferry Regeneration Group

There is something special about New Ferry. Although sitting at the heart of the Merseyside conurbation, it has a feeling of not being too hemmed in by surrounding neighbourhoods. It is the last, southern-most residential area on the western bank of the River Mersey before the industries of Bromborough, Eastham and Ellesmere Port hog the river frontage. The wide expanse of the River Mersey to the eastern side of our community, with its incredible views over to Liverpool, and the presence of Port Sunlight Village within our neighbourhood to the west, put us in an enviable location.

We have a community which is going from strength to strength. Twenty years ago, New Ferry was a depressed area - though not as severely as our neighbours to the north in Tranmere and Birkenhead where more radical regeneration measures have been necessary. Today, our homes are highly sought after by first and second-time buyers who see New Ferry as an attractive and affordable location without the blight that has dragged other communities down. Some of the worst dereliction in our district centre has finally been removed, whilst we have more than the average amount of green open spaces within a short walking distance of all of our neighbourhoods.

Our community is home to one of the most successful monthly farmers markets in the country, we celebrate summer with our Fun Weekend, and come home on wintry nights to the warm and welcoming colours of our Christmas Lights.

New Ferry is a community which has chosen to have a voice that it wants to be heard. New Ferry Regeneration Action Group finds out what local residents and businesses want, and then tries to find who to ask the right questions to in an effort to make improvements to the services we receive, or to the environment in which we live.

This is the second Action Plan which the group has produced after listening to residents' concerns and wishes. We hope it will drive forward a vision that will keep New Ferry an attractive place to live and visit for all.



Above: Where New Ferry Road was bisected by the new Birkenhead to Chester Turnpike Road from the 1840's, a concentration of shops and houses started to grow. This scene, looking down New Ferry Road, shows the crossroads in the 1920's.

Right: an Edwardian family joins the crowd that has arrived to look at a strange vehicle in Bebington Road circa 1910. The wooden shed building behind the vehicle is today occupied by Sayers.



New Ferry - A Brief History

Until the 19th century, the Wirral peninsula had remained a rural backwater. Its lack of raw materials and undeveloped transportation network meant that it was ignored by the Industrial Revolution taking place elsewhere in the country. Even the presence of Liverpool, one of the biggest and fastest growing cities of the 18th and 19th centuries, only two miles away across the Mersey, had failed to have an effect.

Unofficial ferries had been operated by fishermen as a means of earning extra income, from the New Ferry shore, for centuries. Records from the 14th century include a reference by a man named Adam del Fere suggesting that a ferry operated from here.

However, in 1817, steam powered ferryboats came into service on both the Eastham and Birkenhead ferries. Suddenly, everything began to change. With land on the Cheshire shore of the Mersey far cheaper than in Liverpool, Wirral was ripe for immigration and development. Shipping magnates and merchants began to settle in the newly created town of Birkenhead where the population rose from 2,569 in 1831 to 8,223 by 1841. During that decade, the Chester to Birkenhead railway had opened, and the Chester turnpike road (today, the A41) had been rebuilt on a new, straighter course, crossing the River Dibbin on a new bridge at Bromborough Pool.

However, a number of the refugee merchants bypassed Birkenhead, travelling further afield to take up residence in other local townships, amongst them Bebington and the New Ferry and Port Sunlight locality which had been an area of rough land, marsh and fields. In the wake of the merchants came other people, shopkeepers, tradesmen, servants etc. to service their needs, resulting in a cluster of shops and houses appearing at the Toll Bar junction on New Chester Road where New Ferry Road continued towards the river where an unofficial ferry had operated over the centuries.

Through the early decades of the 19th century the river ferry itself had a somewhat chequered history, at times going out of service. All of this was to change in 1865 when a local man, a sugar refiner and immigrant from Liverpool named MacFie, built - at his own expense (£10,000) - a new iron pier



at New Ferry. From this pier, two steam ferryboats of the South End Ferry Company connected the rising Wirral settlement with South Liverpool via Harrington Dock, bringing day-trippers from Liverpool who came to visit the pleasure gardens which developed at Shorefields. It was from 1865 that the name New Ferry became applied to this area. The ferry operated until 1925 in which year a Dutch ship, enroute to Manchester, ran through the pier demolishing two spans and putting an end to the ferry service and subsequently killing off New Ferry's status as a tourist resort.

The development of New Ferry followed a pattern: the richer immigrants tended to settle in large houses with extensive gardens well away from the new Toll Bar junction, many even outside the township. Other, lesser, middle class immigrants settled in smaller, but still large villas, built closer to the centre. Some of these can still be seen in Stanley and Thorburn Roads.

This pattern of development continued to the point where, at the very centre, in the immediate vicinity of the Toll Bar in Woodhead, Olinda and Grove Streets, large numbers of poor quality, small, crowded, terraced houses were built. These were necessary to accommodate the workers who serviced the peripheral screen of larger houses and villas. At the junction, as the population grew, there arose a commercial centre to service the needs of rich and poor alike. In many cases, rather than their being purpose built, earlier, existing residential premises were converted into shops. New Ferry was becoming a natural, commercial centre.

The final factor in the establishment of the New Ferry District Sopping Centre came with the building of two local works. The first came in 1853 when Price's Patent Candle Company built Bromborough Pool Village: the second and most influential development came in 1888 when William Lever bought land within the bounds of New Ferry and built his soap works and Port Sunlight Village. The final factor in the rise of the Centre was the establishment of a system of road borne public transport late in the 19th century. With its already well established road links, New Ferry grew to serve the needs of an extensive area to the north, south and west.

Today, despite immense economic, social and demographic changes wrought during the course of the 20th century, New Ferry remains an important Local Centre. It is still served by public transport (but only just!) and it is still seen as being attractive to national retailers and bankers.

Left: When New Ferry's brief stint at being a tourist resort declined in the early 1930s, the Council built the Shorefields housing estate and a popular outdoor swimming pool. The pool closed in 1977, and in the late 1980s disappeared underneath the new estate of Wimpey houses.

Above: Edge the Butchers remains as one of the longest serving retailers. Behind the horse drawn trap can be seen the original gate that stood at the crossroads, and where travellers using the road between Chester and Birkenhead had to pay a toll.



Above: Arthur Waller and Mel Roberts in the NFRAG shop, circa 2001

Right: Despite having been pedestrianised in 1991, Bebington Road continues to be used as a rat run by inconsiderate motorists.



A Community in Action

How and why NFRAG was formed

By the late 1990s, a group of New Ferry residents had become agitated that for more than two decades they had witnessed the lion's share of central government and other funding for Wirral perennially being awarded to other communities, usually in the north. Every 5 or 10 years, yet another proposal for regenerating Birkenhead, New Brighton, Tranmere or Rock Ferry kicked into gear, with the excuse that these areas always had severe social and deprivation issues which necessitated urgent action to reverse urban decline and improve living conditions and job opportunities.

Boundaries had been drawn many years ago which defined areas classed as "deprived", and New Ferry always sat outside of these boundaries - its statistics being absorbed into those of the neighbouring and relatively affluent areas of Port Sunlight and Bromborough. Each decade, the excuse for giving money to Rock Ferry and other areas to the north was the same - albeit justified - but by the dawn of the 21st century the residents of New Ferry had had enough of being ignored.

The 1990's had proved the turning point for New Ferry. Some limited redevelopment work took place in the District Centre in 1991: a row of derelict shops were demolished, the Kwik Save store (now Somerfield) built, and the precinct was pedestrianised - although not entirely satisfactorily. Meanwhile, Asda and other stores on the new Croft Retail Park at Bromborough sapped the life out of New Ferry's breaking heart, and housebuilder Wimpey Homes struggled to sell its houses at Shorefields because of both a faltering economy and the new tip emerging at nearby Bromborough Dock.

Additional factors such as bus deregulation meant that private bus operators withdrew unprofitable services, cutting New Ferry off from some of the most vulnerable residents living in adjacent parts of Wirral who had traditionally shopped in the district centre



Long time resident of New Ferry, Mel Roberts, got together with his colleagues Arthur Waller and local businessman and former councillor Dave Gregory, and organised a series of public meetings in early 1999. Residents and local business people attended and confirmed what Mel, Arthur and Dave had suspected: that there was indeed a growing resentment within the community that New Ferry appeared to be “ignored” by both Wirral Borough Council and Central Government in favour of the latest regeneration ideas for Tranmere and New Brighton, or “keeping Heswall looking very tidy with its attractive flower beds” (as quoted by one disgruntled trader at the time).

Left: Boarded up shops, seen in increasing numbers in the 1990s gave a poor impression of New Ferry. Through the efforts of NFRAG in attracting private sector investment, these have now been renovated and are back in use.

It was from this resentment and disappointment that New Ferry Regeneration Action Group (NFRAG) was born in the summer of 2000. Its aim: to offer the people of the area a vehicle whereby they might voice their concerns about the decline of the area, and to explore ways whereby that decline might be reversed.

Above: Worn out pavements and illegal parking continue to anger local residents.

Armed with the evidence of local dissatisfaction, a Steering Committee made up of volunteers was formed; its members - then as today - offered a representative mix of residents with a variety of skills and experience from their careers in retailing, business, local service provision, voluntary work and local government.

The aims of the group were enshrined in its constitution which still includes:-

- to canvas local opinion and aspirations, and to subsequently act as a voice for the community of New Ferry.
- to seek by all legal means to bring to the notice of all Elected Representatives, Local and National Agencies, and in particular the Local Authority, the concerns of Residents and Business People of New Ferry regarding the Social, Economic and Environmental problems of New Ferry.
- to seek a more equitable distribution of all currently available funding and to seek to ensure that a fair portion is devoted to the regeneration of New Ferry.

From its very early days, local councillors and our elected Member of Parliament gave their willing and welcome support to the group. That support continues to this day, even though NFRAG remains non-political and wishes to reflect the aspirations of local residents and businesses rather than any political group. It should also be pointed out that we are a group of volunteers representing residents; we neither work for nor represent Wirral Borough Council.



Above: New pavements and street furniture installed along New Chester Road in 2007 were the result of NFRAG's recommendations in the first Action Plan being adopted by the Council as part of the A41 Corridor Strategy.

Right: Pollitt Square, Shorefields.



Impact of the “Action Plan 2000”

In the summer of 2000, NFRAG produced an Action Plan, and consulted with the local community via a temporary shop which was established in the shopping precinct with funding from Wirral Borough Council, and manned by Mel Roberts until his passing away in November 2002. The Action Plan set out the objectives of the group, and outlined a “Wish List” of aspirational projects, targets and actions which residents and business people had suggested.

The document proved to be an influential tool both for the group in getting itself noticed and listened to, but also to Wirral Borough Council who adopted and incorporated many of the Wish List items into the emerging A41 Corridor Strategy, whilst many of the general themes and suggestions have been incorporated into the Local Action Plan for the Bromborough and Eastham area of which New Ferry is part.

So successful was the Action Plan and well received that Wirral Borough Council decided to hold a series of regular progress meetings with NFRAG, chaired by local councillors and attended by senior council officers and other service providers. Together, a number of achievable schemes were identified and progressed, whilst the bulk of residents’ complaints regarding maintenance and service issues were ultimately directed to the new dedicated Streetscene service when it was established in 2004/5.

This unique partnership represented an example of local government embracing the aspirations of the local community, demonstrating how the local community can help to influence the agenda of local government where its own environment, needs and expectations are concerned.

Casting the Net

In addition to being successful in engaging with the local authority, NFRAG has also made close links with communities and groups immediately surrounding it, including Port Sunlight Residents Association and Bromborough Pool Village. Our brief has now been expanded to work with and in support of these communities which face similar problems such as a lack of resources to maintain them to as high a standard as they deserve, and ensure their continuing heritage and historical characters are protected from the pressures of 21st century unsympathetic, short-sighted and potentially damaging development pressures.

Below: NFRAG publishes and delivers four newsletters a year to all residents and businesses in New Ferry. Funding to do this since 2000 has come both from Wirral Borough Council and - latterly - the Community Initiatives Fund administered by the Bromborough & Eastham Area Forum.





Achievements since 2000

Back in 2000 when NFRAG published its first Action Plan, New Ferry was clearly in desperate need of some attention. The district centre, in particular, was showing signs of rapid deterioration - the community's heart was slowly dying.

