This is Wirral

Transport

Wirral Intelligence Service (December 2019)

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Background to This is Wirral

This is Wirral is a collected set of evidence about Wirral.

It includes information about the Wirral population including their current and future health and wellbeing needs and the borough including information about the economy, housing, environment and transport.

The insight is collected into a number of sections to allow ease of access for the reader.

Each section contains detailed content including the key messages from the analysis and insight on main issues and is underpinned by detailed information.

The information forms our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) providing a detailed picture of the borough.

It is used to enable effective strategic planning to determine what actions local authorities and other partners need to take to meet resident needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing.

How can you help?
If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics then please email us at
wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk or go to https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/

Acknowledgements

This is Wirral: Transport

Contents

Key Messages

- Transport provides access to jobs, education, services, and recreational activities. There are clear links between transport and social exclusion. Overcoming barriers to opportunities and services is a key issue. Not everyone owns a car or has access to a car, and it is forecast that car ownership will decrease in the future due to social behavioural changes and also with concerns around health and climate change impacts. We need a whole integrated transport offer which works for everyone including disabled and vulnerable people that improves quality of life and encourages independence. Consideration of the relationship with planning and regeneration is key so that new developments do not encourage car dependency and where possible we can reduce the need for people to travel.

- Electric vehicles are increasingly becoming a familiar sight and will make a positive contribution to reducing emissions caused by the combustion engine, however, it's important that electric and autonomous vehicles aren't seen as a panacea to existing transport issues in Wirral and the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR). Electric vehicles will still contribute to congestion and will also have an environmental impact. A window of opportunity exists over the next few years for politicians and decision makers in Wirral, regionally and nationally to advocate for increased investment in facilities for active travel such as walking and cycling and mass transit options such as buses and trains.

- As ways of working change with more remote and agile working as well as the rise of online shopping the needs of our transport system are likely to change. We cannot second guess how technology will develop, but we must be open to new technology in relation to transport and be aware of any potential risks/benefits.

- An efficient, well maintained and safe network is essential to support the delivery of the Council's economic growth and regeneration plans. Residents, business and visitors must be able to get to where they need to go safely and efficiently. Our road and rail network need to be able to support businesses with well-maintained and well-managed infrastructure which enables reliable journey times. An efficient and attractive bus network is reliant on a well maintained and managed highway.

- Transport is changing and becoming more focussed on the principle of "mobility" across all modes and providers rather than single dominant modes of transport (e.g. cars). However, the vast majority of Wirral residents still travel to work via a car or van (72%) or motorcycle with only 15% traveling to work via public transport. (Train 8%, Bus 7%).

- Car availability is generally higher in Wirral (68% with a car/van and 32% no access to car/van) compared to the Liverpool City Region (LCR) (63% with a car/van and 37% no access to car/van) and according to data published by the Department for Transport, then 24% of households in England have no car/van.

- It takes, on average, a Wirral resident 23 minutes for non-car journeys to travel to a large economic centre. This is 3 minutes faster, on average, than in 2014 (an improvement of 11%) and is a shorter average commute time overall than the Liverpool City Region and North West.

- Increasing road traffic is a key challenge for Wirral with the second highest volume of traffic in the Liverpool City Region behind Liverpool. Noting the context of having the second highest population also we have seen a 2.4% increase in road traffic from 2009 to 2017. Increased traffic volumes have also coincided with a steady increase in cycling across the borough, up by 43% between 2009 and 2017.

Infographics

TRANSPORT

32%
OF HOUSEHOLDS IN WIRRAL
DO NOT HAVE A CAR
(MOTT MACDONALD, 2018)

90,000
VEHICLES PER DAY
USING TUNNELS

WIRRAL IS SERVED
BY A NETWORK OF
38 BUS ROUTES
2019

42 MILLION
PASSENGER JOURNEYS
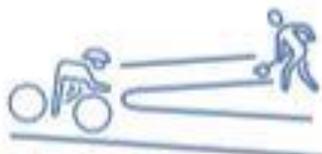ON MERSEYRAIL
2018 - 2019

21%
WALKING ACCOUNTS
FOR OF ALL JOURNEYS
(MOTT MACDONALD, 2018)

INCREASED BY **43%**
ON WIRRAL BETWEEN
2008/09 TO 2016/17

100+ MILES
OF PUBLIC FOOTPATHS,
BRIDLEWAYS, PATHS &
CYCLE TRACKS MAINTAINED
BY WIRRAL COUNCIL

SAFETY ON ROADS
INJURY COLLISIONS
1,379   **430**
2000   2018

What do we know?

So, what do we want in Wirral?

- We want more people walking and cycling to become fitter and healthier.
- We want more people using public transport and active travel to reduce air pollution and congestion.
- Technology which will make it easier for us to plan journeys e.g. Journey planning and smart ticketing.
- More people being able to access local centres by bus or by walking and cycling to reduce reliance on the private car.
- More public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities provided across the Borough
- Fewer people using their cars, especially for shorter journeys.
- Fewer accidents and injuries on our roads.
- Fewer emissions from cars, buses and lorries.
- Less congestion and delay.

How will we achieve this?

- Residents, businesses and visitors will be engaged through consultations, forums and user groups to ensure we work in partnership around transport
- We will work across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) to ensure the transport needs of Wirral are represented.
- We will explore and utilise new technologies as they appear in line with Merseytravel and other Local Authorities in the LCR.
- We will use engineering to improve our road networks, to build new cycle routes, improve pedestrian facilities and take advantage of new technology to make it easier to travel efficiently, safely and sustainably.
- Residents, businesses and visitors will know how to get around and where to find information.
- Enforcement will be required where people do not comply with the driving laws or do not consider other road users in their driving or parking habits.
- These efforts will make people feel confident to change their travel habits and try healthier environmentally friendly ways of getting around.