By 2008, some of the dereliction in the district centre and along New Chester Road has finally begun to be tackled by an eager private sector wishing to capitalise on continually rising regional house prices. Some vacant properties have been recently refurbished as new homes, whilst there has even been new housing development on small sites at Egerton Road, the former Traveller's Rest on New Ferry Road, and Richmond Park (a former petrol station and vacant land off New Chester Road).

In the District Centre itself, despite losing the Job Centre, Aldi opened a new foodstore on Bebington Road in 2004, whilst in late 2007, Wetherspoons opened the John Masefield Pub on New Chester Road.

Over the last eight years, NFRAG has achieved a number of the targets which it set out in its first Action Plan. The group has also brought forward new targets and goals, or has otherwise supported others who have sought funding or recognition for achievements within and for the benefit of our community.

Significant achievements include:

- **CCTV Cameras installed in the District Centre**
One of the groups earliest wins was the introduction of four new cctv cameras. These give some protection to shoppers and businesses, and prove to be a useful tool in deterring some crime. Our future aim, however, is to have the scheme extended to cover other vulnerable areas of New Ferry, such as the bottom end of Bebington Road, Woodhead Street and Grove Street car parks, and New Ferry Park.
- **Wirral Farmers Market**
A major initiative was to establish a Farmers' Market in the Village Hall. The market has now been established since 2001, and as well as proving to be the most successful such event in the North West, in early 2006 it won a prestigious BURA Award for Excellence in Community Regeneration.

Left: Wirral Farmers' Market.

Above: CCTV camera outside Shillings Bar



Above: Christmas Lights made a welcome return to New Ferry in Winter 2005.



Right: Refurbishment of shops along New Chester Road completed in 2007. Compare with the same view on page 5.

- **Removal of Dereliction in the District Centre**

Although our vision to achieve a greater impact through major redevelopment of the core of the District Centre has not materialised, we have been more successful at removing the worst of the dereliction. When public funding for investment in empty buildings was clearly not available, NFRAG approached the private sector. As a result, investors have now moved into New Ferry and have been buying up the worst of our derelict properties and renovating them either as residential accommodation or shops.

- **Summer Fun in the Park**

In September 2005, NFRAG organised a fun weekend in New Ferry Park. This successful event, which coincided with the Farmers' Market, was themed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII. A 1940's re-enactment group was hired to put on displays and a battle in the park that was watched by over 500 residents. Over 3000 visitors to the Fun Weekend enjoyed a fun-fair and various stalls. The event was so successful that NFRAG now intends to make this an annual event.

- **Christmas Lights**

NFRAG put in a request for funding for Christmas lights which had been absent from the district centre for a number of years. Grants came from Wirral Farmers Market, Unilever, United Utilities and the Community Initiatives Fund, and were coupled with generous donations from a number of local businesses including Complete Plumbing, Discount Carpets, G+J Discount, Fresh Naturally, Baxters Butchers, Lloyds TSB, Callows, Port Sunlight Trailers, The Lunchbox Café, Buckleys Newsagents, Edge the Butcher. When installed, the lights drew many appreciative comments.

- **A41 Corridor Strategy Funding**

NFRAG has been involved in every discussion regarding the allocation of funding to New Ferry from the A41 Corridor Strategy monies. Our 2000 Action Plan was used by the Council to draw up a list of priority projects. Some £500,000 was been awarded to New Ferry, and work on the environmental improvements along New Chester Road were undertaken during 2007 and early 2008.

- **Woodhead Street Car Park**

Following numerous requests to sort out the potholes in the car park, the entire site was resurfaced in 2005.



Left: WWII re-enactors and their display at the Fun Weekend in September 2005.

Above: Ashley and Dean's Garden, Legh Road

- **United Utilities Water Treatment Works**

Following pressure from NFRAG residents and others, United Utilities finally admitted there were real problems with smells emanating from their treatment plant at New Ferry. So high were the numbers of incidents and complaints from the New Ferry plant that the company has increased its spending to £11 million on a programme of odour control remedial works - far more than any of its other plants in the north-west which suffer similar problems. These works to the New Ferry plant will be completed early in 2007.

- **Bromborough Dock Tip Park**

NFRAG has also been heavily involved in the designs for turning the former Bromborough Dock tip into a community park. We successfully requested that local schoolchildren should be consulted on the designs, and some elements will be incorporated into the masterplan that will be implemented between 2006 and 2008. The park will hopefully open in 2009/10.

- **New Ferry Butterfly Park**

The Butterfly Park (located next to the railway, to the rear of the Aldi superstore) continues to flourish as community-owned haven for wildlife and flora. A team of local volunteers continue to maintain the park as its founder, former NFRAG secretary Mel Roberts, would have wished.

- **Ashley and Dean's Garden, Legh Road**

Some of our residents took part in a training course run by the Wirral Voluntary & Community Sectors Network and funded by the European Community. As part of the course, they made a bid for and won £5000 from a special fund. This piece of neglected land was cleared of its dumped rubbish and weeds, and landscaped with gravel, a tree and some plants. Plaques dedicated to two local children, Ashley Evans and Dean Casey, who both sadly died from unrelated illnesses were unveiled by their families when it was opened in early 2007.

- **Port Sunlight - New Housing argument**

NFRAG supported Port Sunlight Residents and Conservation Society when they opposed the Village Trust and developer's proposals to build what amounted to flats at the southern end of the village. We allowed representatives from the residents' group to accompany NFRAG to our meeting with Council officers to put their views regarding the proposals across. The proposals from the developer were ultimately dropped in their original form and a less controversial design subsequently submitted.



Above: Shopping in the precinct



Right: New Ferry as viewed from across the River Mersey. Shorefields can be seen on the left, with Irvine Terrace on the right.

What Statistics Say about New Ferry

There is a lot of data about the New Ferry area now available on the website of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Below is some of the most relevant data about our community.

Statistical data is now collected by Super Output Area (SOA). The country is divided into 32,482 SOAs (see map opposite), of which six are within the New Ferry boundary: two in their entirety and two (Port Sunlight Village South, and Bromborough Pool) straddling into adjoining Bromborough communities. In the case of these latter areas, the figures shown on these pages have been estimated as a pro-rata proportion of the total SOA figures.

Importantly, the figures in the table below show us that Area C (Windsor Close - Port Sunlight North) has a much higher percentage of older people, many of whom will traditionally have lower car ownership and will therefore depend on New Ferry District Centre for their shopping needs. This higher than average percentage of older people may also partly explain the area having nearly double the national average levels of limiting long term illness - though this does not explain why every part of New Ferry is higher than the national average.

New Ferry: Population

	A	B	C	D	E*	F**	New Ferry	Wirral	England
Total Population	1,504	1,604	1,435	1,527	749	231	7,051	313,500	-
Males	712	750	653	758	348	113	3,336	-	-
Females	792	854	782	769	401	118	3,715	-	-
All Persons aged 0-15	368	341	180	303	120	49	1,361	-	-
All Persons aged 16-29	280	315	173	274	117	48	1,207	-	-
All Persons aged 30-44	387	290	357	365	151	58	1,608	-	-
All Persons 45-64 (Males) 45-59 (Females)	304	365	283	332	198	40	1,522	-	-
All Persons aged 65 and Over (Males), 60 and Over (Females)	165	293	442	253	163	36	1,352	-	-
% people with limiting long term illness	18.2%	27.7%	31.2%	20.9%	16.6%	19.0%	22.2%	22.5%	17.9%
% people of working age (16-74) with limiting long term illness	17.0%	24.7%	18.8%	17.6%	11.5%	15.4%	17.5%	17.9%	13.3%

Source: ONS, based on mid 2004 estimates *based on 50% of total SOA; ** based on 15.5% of total SOA



Left: Map showing New Ferry's Super Output Areas courtesy of Microsoft Visual Earth

Above: Cecil Road sits in one of the poorest neighbourhood in the country

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004

The IMD is way of measuring how poor communities across England and Wales are when compared to each other. The country's 32,482 Super Output Areas are ranked on a range of topics (called "domains") such as employment, health & disability, income and education. All areas are also awarded a 'Total Deprivation' ranking figure which averages the other individual domains. The most deprived or poorest neighbourhood in England has a rank of 1, so every area with a number less than 3,248 is in the worst 10% in the country.

		OVERALL RANK OF IMD	RANK OF INCOME SCORE	RANK OF EMPLOYMENT SCORE	RANK OF HEALTH DEPRIVATION AND DISABILITY SCORE	RANK OF EDUCATION SKILLS AND TRAINING SCORE	RANK OF BARRIERS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES SCORE	RANK OF CRIME AND DISORDER SCORE	RANK OF LIVING ENVIRONMENT SCORE
A	Stanley Road - Longfellow Drive	7257	7225	6623	4474	9895	32378	9437	3484
B	Esplanade - Merseybank	1822	2384	849	523	3507	31331	13545	5623
C	Windsor Close - Port Sunlight North	5446	8307	3462	2702	15095	31628	9359	767
D	Shorefields - Bolton Road East	8238	8744	7417	4513	9766	23557	16020	4645
E	Port Sunlight South	12307	14720	5948	6234	29457	28842	17032	8697
F	Bromborough Pool Village	12388	14423	13764	7694	12114	20145	21176	4016

Source: ONS NOTE: Housing Rank is better than average due to lower priced, more affordable housing found here than most other places nationally

Overall, from the above table, we can see that out of the 32,482 SOAs nationally, the Esplanade/Merseybank area is in the worst 6%, having particular problems with unemployment (in worst 3%) and health/disability (in worst 2%).

Prior to 2004, data had only been available at ward level. These larger ward level areas tended to mask localised pockets of deprivation which SOAs have now revealed. When the original NFRAG Action Plan was published in 2000, we had no way of proving that some parts of our community are just as impoverished as those to the north in the Tranmere/Rock Ferry area which - for the last twenty years - have received special funding from the likes of the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. We hope that these figures will now help to redress the balance in future years.

Overall, New Ferry is in the worst 15% deprived Super Output Areas nationally. Out of the 32482 SOAs, New Ferry averages a score of 4409. This score was based upon taking the average scores from the SOAs that cover the New Ferry boundary.

New Ferry: Economy & Employment										
	A	B	C	D	E*	F**	New Ferry	Wirral	North West	England
All people aged 16 to 74 (as a percent of all people):	1,052	1,157	1,074	1,160	572	160	5,175	221,013	4.83m	35.5m
Economically Active (as a percent of all people aged 16-74):										
Employed Full Time	43.4%	33.4%	40.0%	43.9%	44.4%	46.8%	41.9%	36.8%	38.8%	40.8%
Employed Part Time	12.5%	10.7%	8.9%	10.9%	11.9%	13.7%	11.4%	12.6%	11.9%	11.8%
Self employed	3.6%	3.7%	4.1%	3.9%	6.3%	2.7%	4.0%	5.9%	7.1%	8.3%
Unemployed	4.3%	5.7%	3.1%	3.3%	2.8%	3.9%	3.8%	4.3%	3.6%	3.3%
Full-time Student	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	2.2%	1.8%	2.2%	1.8%	2.1%	2.5%	2.6%
Economically Inactive (as a percent of all people aged 16-74):										
Retired	10.5%	12.8%	21.9%	13.1%	19.0%	12.1%	14.9%	15.8%	14.3%	13.5%
Student	3.4%	3.2%	2.6%	2.5%	3.3%	3.5%	3.1%	4.0%	4.6%	4.7%
Looking after home/family	7.0%	10.6%	4.7%	6.5%	4.9%	5.9%	6.6%	6.6%	6.1%	6.5%
Permanently sick/disabled	10.5%	14.5%	10.2%	9.0%	4.3%	6.4%	9.1%	8.7%	7.7%	5.3%
Other	3.1%	3.5%	3.3%	4.5%	1.2%	2.7%	3.0%	3.0%	3.2%	3.1%
All People of Working Age Claiming a Key Benefit (Persons, Aug 04)	24.0%	36.0%	21.0%	22.0%	10.0%	15.0%	21.3%	22.0%	18.0%	14.0%
Job Seekers (Persons, Aug 04)	3.0%	5.0%	2.0%	3.0%	1.0%	2.0%	2.7%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incapacity Benefits (Persons, Aug04)	13.0%	21.0%	12.0%	11.0%	5.0%	8.0%	11.7%	12.0%	10.0%	7.0%

Source: Dept of Work and Pensions, ONS, based on 2001 census data *based on 50% of total SOA; ** based on 15.5% of total SOA

Although slightly more New Ferry residents are in full time employment than the national average, the numbers of people not in work claiming benefits are higher than average. However, the above table shows that Area B (Esplanade/Mayfields) has fewer people in work at early twice the national unemployment rate, and higher levels of benefits dependency nearly 2.5 times the national average. Areas C and E show higher levels of retired people living in Port Sunlight Village.

New Ferry – Education & Skills (2005-06)								
	A	B	C	D	E*	F**	Wirral	England
Key Stage 2: % pupils achieving Level 4 or above, 2004-5								
Reading	n/a	n/a	60%	67%	81	n/a	81%	79%
Maths	81%	n/a	n/a	81%	n/a	85%	77%	76%
Science	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	89%	87%
Key Stage 3: % pupils achieving Level 5 or above, 2004-5								
English	59%	n/a	n/a	65%	n/a	75%	76%	73%
Maths	74%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	88%	78%	77%
Science	67%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	71%	73%	72%
% Pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grade passes at GCSE or equivalent, 2004-5								
All pupils	40%	52%	n/a	47%	n/a	52%	57%	58%
Males	35%	50%	67%	n/a	n/a	n/a	51%	54%
Females	46%	55%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	64%	63%

Sources: Department for Children, School & Families: ONS Insufficient data to give accurate New Ferry average

New Ferry's children do not perform quite as well as those elsewhere in Wirral, though the Council is working to address this problem through a range of measures.

New Ferry: Housing										
	A	B	C	D	E*	F**	New Ferry	Wirral	North West	England
Total number of homes	652	828	907	777	340	100	3,604	-	-	-
Council Tax banding										
Dwelling stock in Council Tax band A	44%	90%	23%	89%	#	#	-	40%	43%	25%
Dwelling stock in Council Tax band B	38%	9%	38%	10%	#	#	-	21%	19%	19%
Dwelling stock in Council Tax band C+	18%	1%	39%	1%	#	#	-	39%	38%	56%
Tenure										
Owner occupied	73%	50%	53%	75%	#	#	-	72%	69%	69%
Rented from Housing Association/RSL	14%	36%	26%	11%	#	#	-	17%	20%	19%
Rented from Private Landlord or other	13%	14%	21%	14%	#	#	-	11%	11%	12%
Source: Tenure based on National Statistics, Apr01, *based on 50% of total SOA; ** based on 15.5% of total SOA #Not quantifiable because of boundary straddling two separate neighbourhoods										

New Ferry has a higher than average number of more affordable and keenly priced homes in Council Tax Band "A", which makes our community popular with first time buyers. Every so often, residents are targeted by estate agents' leaflets asking them to consider selling because of the high demand for homes at the lower end and middle of the price range.

The high percentages of Council Tax Band A properties in Areas B (Esplanade-Mayfields) and D (Shorefields-Bolton Road East) is evident, but whereas there is a high proportion of rented accommodation in B, area D has a greater number of owner occupied properties popular with first time homebuyers and those seeking affordable accommodation to purchase.

The table on Housing cannot show true figures for Areas E and F because of the disparity between the two types of communities within these SOAs - part of which are inside the New Ferry boundary, and part outside. However, it might be reasonable to assume that the properties and therefore percentages in Area E (Port Sunlight South) will be similar to those in Area C (Windsor Close-Port Sunlight North).

New Ferry: Health							
Mortality from circulatory disease	Persons <75		Persons >75		Persons all ages		
New Ferry	127.3		79.4		90.6		
Bebington and West Wirral PCT	82.6		71.8		74.4		
Birkenhead and Wallasey PCT	118.7		82.2		91.5		
England and Wales	100.0		100.0		100.0		
Mortality from all Neoplasms	Persons <75		Persons >75		Persons all ages		
New Ferry	143.3		88.9		118.1		
Bebington and West Wirral PCT	100.1		100.8		100.4		
Birkenhead and Wallasey PCT	129.9		118.4		124.4		
England and Wales	100.0		100.0		100.0		
Mortality from All Causes	Females <75	Females >75	Males <75	Males >75	Persons <75	Persons >75	Persons all ages
New Ferry	137.8	93.7	142.3	103.1	140.4	97.3	111.7
Bebington and West Wirral PCT	91.3	94.1	89.6	93.9	90.3	94.0	92.8
Birkenhead and Wallasey PCT	128.3	111.7	132.2	112.4	130.6	112.0	118.7
England and Wales	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Source: Wirral PCT, 2005 Neoplasms = New and abnormal growth of tissue, which may be benign or cancerous							

Although the various Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) across Wirral have now merged to form the Wirral PCT, the figures in the table above from 2005 show that the incidents of circulatory disease and neoplasm amongst New Ferry residents are significantly higher than the rest of Wirral and well above the national average.



Above: Dumped rubbish behind vacant shops in New Chester Road



Right: Illegal parking on New Ferry Road continues despite frequent visits by traffic wardens and rising numbers of tickets issued. A major frustration for the wardens is the number of disabled parking badges on display - meaning they are powerless to act.

What are the BIG ISSUES in New Ferry today?

Despite the successes as listed in the previous section, some aspects of New Ferry continue to give concern.

In the summer of 2005, NFRAG conducted a survey of residents and businesses to ascertain the general feeling about our community, environment and services. 3000 questionnaires were sent out with the regular newsletters. Whilst only 110 were returned (3.3%), it was clear that there were some common themes which were highlighted. A summary of the results is reproduced here.

Decline of the District Centre

The main criticism remains that the district centre continues to look shabby. A significant proportion of commercial premises are suffering from upper floor vacancy and dereliction following years of little or no investment in maintenance. This is down to either building owners not being interested, or retailer/owners themselves only just making enough to live on.

The pedestrianised precinct is still used as a rat run by taxis and other inconsiderate drivers; the brick pavers have been lifted countless times by statutory undertakers who show little care and consideration when relaying them. Some of the shops are rented by short-term traders who appear for a few weeks selling dubiously cheap or second-hand products before disappearing into the twilight; and too many shops remain empty with their metal shutters permanently down.

Trading in the centre has been seriously affected in recent years with the withdrawal of the Job Centre to some distant rural outpost called Bromborough, the more recent loss of the HSBC Bank in 2007, and a saga of ghostly bus services appearing and disappearing with alarming consequences for older and less prosperous citizens being frustrated in their attempts to reach the district centre using such unreliable public transport.



Despite having free car parks, a minority continue to park on double yellow lines along New Chester Road and New Ferry Road, and in the tight residential streets of Legh, Egerton and Winstanley Roads - causing obstructions for local residents and pedestrians

Environmental Issues

Although the Council has introduced its Streetscene service which now acts as a co-ordinated response to many environmental problems, fly-tipping along the shoreline and in back alleys of older terraced properties continue to cause a nuisance for residents.

Complaints persist about the state of New Ferry's pavements, from the age of broken slabs to the amount of litter blowing around on them. The litter problem persists despite new litter bins (featuring posters designed by the children of Grove Street School) having been installed in the precinct.

Parking and Road Safety

Speeding traffic remains a major concern for many residents, particularly those with young children. The lack of traffic calming measures on certain roads astonishes many residents - particularly when they see speed humps, chicanes and 20mph speed limits being introduced in other areas. Requests for traffic calming in Longfellow Drive, New Ferry Road and along New Chester Road following some recent fatalities have all remained unfulfilled, as has an improved pedestrian crossing linking Port Sunlight Village with the district centre and the problem of peak time congestion on Grove Street.

Although spiralling costs led to the cancellation of the long-promised Homezone scheme for Winstanley Road and Salisbury Drive, a scaled down cosmetic version with traffic calming measures was agreed as a replacement for 2008. A residents only parking scheme - often asked for - is still unlikely, whilst traffic wardens are still failing to prevent cars parking illegally along New Ferry Road or from driving down the pedestrianised precinct.

Youths and Anti-social Behaviour

Changes in social attitudes over the last two decades have seen a general deterioration in people's regard and respect for one another, as well as for property. Economic forces have eroded the levels of public service, in particular, policing and maintenance of the general fabric and infrastructure of our communities.

Left: Peak time traffic congestion at the junction of Grove Street and New Chester Road

Above: Residents of Sefton Road have the problem of cars parking in their narrow road to visit the nearby health centre. Not only do residents have their drives blocked, the damage to the unprotected park edge is considerable and a daily eyesore



Above: *Speciality shops like Edge the Butcher have loyal customers who come from great distances.*

Right: *Aldi arrived in 2004 on the site of the former Rialto Cinema. Its design was altered to be more sympathetic to the architectural style of Port Sunlight Village (opposite) following objections from residents to the plans originally submitted for approval. The store is so popular that in 2007 it was extended.*



As in common with every urban area in the country, in New Ferry we have seen the emergence of a whole new class of citizen blighted by unemployment and/or low pay. Amongst these people there is an attitude of despair, low self esteem and a tendency to express their frustration via acts of vandalism, lack of respect, of social duty and awareness and, unfortunately of antagonism to authority and of their more fortunate peers in general.

There remains some criticism that both Registered Social Landlords and private sector landlords deliberately allow so-called “neighbours from hell” - often displaced from other areas - to be deposited into communities such as New Ferry where they cause problems for existing, long term residents. Fortunately, however, in New Ferry this problem is not as prevalent as elsewhere in Merseyside where it has caused significant social and subsequent environmental blight in some areas.

Anti-social behaviour has risen to the top of both the local and national agendas. New Ferry has some problems with juvenile gangs drinking alcohol in New Ferry Park and on other open spaces, some drug abuse in dark back alleys, quadbikes and unlicensed motorbikes causing a nuisance, and petty vandalism to bus shelters all causing annoyance to local residents.

The subways underneath the bypass which splits the community down the middle are still periodically plagued with abusive gangs of youths who also use them as toilets.

However, none of these problems above are worse than suffered elsewhere on Merseyside, where police and other Council resources are also stretched in trying to tackle them. In particular, Wirral Outreach Youth Service has been making efforts to establish contact with youths congregating in New Ferry Park and to talk to them about their problems and reasons for causing disturbances or damage. In some cases, and where funds allow, they can even help to channel the youths’ behaviour into more constructive pursuits.

The Actual Results of the Survey

On the following pages are the actual results, showing the percentages of people who commented on particular topics and issues.



About the respondents

- Nearly half the respondents were aged 45-69, with only 2 respondents being aged under 25. This was a little disappointing in that we would have welcomed more comments from younger people.
- One third of respondents were retired; one third in full time employment. Most of the rest were in part-time jobs.

Overall feelings about New Ferry

- 45% thought New Ferry was okay, but may want to move elsewhere in the future.
- 30% thought New Ferry was a great place to live and wished to stay indefinitely.
- 18% thought they may wish to leave at some stage
- The remaining 7% wanted to leave as soon as possible

About the District Centre

- Surprisingly, 50% of people did their main shopping in New Ferry's district centre, whilst 47% only shop in New Ferry occasionally (3% never shop in New Ferry at all).
- Aldi, Somerfield and Iceland were - by far - the most popular stores in New Ferry which attracted shoppers for their keen prices. These were followed in popularity by Woolworths, greengrocers, butchers, DIY stores and the Post Office.
- The shops which people most wanted to see more of in New Ferry were (in order): decent clothes shops, decent shoe shops, decent fishmongers, and more craft shops.
- 82 respondents quoted the **derelict shops** as being bad for New Ferry; 75 complained about the **litter**; 73 criticised the **lack of quality shops**; and 42 were concerned about the **state of the pavements**. Other negative features were: too many pubs, too many junk shops, too many betting shops and too many cars still using the precinct.

The Positives

- When asked what was good about New Ferry, 53 said "**the park**", 47 said "**the people**"; 27 said "**the street lighting at night**"; 27 said "**the choice of new housing**" and 16 said "**the socialising**".

Left: Complaints continue about junk shops placing their wares over the precinct or pavements. The HSBC Bank to the top left has since closed.