Introduction

- There are many cross-cutting and complex relationships between transport and other key policy areas such as the economy, health and the environment.

- Not only is an effective transport system key to enable access to employment, education, health services and leisure and recreational activities, it also influences the local climate, economy and social equality across the Borough, all of which in turn can impact on the health of Wirral residents and the health of the economy.

- Transport is a fundamental part of our lives and is essential for every resident and visitor - connecting people to services, to employment, to education and to health care and leisure. Travelling to the airport to go on holiday, walking to the shops for a pint of milk or taking the children to school or the dog for a walk – all involve using a mode of transport.

- Manufacturers need to transport their goods to shops, and shops need deliveries to stock their shelves. Even residents who are unable to travel or leave their homes still rely on transport to bring services and products to them.

- Transport is more than getting from A to B – transport needs to be accessible and be safe across all modes. People need to be able to access transport, wherever they are and whatever their circumstances. Transport users also need to be safe and feel safe as they travel.

- Active travel, walking and cycling can improve our health and well-being by encouraging us to be more physically active. It can also help reduce air pollution and congestion from other modes of transport.

- Good transport links within the Borough and to other areas are essential to support growth and to enable development and regeneration. The development and regeneration of Birkenhead town centre, Wirral Waters and other major housing and employment sites means that there are excellent opportunities over the coming years to improve our transport network and provide new and improved infrastructure to support the economic growth and regeneration of the borough and improve the health and well-being of our residents.

- Transport opens up economic and social opportunities and therefore supports all our residents, businesses and visitors. Transport supports the visitor economy enabling access to our coastline, parks, gardens and heritage. Transport can be a tourism attraction in its own right – the Mersey Ferries, the National Cycle Network and the Wirral Circular Trail all attract significant numbers of people to our Borough. The impact on transport of major tourism events taking place in the Borough need to be well managed to ensure people can enjoy what Wirral has to offer.

- We need to manage the negative impacts of transport, particularly on our roads - congestion, poor air quality and traffic noise all have negative impacts on our quality of life and well-being. This could also inhibit growth in Wirral by adversely affecting residents actual and perceived quality of life. Wirral's quality and pace of life is seen as a key asset in promoting inward investment to the Borough.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

In November 2015 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) secured a Devolution Agreement with Government securing £900 million of funding over a 30 year period and brought together other funds into a Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). The agreement also brought with it the devolution of powers and responsibilities from Government.

The LCRCA is responsible for setting transport policy and funding decisions, supported and advised by its Transport Committee. Merseytravel is the LCRCA's executive body, responsible for delivering transport services and managing and co-ordinating delivery.

The six constituent local authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral) remain unitary authorities with specific legal powers and front line delivery responsibilities, which include functions such as local planning authorities, local highway authorities and taxi licensing authorities. Joint working and collaboration between the local authorities, the LCRCA and Merseytravel remain critical to the success of future transport planning and delivery.

Figure 1: Travel to work area for Wirral (2017)
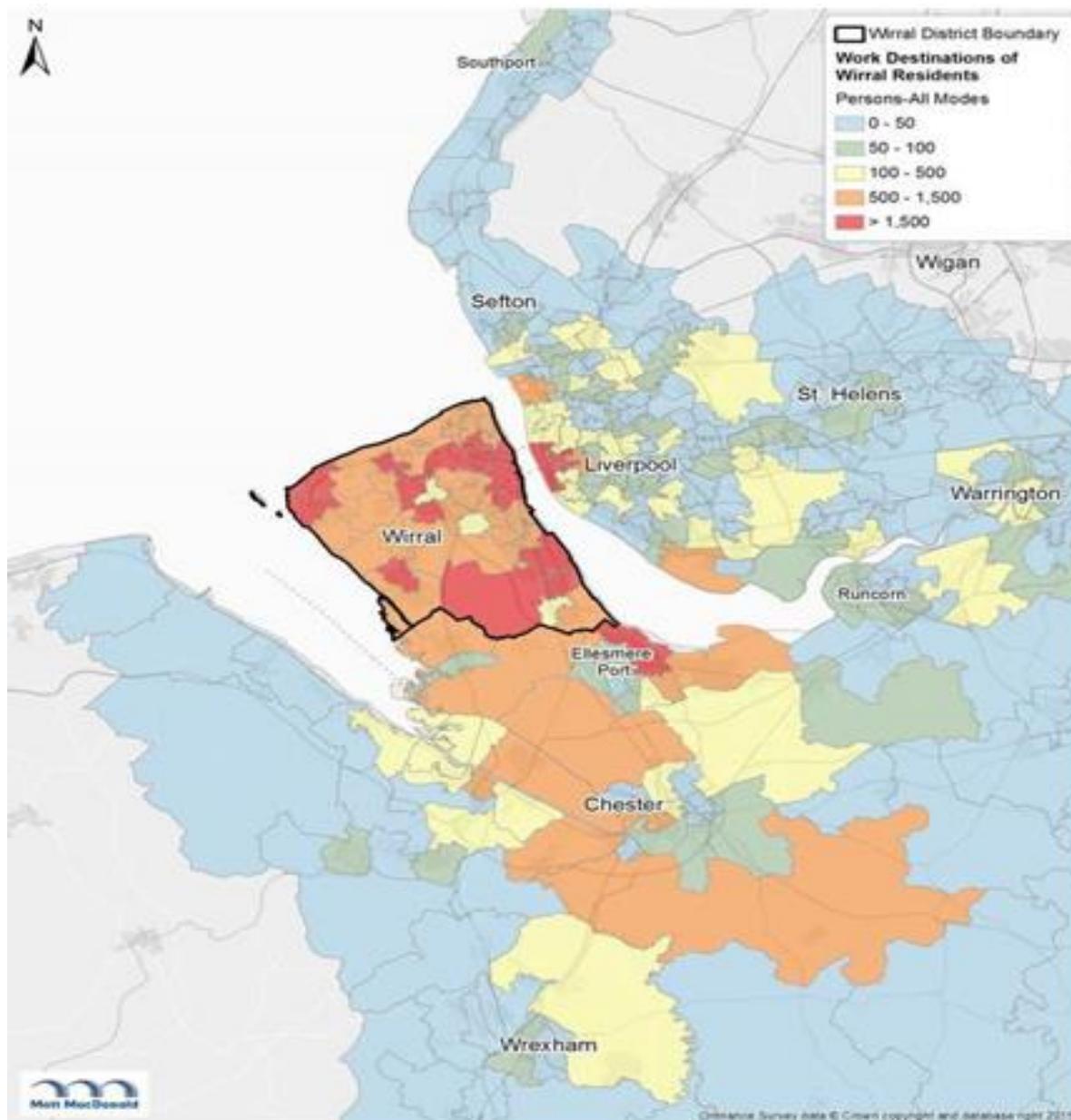
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

In addition to the transport functions that the Combined Authority has gained, an overriding benefit concerns the alignment of transport powers and policies with wider powers over economic development, employment and skills, culture, spatial planning, housing, energy, digital infrastructure and funding

Transport networks are not self-contained and Wirral benefits from being part of the wider City Region along with clear functional arrangements with North East Wales, Cheshire West and further afield. **Figure 1** above illustrates the existence of a travel to work (and other opportunities) area over a much wider geography.

The Wirral Transport Network – Overview

- Overall Wirral has good connectivity with surrounding areas, however within the Borough there are variations by mode and pockets where there is poorer provision. This can be exacerbated by time of day or day of week.

- Wirral is characterised by an urban and suburban eastern side and a more rural western and southern side. This creates challenges in creating a transport infrastructure that can appropriately serve the differing needs of localities across Wirral.

- The M53 Motorway is a key transport link providing connectivity to and from Liverpool and Chester. It also provides a link for internal journeys within the Borough, reducing traffic on local roads.

- The Merseyrail operated Wirral line provides good rail links into/out of Wirral, for the east of the borough down to Chester and Ellesmere Port, and in the north of the borough to West Kirby, New Brighton and Liverpool. Parts of Wallasey, and most of the West Wirral however are not on the Merseyrail network. In these areas' buses form a larger part of the transport network.

- The Transport for Wales operated Borderlands (Wrexham-Liverpool) line provides some rail connectivity in the west of the Borough but has low frequencies and a limited number of stations in the borough.

- Two road tunnels, a rail tunnel and a ferry link across the Mersey provide access across to the wider Liverpool City region.

- Birkenhead town centre has excellent connectivity to wider Wirral and Liverpool and acts as a hub for several transport modes but is characterised by a car dominated infrastructure which results in significant barriers for cyclists and pedestrians.

Figure 2: Commuter outflow and inflow to/from Wirral (2011)
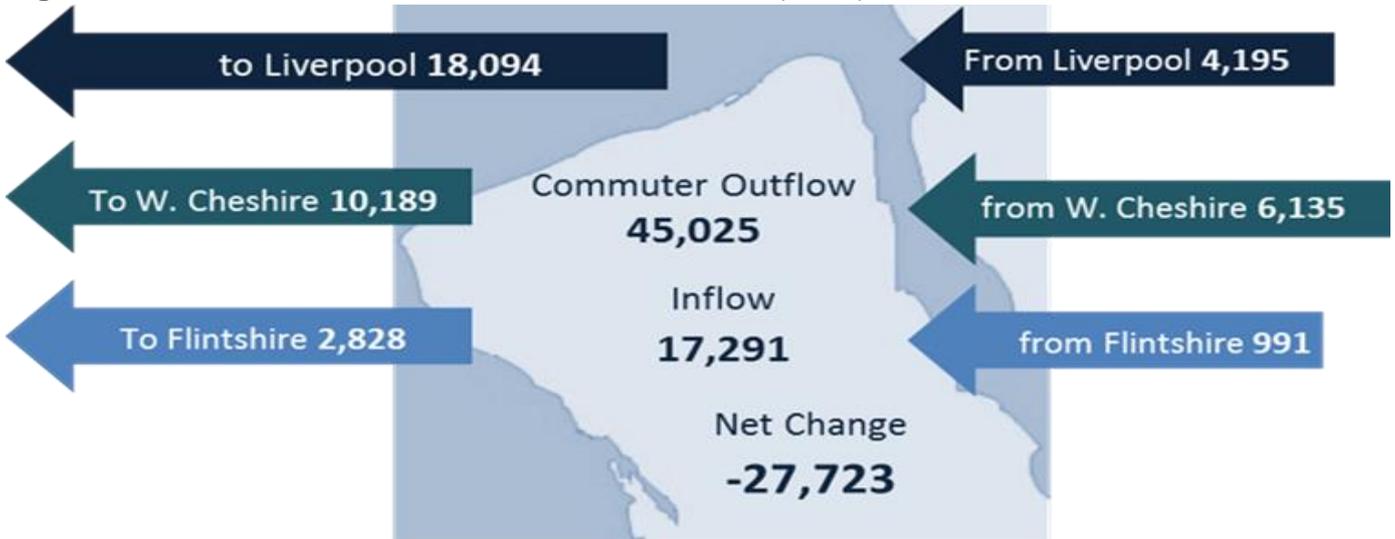
Source: (Office for National Statistics, 2011)