Above: The poor condition of the Thorburn Road underpass, where some residents also complain of abuse from teenage gangs



Above: One of the infamous white vans that has plagued the lives of Egerton Road residents for years.

Right: New Ferry has a problem with teenage drinking and rowdy behaviour, particularly late at night..



The Negatives

- 45% of respondents said the **roadway and pavements** in their streets were maintained in reasonable condition. However, 35% thought the opposite. The main concerns raised were:
 - ❖ Neighbours dumping rubbish in alleys / passages
 - ❖ Dog mess on streets and open spaces
 - ❖ Lack of pedestrian crossing on Boundary Road between Port Sunlight and shops
 - ❖ Salisbury Drive / Windsor Close - bin lorries not able to empty bins some weeks
 - ❖ Poor condition of subways - graffiti and urine
 - ❖ Flooding/puddling at end of Onslow Road
 - ❖ Post office workers and visitors parking in Kempton Road - preventing residents parking there
 - ❖ Broken bottles/glass at end of Napier Road and Easton Road/Esher Road
 - ❖ Litter and rubbish blowing down streets away from the New Ferry Road "R" shop
 - ❖ Litter bins never get emptied often enough - particularly along New Ferry Road outside R shop
 - ❖ Vandalism and broken glass in New Ferry Park play area
- 70% of respondents were concerned about **youths and anti-social behaviour** in the area, including the following specific complaints:
 - ❖ Youths drinking alcohol
 - ❖ Youth gangs gathering outside R Shop in New Ferry Road pestering people to buy them drink
 - ❖ Youths on motor-scooters / motorbikes / quad bikes (all of which are not legal to drive on the streets!!!)
 - ❖ Youths hanging around subways abusing passers-by
 - ❖ Youths hanging around in back entries (drinking and drugs, Napier Road) - in bus shelters (Shorefields) and drinking/drugs in New Ferry Park
 - ❖ Youths kicking footballs at garages - Salisbury Drive; and at shutters in the precinct
 - ❖ Vandalism of cars - Scythia Close, Brownlow Road
 - ❖ Vandalism of recycling facilities in Woodhead Street car park
 - ❖ Rowdy noise at closing time from revellers leaving Shillings and The Little House (the latter no longer being a problem since its recent demolition!)
 - ❖ Youths damaging cash machines in the precinct



- **Other complaints** included:-

- ❖ More needed for youths to keep them occupied
- ❖ Most complained about parking problem is New Ferry Road near New Chester Road
- ❖ Traffic wardens too keen to issue tickets to residents parked outside their own homes (Legh Road, Egerton Road, Marquis Street, Winstanley Road) - but not targeting non-residents enough, particularly the white vans!
- ❖ Parking problems in above streets preventing bin lorries getting through, also at Beta and Windsor Close
- ❖ Why not open up Stanley Road to relieve traffic congestion at Grove Street/New Chester Road (a suggestion which Stanley Road residents themselves remain totally opposed to)
- ❖ Private rented sector allowing too many problem families to live here (landlords need regulating)
- ❖ Too many front gardens look like scrapyards with piles of junk and toys left there for weeks/months on end
- ❖ Litter problems around Village Hall / Grove Street worse when majorettes visit!!!!
- ❖ Speeding traffic on New Chester Road, New Ferry Road, Longfellow Drive, Bebington Road

Left: New Ferry is blessed with superb views of the River Mersey and Liverpool's entire waterfront.

Above: The Esplanade - popular housing with dramatic riverside views

Redeeming Features

Despite the problems highlighted, New Ferry does still have some important redeeming, positive features on which it should be possible to capitalise to the advantage of the community:-

- It is reasonably well served by public transport, with a Merseyrail station at Bebington, and fairly frequent (although sometimes seasonally erratic) bus services connecting us with many areas of the Wirral
- The A41, despite its problems, offers easy and quick access to the M53 motorway as well as to surrounding areas.
- A part of the community enjoys a location adjacent to the River Mersey, with impressive views across the estuary to the City of Liverpool and its waterfront.
- Port Sunlight Village, Wirral's major tourist attraction, as its closest neighbour.
- A district centre that is still hanging on, and managing to slowly attract new businesses such as Aldi, and Wetherspoons, whilst keeping its speciality shops such as Edge the Butchers and Runners Sports Shop.



Above: Winning CCTV for the district centre was an early victory for NFRAG



Right: Somerfield took over the Kwik Save Store in 2006 - but concerns about its poor range of products remain.

The District Centre

Down, but not out

Until 30 years ago, New Ferry had a thriving district centre. Originally developed in the early 19th century at an important crossroads on the New Chester Road and Bebington Road/New Ferry Road, it provided a range of shops and services that pulled in customers from much further than its own community boundaries.

However, the latter quarter of the 20th century saw huge changes in the employment market on Merseyside, and New Ferry was one of many urban areas which saw urban decline setting in as people moved elsewhere to find work, leaving behind an increasingly aging and lower paid population with less money to spend. The greatest blow to New Ferry's district centre came in 1990 when the Croft Business Park was developed in nearby Bromborough, and its Asda store sucked the very life out of New Ferry's traditional core.

Even the arrival of a new Kwik Save (now Somerfield) store and a less than successful pedestrianisation of the Bebington Road precinct in 1991 failed to halt the slow decline. In recent years, New Ferry has also lost its job centre and another of its banks, with just one bank - Lloyds TSB - still hanging on.

Particularly over the last ten years, small businesses have comeand failed. Residents have been wary of shops appearing selling low quality or second-hand goods, only for them to disappear within months or even weeks, adding to the blank façade of metal shutters permanently down.

But the story is not without some glimmers of hope. New Ferry is the district centre which has refused to die:-

- It has managed to keep its post office, Citizens Advice Bureau, Iceland, Somerfield, Woolworths, Ethel Austin, Rightway DIY and a number of cafes and other traditional, family run businesses;
- CCTV arrived to keep a watch on the centre in 2001, helping to cut certain types of crime and boosting a feeling of security to both residents and visitors;
- some of its specialist shops have remained and are well renowned in the area - Edge the Butcher and Runners Sports, electrical and computer specialists, and Motorvation are just some examples of shops who still attract customers from both within New Ferry and from much further afield;



- Aldi opened a new store in 2004 (extended in 2007);
- Wetherspoons invested in one of the longer-term derelict buildings to open a new family restaurant at the end of 2007;
- prompted by action from NFRAG, private investors have stepped in to remove the worst of the long term dereliction by either refurbishing vacant shops or turning them into homes for rent;
- the long awaited environmental improvements to New Chester Road finally materialised in early 2007 with new railings and pavings.

Left: The recently opened John Masefield (Wetherspoons) restaurant

Above: New pavements were installed along New Chester Road in 2007

Who needs a traditional District Centre?

Rising car ownership has given many of us considerable flexibility to choose where, how and how often we wish to shop. But not everyone can afford to own a car, and with the current trend of discouraging car use through higher taxes, insurance - and maybe congestion charging in the future - those on lower incomes will forever have to rely on public transport.....or their feet.

But carrying home a weekly (or even monthly shop) either on foot or by public transport is not convenient. Those on lower incomes need to shop for smaller amounts more frequently, and therefore will always need to have sufficient choice and quality of goods much nearer to their own doorstep.

It is now recognised that when shops close down in traditional district centres, those which remain face less competition. In some cases the quality of produce can deteriorate as traders get away with selling goods which they can off-load cheaply to customers who have little choice. The well-established Wirral Farmer's Market has made some significant headway in providing improved quality and choice of goods, which would otherwise have disappeared completely in this area.

Small traders also need New Ferry. They need somewhere to start up new businesses, earn a living and potentially grow.

Last, but not least, Port Sunlight Village needs New Ferry District Centre. The district centre is part of Port Sunlight's history; the Port Sunlight community relied on it for its services. It is a shame that today the district centre looks like a poor relation to the village, but with a little forethought and tender loving care - not least an injection of investment cash - New Ferry District Centre could be tidied up and once again be linked closely to the village and what it has to offer as the Wirral's largest tourist attraction.



Above: The HSBC closed its doors in summer 2007, leaving New Ferry with just one bank.

Right: Many of the buildings in the core of the shopping centre are over 100 years old and not particularly worthy specimens of their era

What does New Ferry lack (or have too many of)?

Residents and visitors have frequently expressed concern about the deterioration which has been evident in recent years, but the most common complaints are:

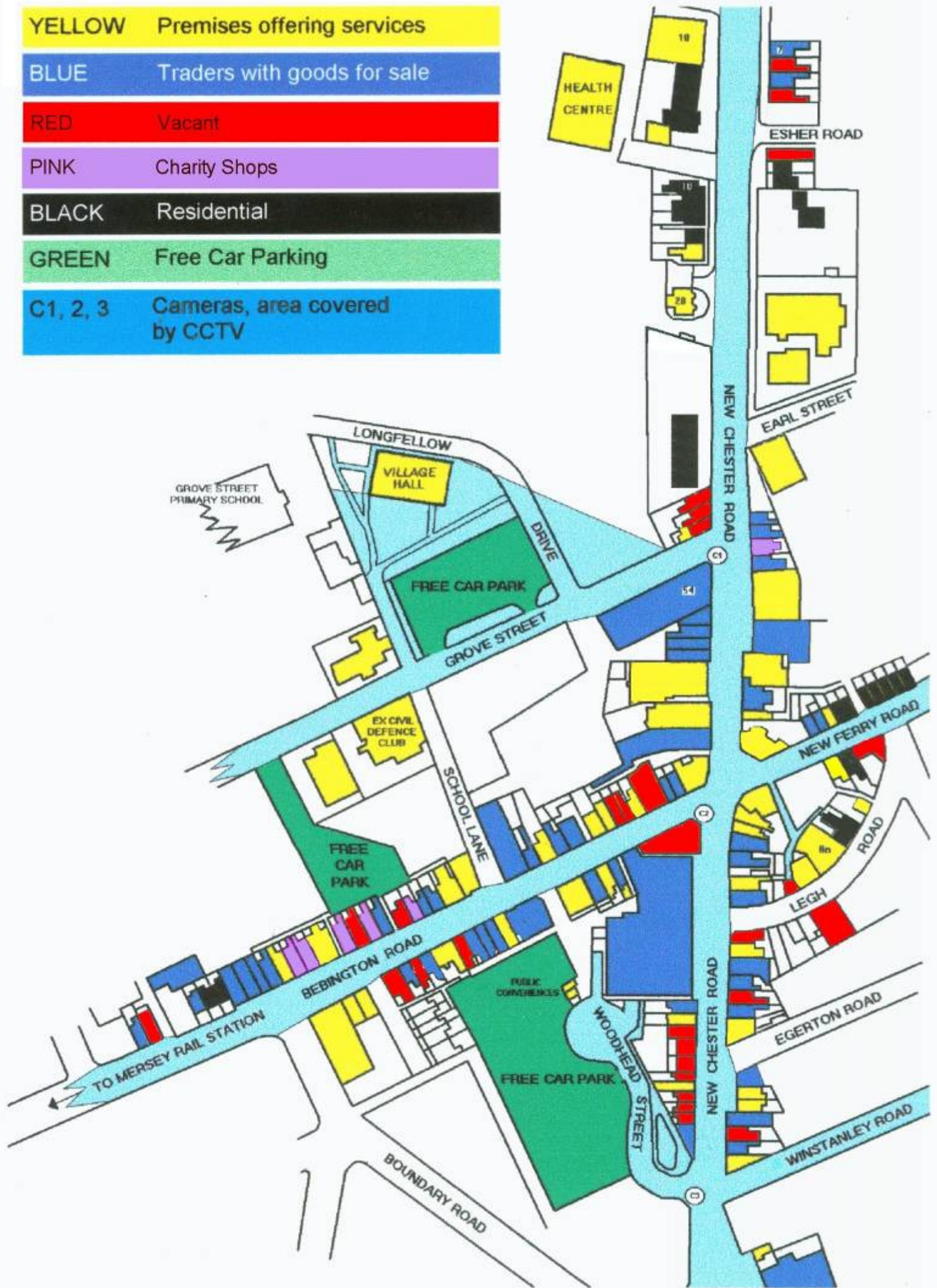
- Loss of banks;
- Lack of “quality” shops for such items as clothes and shoes;
- Too many “pound” or cheap shops, including ones which open for short periods of time (including fireworks shops in winter - for which New Ferry seems to be Wirral’s capital!)
- Too many charity shops (although they need somewhere to operate in support of their causes!);
- Too many pubs and betting shops;
- Not enough activity after dark;
- Lack of sufficient parking at peak times;
- Too much illegal parking on double yellow lines causing obstructions to traffic & hazard to pedestrians;
- Speed of traffic driving along New Chester Road;
- Traffic still using the pedestrianised section.