In the most recent Census (2011) the majority of commuter journeys of Wirral residents were via car or van (including both as passengers and drivers) (72%) (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Overall more people commute from Wirral to elsewhere compared to individuals commuting to Wirral **(Figure 2).**

It can be seen in **figure 3** that the vast majority (92%) of trips made by Wirral households are within the Borough**.** The same is true for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR) as a whole, although to a lesser extent (86.8%) (Mott Macdonald, 2018)

Figure 3: Percentage (%) of trips by destination in Wirral compared to Liverpool City Region (2018) (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

	Own District	Other LCR District	Greater Manchester	Cheshire	Lancashire	Elsewhere
LCR	86.8%	8.7%	1.1%	1.9%	0.8%	0.8%
Wirral	92.0%	4.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.0%
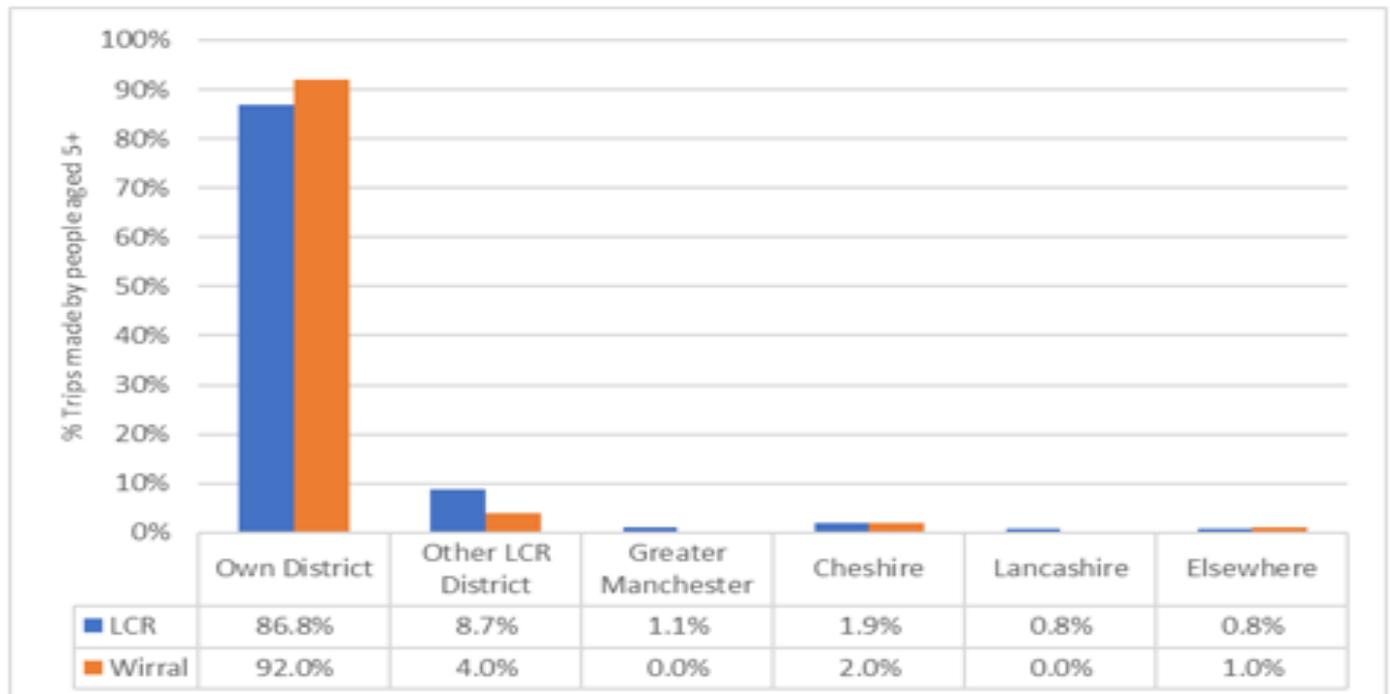
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018)

Wirral households tend to make shorter distance trips (<2km) than the Liverpool City Region and fewer longer distance trips of >10km **(Figure 4).**

Figure 4: Percentage (%) trips by distance travelled in Wirral compared to Liverpool City Region (LCR) (2018)
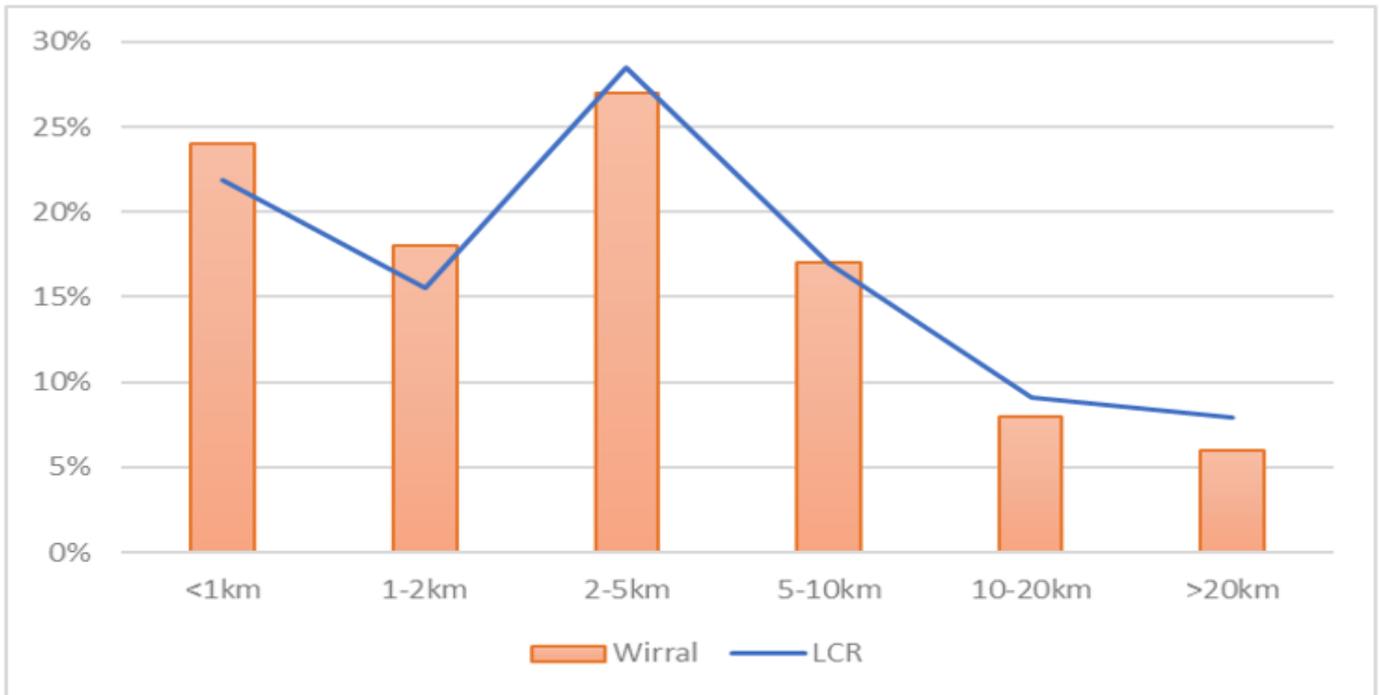
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

Figure 5: Percentage (%) trips by purpose of trip in Wirral compared to Liverpool City Region (2018)
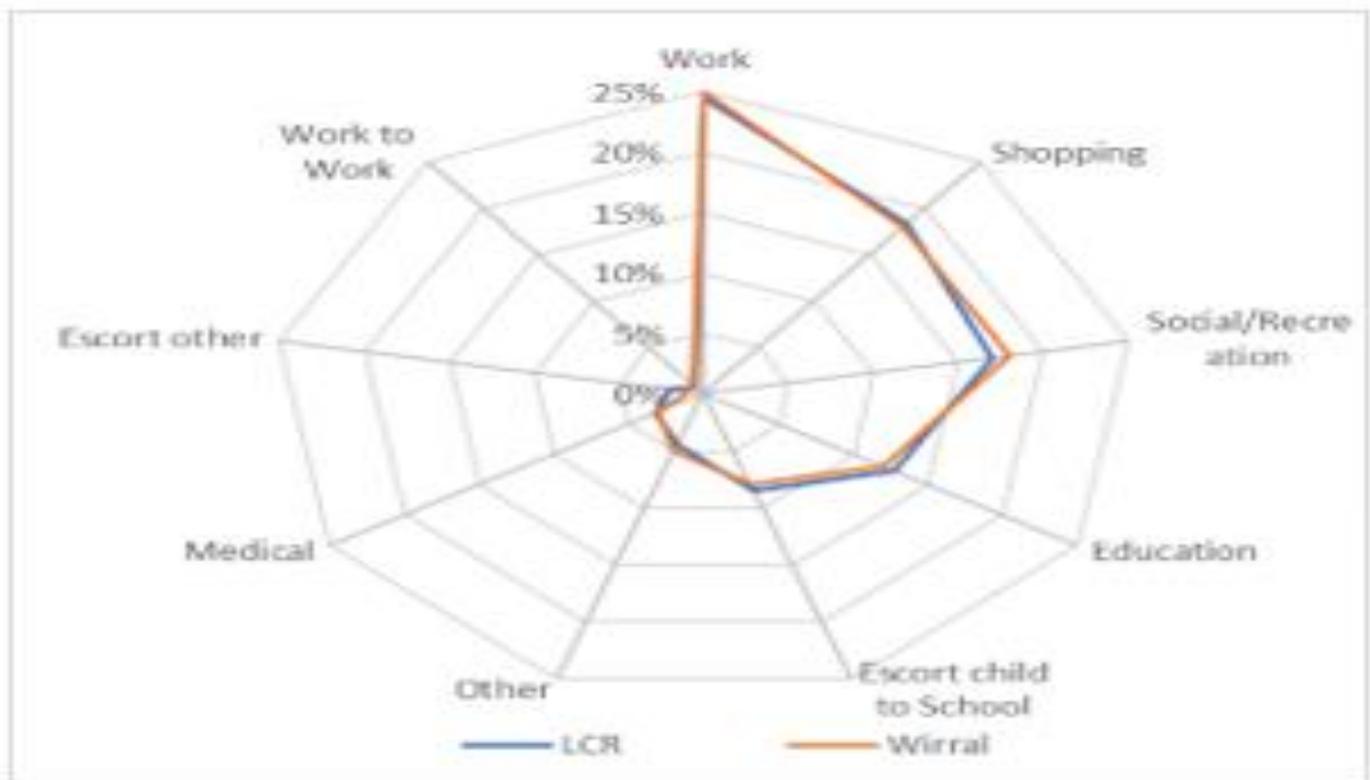
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

Figure 5 illustrates the overall purpose of trips made by Wirral householders compared to the LCR. It is a very similar picture for both areas, with the highest proportion of trips being made for work in both cases, followed by shopping and social/recreation purposes.

The Wirral Transport Network – Road

The M53 motorway running through Wirral from Birkenhead to Chester, links Wirral to the wider motorway network via the M56 to Warrington and beyond, as well as to the A55 to North Wales. The two Mersey road tunnels connect Wirral to the rest of the Liverpool City region, from Birkenhead via the Queensway Tunnel (A41) and from Wallasey via the Kingsway Tunnel (M53/A59). Up to 90,000 vehicles per day cross under the River Mersey via these tunnels between Wirral and Liverpool.