The failings of the district centre are obvious, and have contributed to the feeling of neglect:

- Most shops in New Ferry were originally built as houses and are now over 100 years old;
- Various repairs and extensions have been undertaken over the decades, but not enough quality maintenance;
- Upper floors are mostly vacant or used for long-term storage (with boxes piled in windows);
- Floor plates of the buildings are too small for modern stores wanting flexibility;
- A poor quality environment in the precinct - worn out brick pavings and planters that usually grow weeds instead of flowers;
- Litter remains a noticeable problem, despite the valiant efforts of our resident street sweeper.

The plan on the following page shows a survey of uses of the buildings within the core of the district centre as at November 2007.

YELLOW	Premises offering services
BLUE	Traders with goods for sale
RED	Vacant
PINK	Charity Shops
BLACK	Residential
GREEN	Free Car Parking
C1, 2, 3	Cameras, area covered by CCTV





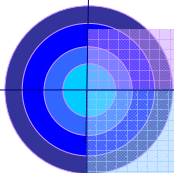
Above: Illustration of how the best of New Ferry's older shops could be refurbished - perhaps to reflect their proximity to Port Sunlight Village

Right: An example of how redevelopment of some existing shops with a new build scheme featuring improved ground floor retail with apartments over could look in New Ferry.

What does New Ferry District Centre need?

Despite having some buildings of merit, New Ferry has far too many older, worn out buildings which are no longer of any value to modern-day retailers. They were built and adapted as far as possible to cater for shopping patterns of 100 years ago, and cannot cope with the requirements of 21st century retailers and customers. Some of the older properties still lack basic amenities such as toilets for staff.

Traders who remain in these buildings often have to work in cramped conditions as they squeeze in as much of a range of stock to provide as much choice for their customers as they can manage.



ACTION POINT TARGETS - New Ferry District Centre

Specifically, the district centre needs:-

- To encourage greater involvement in the future of the District Centre by the major private sector players, including to establish the aspirations and long term plans of the likes of Somerfield, Iceland, Woolworths and Ethel Austins - and work with them to agree a way in which New Ferry can be moved forward;
- Funding for façade improvements to existing shops to improve their general appearance;
- New, cleaner shops for the 21st century with a range of unit sizes to suit small and medium sized traders;
- Possible encouragement of building owners to convert vacant upper floors to residential or for investors to consider demolition and rebuild with higher quality ground floor shops with residential apartments for sale on upper floors;
- A better quality environment, particularly in the precinct and on New Chester Road beyond the area recently refurbished by the A41Corridor Strategy;
- Better quality car parking provision, particularly Grove Street;
- A public presence after dark;
- An extension to the CCTV scheme into certain key areas not covered by the current provision, particularly Olinda Street and Grove Street, behind the Bebington Road shops;
- A major rethink of backwater areas such as Olinda Street is seriously needed;
- More active marketing of the potential within New Ferry for new businesses to cluster together and benefit from each other's presence and pulling power. This could potentially be a "District Centre Manager" employed by Wirral Borough Council who is tasked with championing all the borough's district centres outside Birkenhead's main centre;
- The above could involve promoting New Ferry as a centre for antique or art & craft shops.
- Improvements are needed to the Boundary Road/New Chester Road junction. A filter lane for southbound traffic wishing to turn right into Boundary Road needs to be considered, perhaps with traffic lights installed. Pedestrian crossing facilities at or near to this junction also need to be reviewed: perhaps a pedestrian island for people crossing the wide mouth of Boundary Road could be provided. The problems at this junction are further complicated by the presence of the entrance/exit road from Woodhead Street.



Tourism and Leisure

Back in 2000, New Ferry had little claim to fame, being the much poorer but closest neighbour of Wirral's tourist magnet, Port Sunlight Village. In late 2007, it was revealed that 50% of tourist passengers from the first three cruise ships which called at the new Liverpool Cruise Liner Facility visited Port Sunlight Village. The Village also attracts tourists from across the region - yet - very few probably consider crossing Boundary Road to pay our district centre a visit. Neither will they be aware of one of New Ferry's greatest assets: its outstanding view across the river Mersey back towards the City of Liverpool.

The foreshore itself has a very different status to that which it had in 2000. A major feeding/wintering site for birds including pintail ducks and black-tailed godwits, the site was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 2002. Obviously, the site is very popular with bird-watchers, and will be further enhanced when the former tip site at Bromborough Pool to the south opens as a major new waterfront park in 2009/2010.

Unfortunately, the long held aspiration to open the Wirral East Coast Heritage & Nature Trail between Rock Park and Eastham Woods, of which New Ferry's shoreline would play a major part, has not been realised. But it is hoped that by the time the tip site park opens, work may have started to open up this route for the enjoyment of residents.

An early NFRAG success was the establishment of the Wirral Farmers' Market in the Village Hall in 2001. This monthly event attracts 1,500 visitors from across Wirral and further afield from Cheshire and even Liverpool. One of the most successful markets of its type in the North West, it has won a number of major awards including a British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) Award in 2006.

In more recent times, New Ferry Park has returned to the forefront of New Ferry life, with annual fun days or weekends having been established in 2005 to bring the community together for fun listening to local music, enjoying the fun fair or and other attractions which NFRAG has managed to entice.

With summer taken care of, NFRAG has also successfully restarted the annual display of Christmas lights which offer a warm welcome on winter nights to both residents and passing visitors.

Left: New Ferry's foreshore is now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Above: one of the new welcome signs on the southern approach to New Ferry, erected in 2007



Above: The Village Hall plays host to the market every month throughout the year. Its first year saw a band playing outside.

Right: Wirral Farmer's Market offers a variety of foodstuffs and other goods



Wirral Farmers' Market

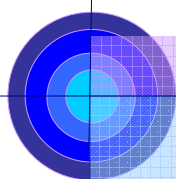
Wirral Farmers' Market was set up in 2001 by NFRAG, and it is now independently run by a group of volunteers from the local community.

It is considered one of the best in the North West with more than 35 producers attending every month at the village hall in New Ferry. The market, which is held on the second Saturday of every month, was set up with a three-fold aim to help regenerate New Ferry, provide sustainable source of healthy produced for people in the area and to help producers and farmers.

In 2004 Wirral Farmers Market set up a Community Grants scheme and has provided funding for projects in New Ferry such as local schools and community groups. The funding has included transport for children on a summer playscheme to have a day out, storage cupboards for a visually impaired group, a book stand and books for Stick'n'Step, recycling bins for New Ferry Butterfly Park and a new garden scheme for Grove Street Primary School. The market has also contributed to the New Ferry Fun Weekend held in the park since 2005, and the purchase of Christmas lights which adorn the precinct over the winter festive season.

In January 2006 the market won a prestigious British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) Award. BURA Charitable Trust Awards celebrate best practice in community-led regeneration, and chose Wirral Farmers' Market as outstanding success inspired and driven by local people, raising community spirit and improving the quality of life of local people.

Despite the market's undoubted success at bringing visitors to New Ferry every month, there has only been some limited success in attracting them to the existing district centre. It is acknowledged that the district centre itself needs environmental improvement and better marketing to both advertise existing - and help to capture more - specialised niche retailers.



ACTION POINT TARGETS - Wirral Farmers' Market

IMMEDIATE:

- Farmers' Market Committee and Wirral Borough Council to work with NFRAG on exploring all available opportunities for using the market as a springboard to advertise businesses in New Ferry District Centre.



New Ferry Park

In recent years, New Ferry Park has re-emerged as one of the major catalysts for community spirit building. The annual Fun Weekends, which started in 2005, were intended to recreate the community pride which was evident in the early half of the 20th century when the park was the focus of the annual Port Sunlight/ New Ferry parade.

The park provides a mature green lung in the heart of the community, and benefits from its close proximity both to one of the community's schools and the District Centre.

Although part of the park was lost to the new health centre in the 1970s, it still retains the same basic shape and structure which it had over 100 years ago. Unfortunately, much of the detail was lost in the late 20th century: the bowling green and ornamental scented flower beds are long gone due to cuts in the Council's maintenance budget, but the tennis courts remain (albeit in poor condition). The entrance gates next to the Park Lodge have also disappeared. The Lodge, New Ferry's only listed building now housing a restaurant is an important landmark building in the area.

The refurbished play area remains a major attraction, whilst the tarmac kickabout pitch serves older children. The park has a football pitch that is well used a local youth football team, but the pavilion in the centre of the park - which is supposed to provide toilet and changing facilities - is vandalised and in poor condition.

In 2001/2, new housing appeared around the western side of the park, on the site of former unpopular Council maisonettes. These now provide a far more pleasant backdrop to the park, framing it and giving the park a pleasant "village green" setting.

The Village Hall, built on the southern side of the park in the late 1980s - and, as well as being used by various clubs, is also the venue for the Wirral Farmers Market. Plans exist to extend it, but acquiring the necessary funding is proving a longer term task.

However, the park is not without its problems. These mostly revolve around maintenance and security of the park's remaining features. In the autumn of 2007, we posed a series of questions through our newsletter to residents asking them if they agreed or disagreed with certain suggestions about what New Ferry Park and its environs needed.

Left: The popular play area in New Ferry Park.

Above: The Park Lodge has been operating as a restaurant since 2000. It was originally built as a home for the park's Council-paid keeper, and the main gates to the park stood to one side of it.



Above: Aerial photo showing New Ferry Park (left) and Shorefields Nature Park to the right, adjacent to the river edge.

Photo courtesy of Microsoft Corporation (www.local.live.com)

72 residents responded to the questionnaire, and the results are summarised as below:-

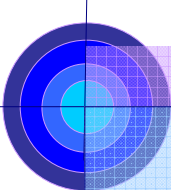
- ❖ 57% of residents thought the park should be surrounded by railings or a fence to protect it from damage by vehicles driven by joy-riders (32% disagreed; 11% couldn't decide);
- ❖ 42% of residents thought a bandstand could act as a focus for the park and its events (35% disagreed; 23% could not decide either way);
- ❖ An overwhelming 82% wanted the pavilion in the centre of the park to be refurbished;
- ❖ 55% said that putting a ball retaining fence around the existing tarmac kickabout area was a good idea (24% disagreed; 21% undecided);
- ❖ 67% wanted to see the footpaths in the park resurfaced, whilst 53% agreed with new footpaths being laid between desire lines currently without direct footpath routes;
- ❖ 89% wanted to see a CCTV camera erected inside the park to protect people and the features within the park itself, whilst 79% also wanted better lighting in the park to make footpaths more visible in the dark;
- ❖ 51% wished for traffic calming measures along Longfellow Drive, but 26% disagreed, saying residents living in the Beazer estate were the culprits who should slow down (23% undecided);
- ❖ 68% think Sefton Road should be widened and its edge to the park protected. 76% wanted a parking layby on the park side of the road to cater for visitors to the health centre during weekdays, and the football pitch during weekends - but 61% of residents were adamant that the cost of these improvements should not be raised by selling any part of the park for development.
- ❖ 49% did not want to see a skateboard park sited in the park if a site for it at Mayer Park could not be found (30% said they didn't mind, whilst 21% couldn't decide).
- ❖ Not mentioned on the questions, but raised by residents in their returns was the poor state of the surfacing of the tennis courts.

From the above, the main points are summarised here as a series of immediate and medium to long term set of actions and targets.



Left: The Beazer Homes estate embraces the park, creating a "village green" effect

Above: proposed extension to the Village Hall



ACTION POINT TARGETS - New Ferry Park

IMMEDIATE:

- Review grass cutting/maintenance arrangements which have attracted criticism from residents for not being frequent enough (including verges to Stanley Road in vicinity of the tennis courts);
- Re-examine drainage on the main field used by the annual fun fair;
- Complete a comprehensive tree survey in the park, and initiate a rolling programme of tree planting to begin planning for the future;
- Repair and refurbishment of the pavilion in the centre of the park
- Enable consultation on the spending of additional £60,000 for new equipment in the childrens play area by the end of Spring 2008.