From April 2019 tunnel tolls have been reduced to £1 each way for Liverpool City Region (LCR) residents using a fast tag. Contactless card payments have also been introduced in the Mersey Tunnels, offering greater ease of payment for drivers.

The A41 is a busy strategic corridor on the east of the Borough linking Birkenhead to Chester, and the A540 is the strategic corridor on the west side linking Hoylake to Chester. East West links across the Borough are provided by several other main roads such as the A552 and the A553.

In 2018 Wirral had the 2nd highest number of vehicle miles travelled of any Borough in the Liverpool City Region at 1.1. Billion (Department for Transport, 2018). Traffic, in terms of vehicle miles, on Wirral's roads grew substantially between 1994 and 2005. From then on vehicle miles travelled annually on Wirral's roads began to decrease up to 2013.

Since then vehicle miles travelled in the Borough have increased year on year, with the figures remaining identical for 2017 and 2018 at 1065.5 million vehicle miles (Department for Transport, 2018).

2011 Census data indicates that 28% of households have no access to a car or van - this is the same as the national average (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Across Wirral however the rate of access to a car varies significantly for example in Heswall only 10% of households have no access to a car or van, where as in Birkenhead this rate is 56%, well above the national average of 28% (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Percentage (%) of households with no car by ward across Wirral and averages for England and the North West (2011 Census)
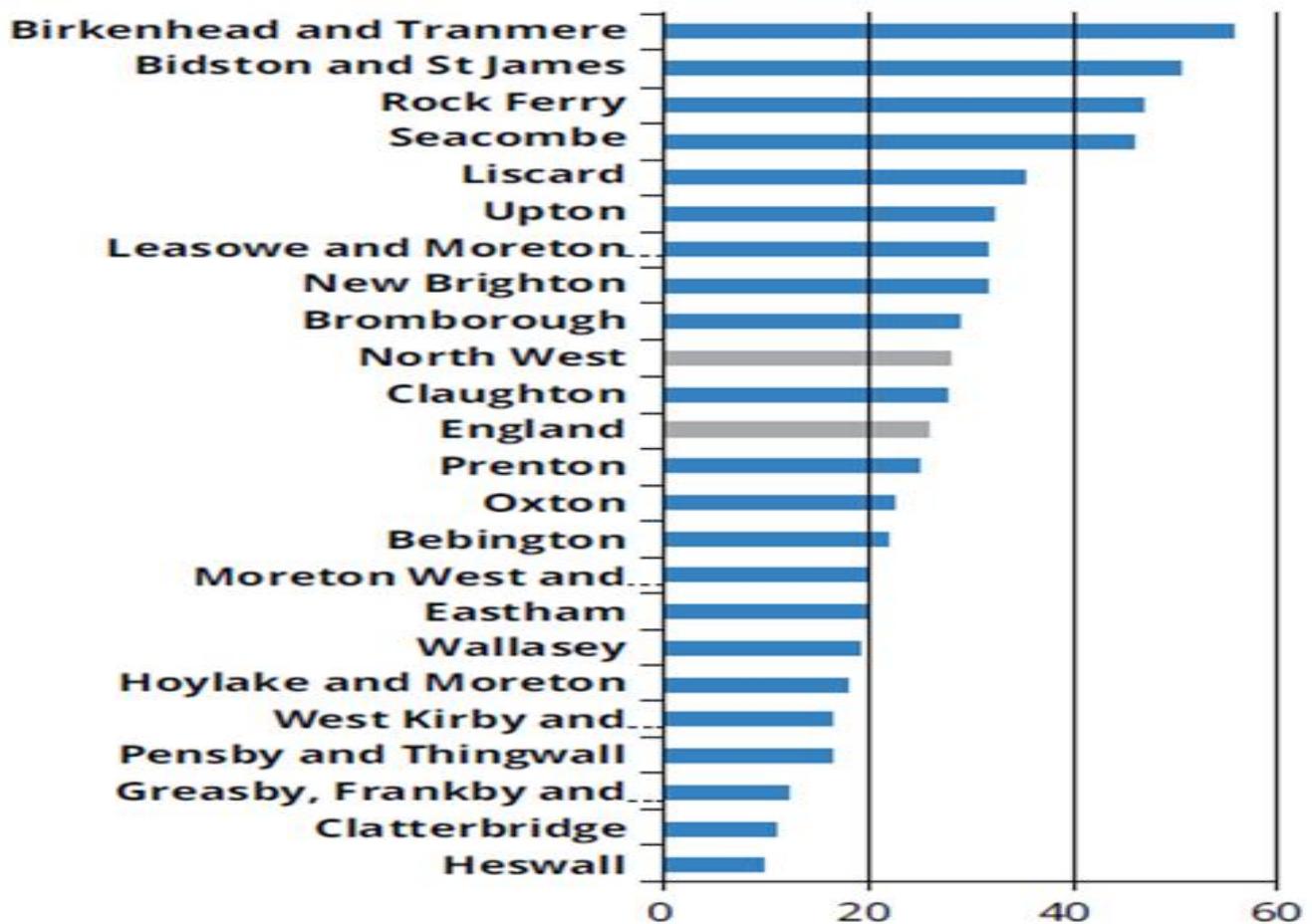
Source: (Office for National Statistics, 2011)