MEDIUM TO LONG TERM:

- Complete refurbishment of the two tennis courts, including new surfacing and surrounding railings, followed by subsequent advertising/awareness raising of the tennis courts to encourage greater use by the local community;
- Complete refurbishment of Sefton Road, including carriageway widening, new parking lay-by and turning head at western end;
- Entire park to be surrounded with railings and entrance gates to deter access by vehicles;
- Improvement to footpath network, including new route between Sefton Road and Village Hall;
- Ball retaining fence to be erected around kickabout area;
- New bandstand to be constructed;
- New CCTV camera(s) to be installed to enhance park security and protect its features and structures;
- Excavation of one of the surviving air raid shelters for possible occasional opening to the public, along with installation of interpretative plaque telling the history of New Ferry and its park;
- Possible ornamental scented garden and seats (suggested by local schoolchildren);
- Traffic calming measures along Longfellow Drive to particularly protect children crossing the road between the play area and the school;
- Village Hall extension (see section below)



Above: The mudflats have stunning views of the Liverpool skyline



Right: Black tailed godwit

Shorefields Nature Park

The large green field overlooking the river is another jewel in New Ferry's crown, and is currently the largest flat green open space on the western bank of the River Mersey. Originally laid out as a "pleasure park" for local residents and daytripping tourists coming over from Liverpool on the steam ferry which landed at New Ferry Pier, the centre of this complex was the Great Eastern pub. Around it were bowling greens and tennis courts - many of which would disappear under the Shorefields/Pollitt Square/Merseybank Road Council estate when it was built in the 1930s after a river barge collided with and destroyed the pier, thus bringing New Ferry's brief period as a tourist hot-spot came to an end.

Of all of this "pleasure area", the main part which survives is the green field overlooking the river. A tall brick wall originally stood along the cliff edge, but this was eventually demolished in the mid 20th century. During and after WWII, the field was filled with pre-fab houses for people to live in temporarily after losing their own homes in German bombing raids.

Until the late 1970's, an old boat near the junction of Shorefields and Shore Bank was used as an informal play area by local children. In 1990, Wimpey made an application to build more houses on the field after its first two phases constructed 1988/89, but the application was turned down and the field is now regarded as "protected coastal land", which means it can never be built on.

At the foot of the cliffs are the mudflats - a nationally important feeding site for wading birds. In 2002, the beach was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), giving it protected status. It is also part of the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area for birds (a European designation showing international value). Throughout the winter, the New Ferry shore supports numerous waders and wildfowl, feeding at low tide on the many invertebrates in the mud. There are nationally important numbers of pintail (a type of duck) and black-tailed godwits (waders) as well as many redshank, shelduck, ringed plover, knot, dunlin and turnstone. Obviously, the site is very popular with bird-watchers.

The main problem with the area today is the total lack of maintenance of the cliffs and beach, which are strewn with an abandoned car, motorcycles, supermarket trolleys, sofas, bin bags, and tons of brick and concrete rubble that has been tipped there for decades. Parts of the beach and foreshore are an absolute disgrace - and which are also highly visible from the river where Mersey Ferries with boatloads of tourists pass by every day. The impression which this gives of New Ferry must be depressing!

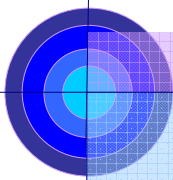


Twenty years ago, log seats were positioned along the cliff top for residents and visitors to sit and admire the view - but these were loosened and thrown over the cliffs by vandals in 1989.

Left: The pathway around the Wimpey Estate is accessed through a gate

In 1987, Landfill Tax and a Manpower Services Commission scheme together paid for a team of youth offenders to construct a hardcore path around the Wimpey Housing Estate, accessed through gates. A flight of timber steps was also constructed to improve access to the beach - the only form of proper access to the foreshore between here and The Esplanade. Although resurfaced, again with landfill tax monies, in 2001, the path continues to degrade through heavy use and abuse by motorcycles and quadbikes which use the area for off-road, but illegal, leisure.

Right: A visitor to the New Ferry shore in summer 2007



ACTION POINT TARGETS - Shorefields Nature Park

IMMEDIATE:

- A clear up of the beach and cliffs is imperative, to remove the car, motorcycles, trolleys, sofas, bin bags, concrete slabs, other large items and brick rubble visible from the cliff-top and river.
- A similar exercise is needed to remove the same kind of items from the woodland area between the Wimpey Estate path and the water treatment works.

MEDIUM TERM:

- If not carried out with the above, some parts of the beach need to be cleared of the concrete and brick rubble that is sometimes submerged by the tide or sits above the water-line, including the degraded gabions at the foot of the cliffs which have split and released their captive bricks.
- The hardcore footpath around the Wimpey Estate needs to be resurfaced with a more durable material.
- Access between Starworth Drive and the top of the beach steps needs to be cleared of overgrown bushes and trees, and a new formal path installed to improve access.
- The wooden/plastic gates and fencing protecting the above footpath and area need to be replaced with more durable metal ones. The gates must be robust enough to deter access by motorcycles and quads.
- The steps down to the beach need to be either cleaned up and resurfaced, or otherwise re-excavated and completely rebuilt. Consideration should also be given to providing new steps in other locations to prevent further erosion of the cliffs by people climbing them to access the beach below.
- Seating needs to be re-introduced along the cliff top to provide a restful place for residents and visitors to sit and admire the stunning river views which our community is blessed with.
- Maintenance of the regenerating woodland needs to be reviewed, as pathways frequently become inaccessible due to rapid growth.

LONG TERM:

- Future access to the Bromborough Pool Park (former tip) needs to be considered - so that cyclists and disabled visitors can be provided with a more suitable route down the cliffs to the new park when it opens in 2010.



Above: Biffa's Operations Manager Ben Rigg and colleague pay a visit to the colony of swans who have made the site's pond their home

Right: An aerial view of how the park might look in 2020 once the planting has established.



Bromborough Pool Park

Despite vociferous objections from residents when first proposed in 1989, the former silting ponds at Bromborough Dock, and the former historic dock itself, were used as a landfill site between 1991 and 2006. The company which applied for the licence and began the operation was UK Waste Management. In the mid-1990s they were taken over by Biffa.

The former dock was filled in first, with a channel being left for the River Dibbin to reach the River Mersey. Land to the south of the Dibbin, where most of the dock was situated, is proposed to be used for future industrial use, whilst the northern section which included the former silting ponds was turned into what resembles a mountain next to the estuary. Only the far northern end of the site was not tipped on, this being allowed to develop as a pond which is now home to variety of wildlife.

The tip is currently being capped with topsoil, and will eventually be turned into a park for local people. It will be opened for public access in 2009/10, and will be a jewel in New Ferry's green crown - with its breath-taking views over the Mersey estuary.

NFRAG were involved in periodic discussions with Biffa from 2003 onwards regarding plans for how the landscaping reinstatement scheme could look when eventually implemented. Despite these discussions, several issues need to be resolved. These are covered in the action points listed below, whilst our community's preferred plan of ideas suggested by local residents and school-children is presented opposite.

ACTION POINT TARGETS - Bromborough Pool Park

IMMEDIATE:

- A more detailed plan for the landscaping framework and features needs to be agreed. This should include keeping proposed tree planting clear from certain areas at the top of the hill so that the stunning views of the estuary can be appreciated by future visitors; footpaths and a possible sculpture on the peak on the Bolton Road axis.
- Consideration in the plan should be given to how the park can be linked to existing communities, particularly to Shorefields where there is a great height difference that currently would provide a barrier to future disabled access.
- How the park is linked to Bromborough Pool Village and Eastham Country Park via the long-proposed East Wirral Coast Heritage & Nature Trail needs to be clarified - in particular - how a future route will cross the River Dibbin.

MEDIUM:

- Issues surrounding future ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the river wall need to resolved.



- A** Great Eastern Pub
- B** Tidal mudflats & bird feeding grounds (existing SSSI)
- C** Cliffs to be maintained to deter spread of sycamore and other undesirable species; stepped access to foreshore to be improved
- D** Part tidal footpath
- E** Improvements to existing car park (where required)
- F** Improved link to Bromborough Dock Park
- G** Existing lochrin fence boundary to be removed
- H** Existing freshwater pond
- J** Wetland habitat with bird hides positioned along river edge
- K** Woodland with variety of Wirral-native species such as alder, poplar, salt tolerant conifers, birch
- L** Picnic area with stunning views northwards towards Liverpool and estuary mouth
- M** Focal feature sculpture (visible from Port Sunlight along Bolton Road axis) with viewing and picnic area
- N** Heathland created on warm sheltered slopes to mimic heather and gorse heath
- P** Pluto Storage Tank - not accessible to the public but interpretative historical information provided nearby
- Q** Existing road link to water treatment works
- R** Suggested new housing - with frontages to public open space
- S** Proposed new car park
- T** Existing methane / leachate collection equipment
- U** River Dibbin
- V** Proposed new industrial development

Shorefields Nature Park & Bromborough Pool Park

Note: This plan has been produced by the New Ferry Regeneration Action Group. It is intended to show suggestions and ideas for the regeneration of the Shorefields area of New Ferry and the current Bromborough Dock Tip – and is for discussion purposes only.



Above: The River Mersey can offer ever-changing views to people using the Heritage & Nature Trail



Right: Bromborough Pool Village.

Wirral East Coast Heritage & Nature Trail

The Wirral East Coast Heritage & Nature Trail concept dates back to 2000 when proposals first emerged for a pathway/cycle route linking Rock Park - along the waterfront past New Ferry's Shorefields - over the River Dibbin into Wirral International Business Park (passing Bromborough Pool Village) - to link up with Eastham Country Park.

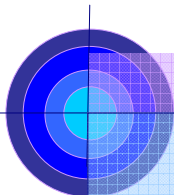
The recreational value of such a proposal is very welcome, but progress has been painfully slow due to landownership issues along the Business Park section. The problems of sorting out crossing the River Dibbin at Bromborough Pool and satisfactorily connecting with the Shorefields community still need to be sorted.

Bromborough Pool Village

A key element of the Heritage & Nature Trail should be to re-connect the historic Bromborough Pool Village with its nearest-neighbouring communities: namely, New Ferry and Bromborough.

The village itself is now recognised as a tourist attraction in its own right. Built in 1853 to house workers from the adjacent Prices Patent Candles Factory, it remains the second oldest 'industrial' village in the United Kingdom (the first was Saltaire near Bradford in Yorkshire built in 1850). In the early 2000s, Landfill Tax monies were used to erect heritage information signs in the village to aid visitors appreciate the history of the village.

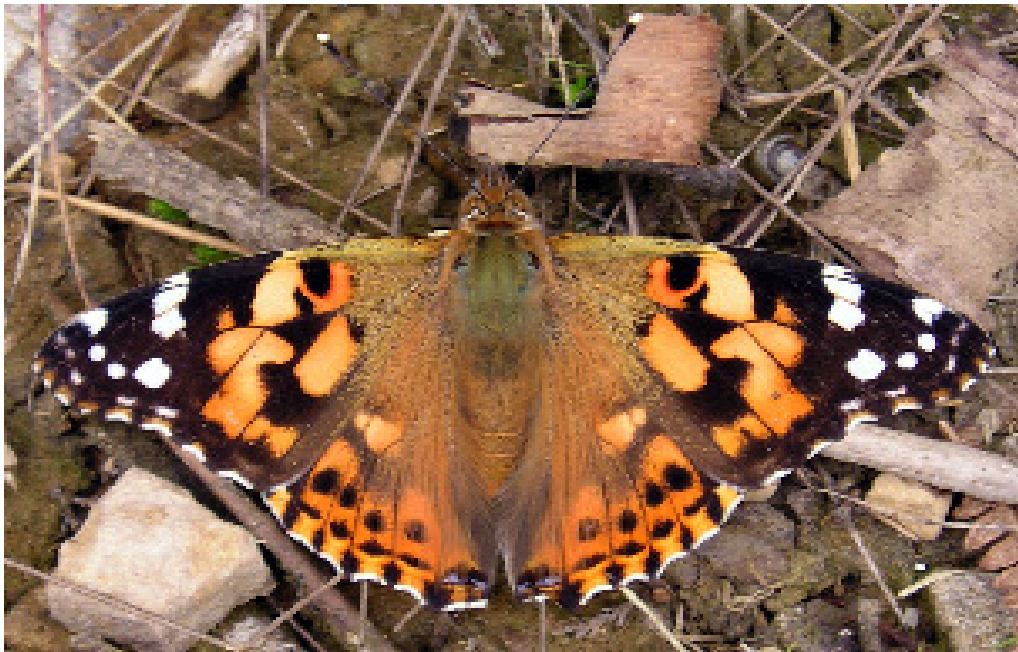
More recently, the village's owners Riverside Housing have proposed extending the village with more housing.



ACTION POINT TARGETS - East Wirral Nature & Heritage Trail

MEDIUM TO LONG-TERM:

- Land ownership issues along the route need to be resolved so that the scheme - promised for so many years - can progress.
- Ownership and access issues regarding the Esplanade at Rock Park also needs to be resolved so that the riverside pathway can be incorporated into the proposals.
- Although not accessible to the public, the Pluto Oil Storage Tank's role and importance in the D-Day invasion of Normandy in World War II should be commemorated. The provision of interpretative boards imparting historical information about the pipe and the role of local industry in this event would act as an additional tourist feature. The same can be said for the Listed Archaeological site in Pool Lane, the home of the Manor Court and the site of the legal and administrative centre for most of East Wirral from the 12th to the 16th centuries.



New Ferry Butterfly Park

The Park was established in September 1993 on a piece of derelict land previously used for anti social behaviour. It is run by a local committee and backed by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. It has been secured and developed into an urban wild space giving preference to native British butterflies. Thick-legged Flower Beetle and White Letter Hairstreak butterfly have been recorded here; both are a Local Biodiversity Action Plan species. Many other invertebrates use the park - spiders, bumble bees, moths, shield bugs, grasshoppers, centipedes, snails, hoverflies and so on. Other interest lies in newts, mistletoe, orchids and flower rich grasslands.

Local history is also important - the Park was once the railway goods yard to Bebington Station and contains the remains of an 18th century brickworks. The Park is much used for education for School groups, Scouts, and Brownies, as well as holding grassland training days for the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

In more recent times, the Park has been supported by Wirral Farmers' Market (in constructing large compost bins), New Opportunity Funds (in providing a mower, hand tools and a large trolley), Powergen (in creating acid grasslands) and Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest (resurfacing of paths). The Park has also been supported by work parties from Wirral Countryside Volunteers and Unilever employees.

Future developments include:-

- further on-going improvements to the park's biodiversity, improving visitors/volunteer facilities (eg composting toilets) and development of woodland crafts
- improving signage on Bebington Road; and
- expanding the number of local residents involved.

Left : Painted Lady butterfly as seen at the park in New ferry

Above: In summer, the park is a blaze of colour.

Below: The interpretative sign installed in 2007





New Ferry Village Hall

Improving Community Facilities

Over the last few years, New Ferry has lost some of its vital services. The handful of banks once in the district centre has now become only one. Our community is fortunate enough to be left clinging to its post office, but we have lost the Job Centre, and every year there is talk of the Citizens Advice Bureau relocating to another area of Wirral. These are the type of facilities which draw shoppers and visitors to New Ferry - when the Job Centre relocated to Bromborough, local traders reported a significant drop in footfall into their shops.

The one facility that brings the entire community together is the Village Hall next to New Ferry Park. Built in 1990 as a joint venture between the National Playing Fields Association, Merseyside Playing Fields Association and Wirral Borough Council, it includes a ground floor sports hall with offices, shower rooms and community rooms on the first floor. It therefore acts as both sports hall and community centre.

New Ferry Village Hall's aims are as follows:

- to support and encourage the development of a wide range of community based leisure activities;
- to ensure that the Centre is managed by the local community for the benefit of the local community;
- to ensure all services are accessible to all sections of the community without discrimination;
- to provide equal opportunity in all services.

Not only is it the venue of the multi-award winning Farmer's Market, it has a full weekly diary of groups and societies who converge to use its facilities including Sure Start, open access play sessions, Martial Arts club, Morris Dancing Troupe (Regionally recognised), the Table Tennis Club (Regional & Nationally renowned).

Left : New Ferry Netball Team, based in the Village Hall

Above: Wirral Mind, who run a Mental Health Drop In centre at the Village Hall



Above: Visitors to the Farmers Market in 2003 were met with music - but no welcoming front entrance to New Ferry's premier community facility.

Above: The proposed extension with its clock tower, as seen from the Grove Street car park.

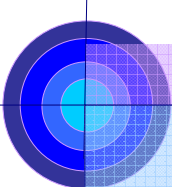


However, despite the success of these organisations, the Village Hall is not used to its full potential. There are still many people who are unaware of its presence as a community facility because it looks like a sports barn attached to Grove Street School. In addition, the community rooms on the upper floors are unsuitable for their purpose, being accessed by flights of stairs and there being no lifts available. It is also for these reasons that New Ferry Regeneration Action Group cannot hold its public meetings in this building.

Plans have been prepared for an extension to the hall to make it more open and accessible, and with a frontage that is more welcoming and visible. The aim would also be to improve accessibility to upper floor facilities in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act. We need a Village Hall that is more suitable and sustainable as a community facility; one that is able to keep pace with the needs of the community by being able to provide services to meet those needs.

The improvements which the proposed extension would bring would enable the Village Hall to become a more fully accessible, sustainable venue where local residents can access a range of services, learn new skills and improve their health and well-being. It would become a focal point for community activity, whilst the proposed clock tower will make a more visible presence and significantly improve the appearance of the building.

The additional space created internally will enable a much better range of services to be offered to local residents, including advice (debt, welfare rights, housing, consumer, etc), guidance, job/employment services, and family support services. Residents will also be able to take part in a range of training, education and social activities within a safe, attractive and comfortable setting.



ACTION POINT TARGET - New Ferry Village Hall

MEDIUM TERM:-

- To work with the Village Hall Management Committee and Wirral Borough Council to support the bid for funding for the Village Hall extension.



Above: New Ferry bypass - a noisy race track through the heart of the community



Right: Traffic on New Chester Road.

Community Safety

Speeding and Other Traffic Issues

One issue that continues to worry residents is the speed of traffic passing through New Ferry, and the spate of accidents which have occurred on some of our roads over the last few years. Since its inception in 2000, NFRAG has raised residents' concerns about speeding traffic in particular hot-spots, and despite very little having been done to sort out the problems, we are determined to continue to ask for measures to be taken.

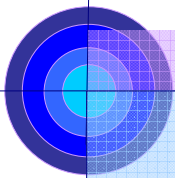
- Despite there being a 50mph speed limit on the bypass, motorists continue to use it as a racing track, causing a noise nuisance to adjacent residents as well as a safety problem for other drivers using the bypass.
- New Chester Road had several nasty road accidents in 2006/7, caused by a variety of issues including excessive speed of traffic leaving the Port Sunlight/Bolton Road roundabout. Residents remain concerned that the parking of cars so close to the junctions of minor streets leading off New Chester Road may have also contributed to the problems.
- The junction of New Chester Road with Boundary Road (and all the other roads which converge close to this point - Woodhead Street and Winstanley Road) make this junction a nightmare for vehicle drivers and pedestrians alike.
- Speeding traffic on New Ferry Road along its entire length remains a major concern, as does the increased parking seen in recent years at the junction of Merseybank Road and New Ferry Road where there have been several near misses.
- Traffic speeding along Longfellow Drive between the park, village hall and school has long been a cause for concern.
- Traffic speeding along Greenbank Road (Port Sunlight Village) is also a significant problem.
- Elderly residents of Port Sunlight Village have told us they sometimes have difficulty crossing the Bebington Road /Boundary Road junction to get to the shops because they find the speed of approaching traffic difficult to judge
- Despite it having been "pedestrianised" in 1991, a significant volume of traffic still speeds along the precinct as a short cut from Bebington Road to head north on New Chester Road. Neither does all of this traffic travel in the one official direction of this section of road.



- Residents of Legh Road, Egerton Road and Winstanley Road have problems with people visiting the shops and other inconsiderate vehicle owners parking in their cramped streetswhen there is adequate space in Woodhead Street car park.
- Despite the continuing efforts of the Council's parking attendants, drivers still park along New Ferry Road near to its junction with New Chester Road. Vehicles frequently park on the dropped pavement outside the old market building, forcing pedestrians to walk around them in the middle of the road and putting themselves in danger by doing so. Unfortunately, many of these offending motorists are disabled badge holders who have little respect for other road users safety.

Left : Parking opposite the 'R' Late Stores on New Ferry Road makes emerging from Merseybank Road an often hazardous manoeuvre.

Above: Drivers frequently park on the pavement on New Ferry Road, often even closer to the buildings than seen here!



ACTION POINT TARGETS - Community Safety - Speeding and Other Traffic Issues

IMMEDIATE:

- Residents only parking scheme should be introduced for the long-suffering residents of Legh Road, Egerton Road and Winstanley Road.
- Bollards or other measures to be implemented on New Ferry Road to prevent vehicles parking on pavements outside the old market.

MEDIUM:

- Traffic speed cameras to be installed along the bypass, particularly between New Ferry Road bridge and Thorburn Road where some horrific accidents have taken place over the years.
- Kerb build-outs should be constructed along New Chester Road at the junctions with Pool Bank, Elm Bank, and Willow Bank to deter parking in the immediate vicinity of those junctions and to improve visibility for emerging vehicles from these streets.
- Kerb build-outs should also be constructed at the junction of New Ferry Road and Merseybank Road, where drivers park short term to access the 'R' shop.
- A pedestrian crossing should be installed at or near the junction of Bebington Road / Boundary Road.
- Speed humps or other traffic calming measures - or other methods to reduce traffic speeds - need to be implemented in the following streets:- Longfellow Drive, New Ferry Road, New Chester Road, Greenbank Road.
- A review of traffic movements at the junction of Boundary Road/Woodhead Street/New Chester Road should be undertaken to consider junction safety and pedestrian crossing improvements.
- A more effective method of preventing traffic driving down the precinct should be found and implemented. This could include the installation of planters or other obstacles to create a chicane effect that would not make the route so attractive as a short-cut..

LONG TERM:

- The Department of Transport should be lobbied to acknowledge that double yellow lines mean "no parking/stopping for anyone for reasons of safety". This should remove the need to apply special extra markings to such roads to exempt disabled badge holders - the majority of whom seem to park irresponsibly with little regard for the safety of others. Double yellow should mean "NO PARKING".



Above: Back alley between New Ferry Road and Seafield Road, November 2007



Right: Typical state of the underpasses

Subways

The subway passing under the bypass and linking Thorburn Road with New Chester Road is a major concern to residents who feel intimidated by the presence of youths gathering in the vicinity, using foul language and threatening behaviour. Following previous complaints, the police have responded with extra patrols and the Council by cleaning up the mess when reported. However, these actions are often short-lived, and within weeks or months, the situation deteriorates yet again.

The subway at Beaconsfield Road is also a disgrace, with broken lighting, vandalised and graffiti covered walls - and the constant smell of urine.

ACTION POINT TARGETS - Community Safety - Subways

IMMEDIATE TO MEDIUM TERM:

- Lighting to both subways needs to be improved.
- Beaconsfield Road subway needs the walls to be decorated, perhaps with artwork.

LONG TERM:

- CCTV cameras to be installed around subways, if more frequent police patrols are not possible.
- Are there other ways to link the communities on either side of the bypass WITHOUT using the subways?

Alleys and Alleygating

Despite the efforts of the Council in providing residents with more bins and recycling facilities, the back alleys of many terraced properties in New Ferry continue to be an eyesore. Some residents continue to tip household rubbish, furniture and kitchen and other electrical appliances. This is allegedly the behaviour of short-term tenants of private landlords who have no care for the environment in which they live. It is also claimed that people from outside the area are using the alleys as a convenient place to tip unwanted items.