Figure 7: Number of cars per household as a percentage (%) of all households in Wirral (2018)
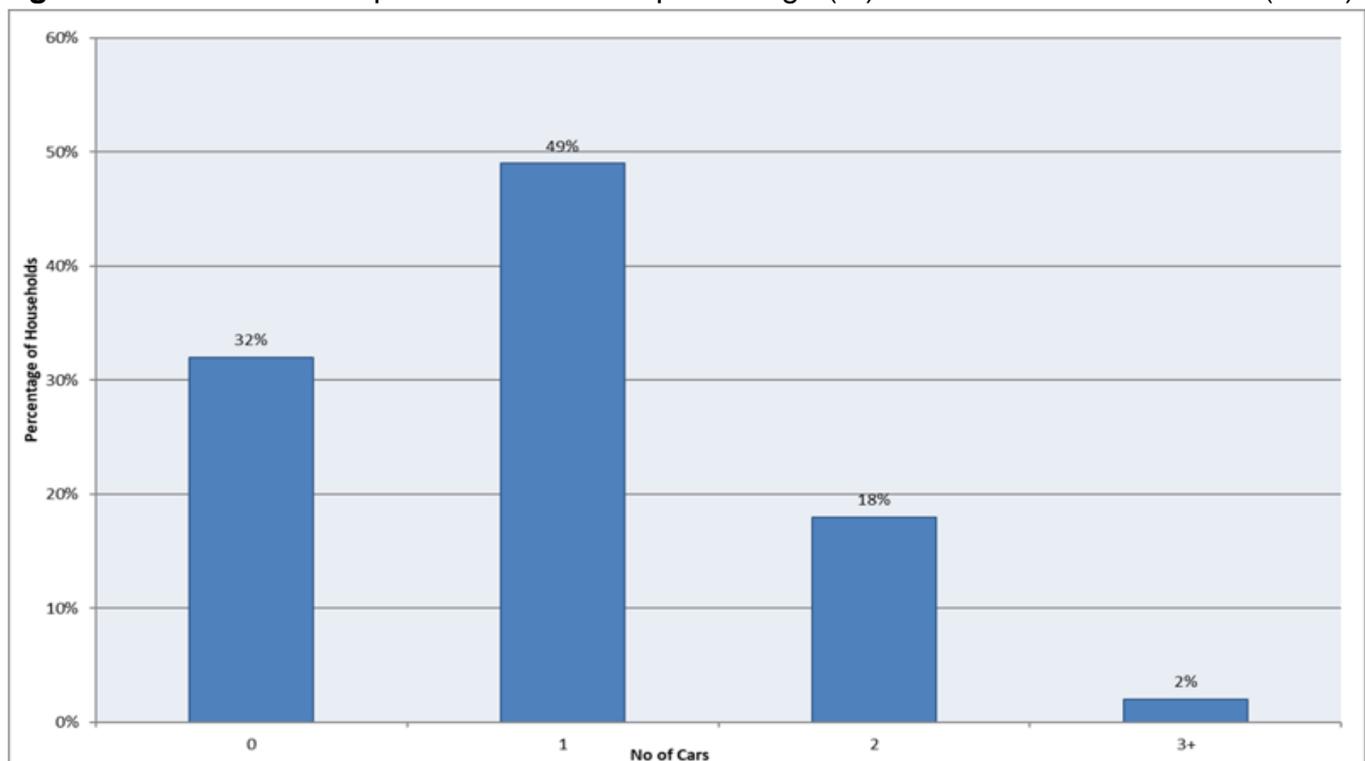
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

A more recent number can be found in the Countywide Household Travel Survey of 2017 which examined car ownership within the Borough. It found approximately 32% of households did not have access to a car or van (**Figure 7**) this is lower than the Liverpool City Region (LCR) average (37%) (Mott Macdonald, 2018). For households without access to cars or vans other modes of transport become vital for access to services.

Nationally in 2017 24% of households in England had no access to a car or van (Department for Transport, 2017). The metropolitan nature of LCR and large parts of eastern Wirral, with subsequent good access to other modes of transport may account for why car ownership is less common in LCR and Wirral compared to England as a whole.

Multiple car or van ownership is slightly higher on average for households with 2 or more cars or vans in Wirral compared to LCR at 18% for Wirral and 17% for LCR. However, for households with three or more cars or vans LCR has on average slightly more households than Wirral. 2% for Wirral and 3% for LCR (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

The Countywide Household Travel survey also shows that the car is the most popular form of transport for most people, of 1685 valid trips in the survey period 43.8% were taken by car. However, this is lower than the 2013 survey when 46.9% of trips surveyed were taken by car (Mott Macdonald, 2018).

In 2017 peak hour cordon counts conducted in Birkenhead also illustrated that private vehicles were the most common form of transport **(Figure 8).**