Alleygating involves erecting gates across alleys behind terraced properties to increase security and reduce tipping of rubbish by outsiders. Alleygating schemes, originally trialled in Liverpool, have been successfully implemented in Wirral in recent years in areas such as Tranmere, where incidences of burglary have been reduced.

ACTION POINT TARGETS - Community Safety - Alleys and Alleygating

MEDIUM TERM:

- All back alleys to terraced dwellings in New Ferry to be considered for alleygating schemes.



Summary of Action to be Taken

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
NEW FERRY DISTRICT CENTRE		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
To encourage greater involvement in the future of the District Centre by the major private sector players, including to establish the aspirations and long term plans of the likes of Somerfield, Iceland, Woolworths and Ethel Austins – and work with them to agree a way in which New Ferry can be moved forward.	New Ferry Regeneration Action Group (NFRAG) in partnership with Wirral Borough Council	Initial contact by letter, perhaps followed by invitation to a round-table meeting to discuss common goals, interests and aspirations
<p>More active marketing of the potential within New Ferry for new businesses to cluster together and benefit from each other's presence and pulling power.</p> <p>The above could also involve promoting New Ferry as a centre for specialist traders, e.g. for antique and art & craft shops.</p>	New Ferry Regeneration Action Group (NFRAG) in partnership with Wirral Borough Council and private sector	This could potentially be a "District Centre Manager" employed by Wirral Borough Council who is tasked with championing all the borough's district centres outside Birkenhead's main centre in either a full or part time role
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
Grove Street Car Park to be resurfaced	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
To seek funding for façade improvements to existing shops to improve their general appearance	Wirral Borough Council / private sector business owners	A code of conduct for the visual appearance of shop facades needs to be introduced, and then funding sought from whatever source may be able to help.
<p>Building owners to be encouraged to convert vacant upper floors to residential or for investors to consider demolition and rebuild with higher quality ground floor shops with residential apartments for sale on upper floors.</p> <p>This would also encourage a night time public presence in the District Centre.</p>	Private sector	The use of vacant upper floors of shops for residential should be actively encouraged as it has an important future role in providing a cost-effective solution for shortages of affordable accommodation for future generations
An extension to the CCTV scheme into certain key areas not covered by the current provision, particularly Olinda Street and Grove Street, behind the Bebington Road shops	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<p>Improvements to the Boundary Road/New Chester Road junction. A filter lane for southbound traffic wishing to turn right into Boundary Road needs to be considered, perhaps with traffic lights installed.</p> <p>Pedestrian crossing facilities at or near to this junction also need to be reviewed: perhaps a pedestrian island for people crossing the wide mouth of Boundary Road could be provided. The problems at this junction are further complicated by the presence of the entrance/exit road from Woodhead Street.</p>	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<i>Longer Term targets:</i>		
To encourage the private sector to provide new, cleaner shops for the 21st century with a range of unit sizes to suit small and medium sized traders	Private sector	As part of a "future strategy plan" for New Ferry, it needs to be made clear that refurbished or new business space is more likely to attract new businesses than decrepit buildings with basic amenities
The precinct needs to be repaved/updated with better quality materials.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
The above repaving scheme needs to be extended further north and south along New Chester Road on the main approaches to the District Centre	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
A major rethink of backwater areas such as Olinda Street is required	Wirral Borough Council / possibly private sector	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
WIRRAL FARMERS' MARKET		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Explore all available opportunities for using the market as a springboard to advertise businesses in New Ferry	Farmers' Market Committee and Wirral Borough Council to work with NFRAG	As stated

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
NEW FERRY PARK		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Review grass cutting/maintenance arrangements which have attracted criticism from residents for not being frequent enough (including verges to Stanley Road in vicinity of the tennis courts);	Wirral Borough Council	As stated
Re-examine drainage on the main field used by the annual fun fair	Wirral Borough Council	New land drains to be laid where necessary
Complete a comprehensive tree survey in the park, and initiate a rolling programme of tree planting to begin planning for the future	Wirral Borough Council	As stated
Repair and refurbishment of the pavilion in the centre of the park	Wirral Borough Council / possibly NFRAG	Possible lottery funded
Enable consultation on the spending of additional £60,000 for new equipment in the childrens play area by the end of Spring 2008.	Wirral Borough Council / NFRAG	As stated
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
Complete refurbishment of the two tennis courts, including new surfacing and surrounding railings, followed by subsequent advertising/awareness raising of the tennis courts to encourage greater use by the local community	Wirral Borough Council	As stated
Complete refurbishment of Sefton Road, including carriageway widening, new parking lay-by and turning head at western end	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Improvement to footpath network, including new route between Sefton Road and Village Hall	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Ball retaining fence to be erected around kickabout area	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
New bandstand to be constructed	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
New CCTV camera(s) to be installed to enhance park security and protect its features and structures	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Excavation of one of the surviving air raid shelters for possible occasional opening to the public, along with installation of interpretative plaque telling the history of New Ferry and its park	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Possible ornamental scented garden and seats (suggested by local schoolchildren)	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Traffic calming measures along Longfellow Drive to particularly protect children crossing the road between the play area and the school	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector/lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
SHOREFIELDS NATURE PARK		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Beach / foreshore to be cleaned up, to remove the car, motorcycles, trolleys, sofas, bin bags, concrete slabs, other large items and brick rubble visible from the cliff-top and river.	Wirral Borough Council	As stated
A similar exercise is needed to remove the same kind of items from the woodland area between the Wimpey Estate path and the water treatment works.	Wirral Borough Council	As stated
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
If not carried out with the above, some parts of the beach need to be cleared of the concrete and brick rubble that is sometimes submerged by the tide or sits above the water-line, including the degraded gabions at the foot of the cliffs which have split and released their captive bricks.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
The hardcore footpath around the Wimpey Estate needs to be resurfaced with a more durable material.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Access between Starworth Drive and the top of the beach steps to be cleared of overgrown bushes and trees, and a new formal path installed to improve access.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
The wooden/plastic gates and fencing protecting the above footpath and area to be replaced with more durable metal ones. The to be robust enough to deter access by motorcycles and quads.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
The steps down to the beach to be either cleaned up and resurfaced, or otherwise re-excavated and completely rebuilt. Consideration should also be given to providing new steps in other locations to prevent further erosion of the cliffs by people climbing them to access the beach below.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Seating to be re-introduced along the cliff top to provide a restful place for residents and visitors to sit and admire the stunning river views which our community is blessed with.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Maintenance of the regenerating woodland needs to be reviewed, as pathways frequently become inaccessible due to rapid growth.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<i>Longer Term targets:</i>		
Future access to the Bromborough Pool Park (former tip) needs to be considered – so that cyclists and disabled visitors can be provided with a more suitable route down the cliffs to the new park when it opens in 2010.	Wirral Borough Council / BIFFA / United Utilities	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
BROMBOROUGH POOL PARK		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
A more detailed plan for the landscaping framework and features needs to be agreed. This should include keeping proposed tree planting clear from certain areas at the top of the hill so that the stunning views of the estuary can be appreciated by future visitors; footpaths and a possible sculpture on the peak on the Bolton Road axis.	Wirral Borough Council / BIFFA	As stated
Consideration in the plan should be given to how the park can be linked to existing communities, particularly to Shorefields where there is a great height difference that currently would provide a barrier to future disabled access.	Wirral Borough Council / BIFFA	As stated
How the park is linked to Bromborough Pool Village and Eastham Country Park via the long-proposed East Wirral Coast Heritage & Nature Trail needs to be clarified – in particular – how a future route will cross the River Dibbin.	Wirral Borough Council / BIFFA and other landowners along the proposed route	As stated
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
Issues surrounding future ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the river wall need to be resolved	Wirral Borough Council / BIFFA and Levers	As stated

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
EAST WIRRAL NATURE & HERITAGE TRAIL		
<i>Longer Term targets:</i>		
Land ownership issues along the route need to be resolved so that the scheme – promised for so many years – can progress.	Wirral Borough Council with various owners/ businesses along the route	As stated
Ownership and access issues regarding the Esplanade at Rock Park also needs to be resolved so that the riverside pathway can be incorporated into the proposals.	Wirral Borough Council with private residences	As stated
Although not accessible to the public, the Pluto Oil Storage Tank's role and importance in the D-Day invasion of Normandy in World War II should be commemorated. The provision of interpretative boards imparting historical information about the pipe and the role of local industry in this event would act as an additional tourist feature. The same can be said for the Listed Archaeological site in Pool Lane, the home of the Manor Court and the site of the legal and administrative centre for most of East Wirral from the 12th to the 16th centuries.	Wirral Borough Council / Shell UK	Public sector or lottery funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
COMMUNITY SAFETY – SPEEDING & OTHER TRAFFIC ISSUES		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Residents only parking scheme should be introduced for the long-suffering residents of Legh Road, Egerton Road and Winstanley Road.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Bollards or other measures to be implemented on New Ferry Road to prevent vehicles parking on pavements outside the old market.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
Traffic speed cameras to be installed along the bypass, particularly between New Ferry Road bridge and Thorburn Road where some horrific accidents have taken place over the years.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Kerb build-outs should be constructed along New Chester Road at the junctions with Pool Bank, Elm Bank, and Willow Bank to deter parking in the immediate vicinity of those junctions and to improve visibility for emerging vehicles from these streets.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Kerb build-outs should also be constructed at the junction of New Ferry Road and Merseybank Road, where drivers park short term to access the 'R' shop.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
A pedestrian crossing to be installed at or near the junction of Bebington Road / Boundary Road.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Implement speed humps or other traffic calming measures or other methods to reduce traffic speeds in the following streets:- Longfellow Drive, New Ferry Road, New Chester Road, Greenbank Road.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Review traffic movements at the junction of Boundary Road/Woodhead Street/New Chester Road to consider junction safety and pedestrian crossing improvements.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Identify a more effective method of preventing traffic driving down the precinct. This could include the installation of planters or other obstacles to create a chicane effect that would not make the route so attractive as a short-cut.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<i>Longer Term targets:</i>		
Lobby the Department of Transport to acknowledge that double yellow lines mean "no parking/stopping for anyone for reasons of safety". This should remove the need to apply special extra markings to such roads to exempt disabled badge holders – the majority of whom seem to park irresponsibly with little regard for the safety of others. Double yellow should mean "NO PARKING".	Wirral Borough Council / Department of Transport	As stated

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
COMMUNITY SAFETY – SUBWAYS		
<i>Immediate to Medium Term targets:</i>		
Lighting to both subways to be improved.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Beaconsfield Road subway walls to be decorated, perhaps with artwork.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
<i>Longer Term targets:</i>		
CCTV cameras to be installed around subways, if more frequent police patrols are not possible.	Wirral Borough Council / Merseyside Police	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available
Are there other ways to link the communities on either side of the bypass WITHOUT using the subways?	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
COMMUNITY SAFETY – ALLEYS AND ALLEYGATING		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Leaflet drop to residents with back alleys (including tenants and their landlords) reminding them of their obligations to keep back alleys in a tidy condition.	NFRAG	Via newsletter
<i>Medium Term targets:</i>		
All back alleys to terraced dwellings in New Ferry to be considered for alleygating schemes.	Wirral Borough Council	Public sector funding to be secured when and if it becomes available

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
COMMUNITY SAFETY – ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR		
<i>Immediate – more achievable targets:</i>		
Wirral Youth Outreach Service to continue its efforts in the New Ferry area to engage with disaffected youths, and to support them with advice and other more constructive pursuits/programmes where funding can be sought.	NFRAG to support Wirral Youth Outreach Service	NFRAG to help access funds for various projects/initiatives to engage youths

ACTION TO BE TAKEN	BY WHO	HOW
NEW FERRY VILLAGE HALL		
<i>Medium term target:</i>		
To support the bid for funding for the Village Hall extension.	NFRAG to support the New ferry Village Hall Management Committee & WMBC	-

Note:

We acknowledge that some of the above targets may not be achievable in the short or medium term and that public funds are limited.

However, we also recognise that - from time to time - funding streams materialise due to changes in policy or simply just a lucky cash windfall. It helps to have a shopping list of schemes sitting waiting for when funds become available in this way.

The purpose of this document and - in particular - the table above is to act as that shopping list, which can also help guide decision-makers to make choices where New Ferry and its case may be viewed more favourably.