Figure 8: Percentage (%) modal share into Birkenhead from peak hour cordon counts in 2017
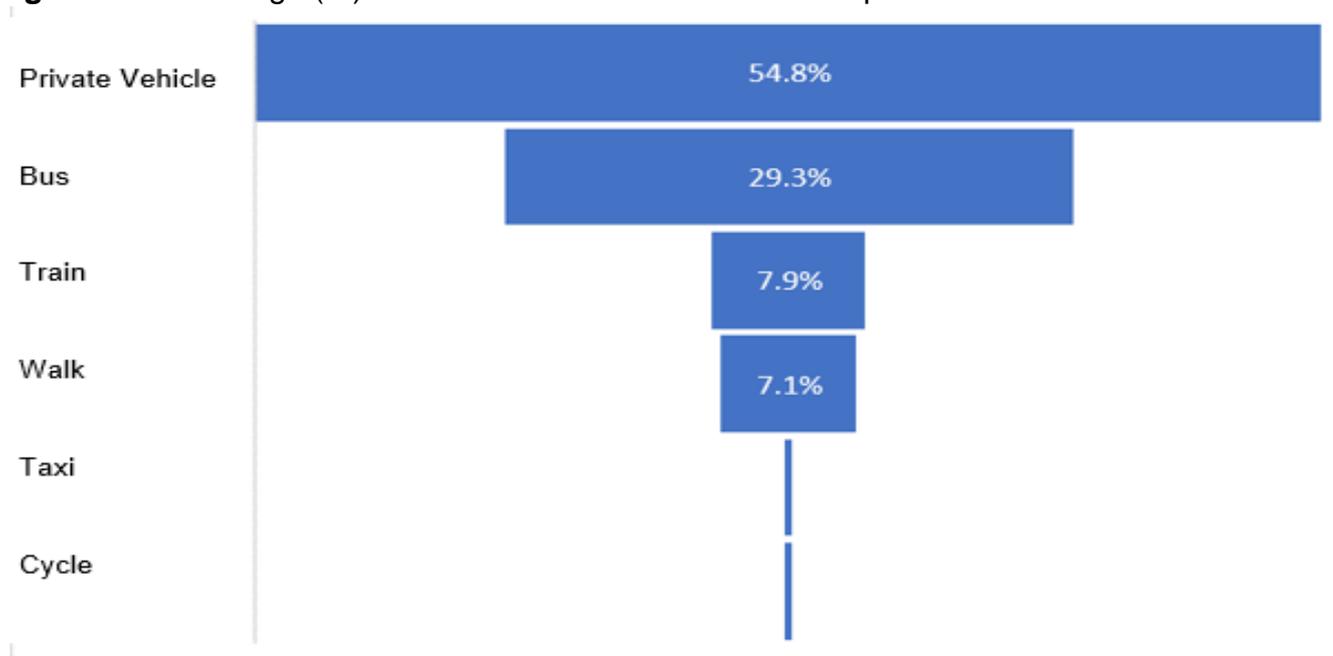
Source: (Modal Share Cordon Counts, 2017)

Road traffic needs to be viewed in the context of Wirral's road infrastructure and usage, the M53 motorway is a major contributor to road traffic in the Borough. Wirral is also known to be a key location in the city region for commuters who live in the Borough but work elsewhere **(Figure 2).**

Figure 9: Average Travel time in minutes to small medium and large employment centres by all modes of transport across Wirral, Liverpool City Region and North West England (2016)
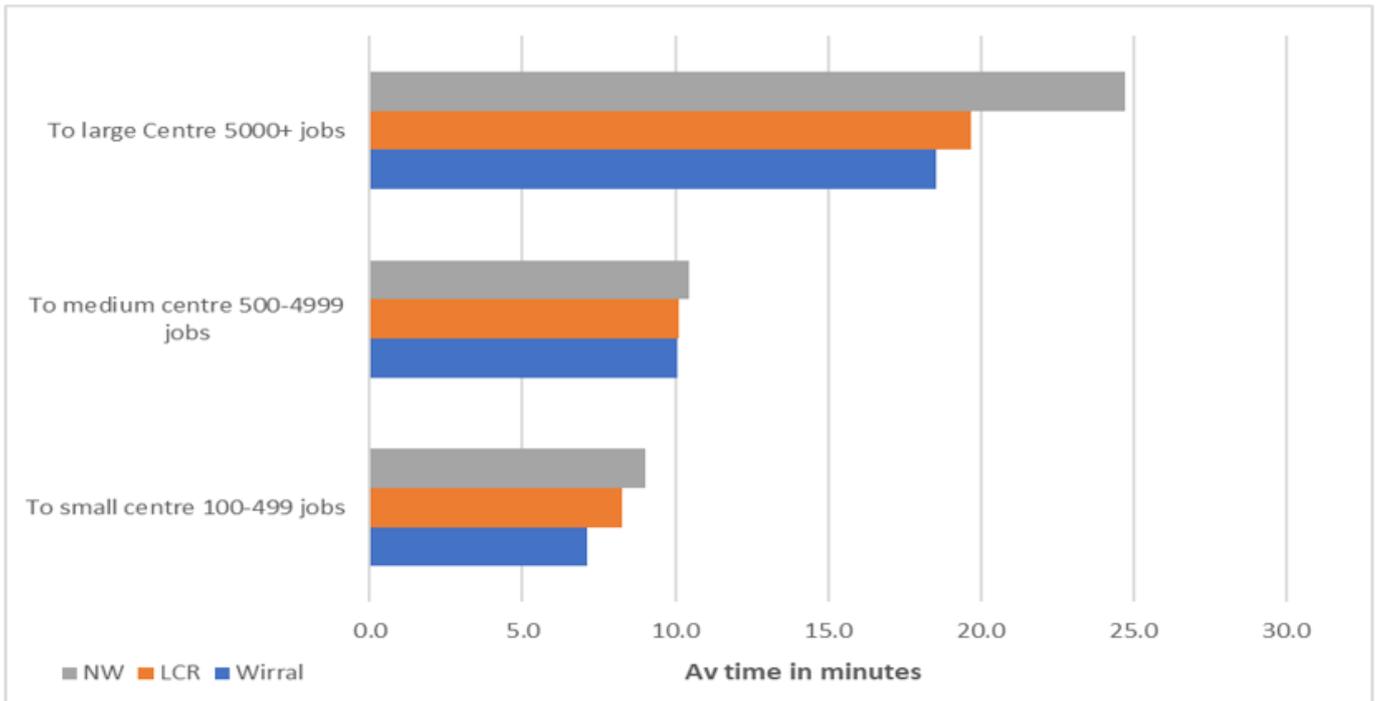
Source: (Department for Transport, 2018).

As **Figure 9** shows Wirral has average journey times to employment centres under those average for LCR and the North West of England (average by all modes of transport).
In Wirral the average travel time to a large employment centre is 18.5 minutes, in many cases for Wirral residents this is Liverpool. The average travel time to a small employment centre is 7 minutes.

Figure 10: Average Travel Time to Access Key Services by Mode of Transport 2014 and 2016
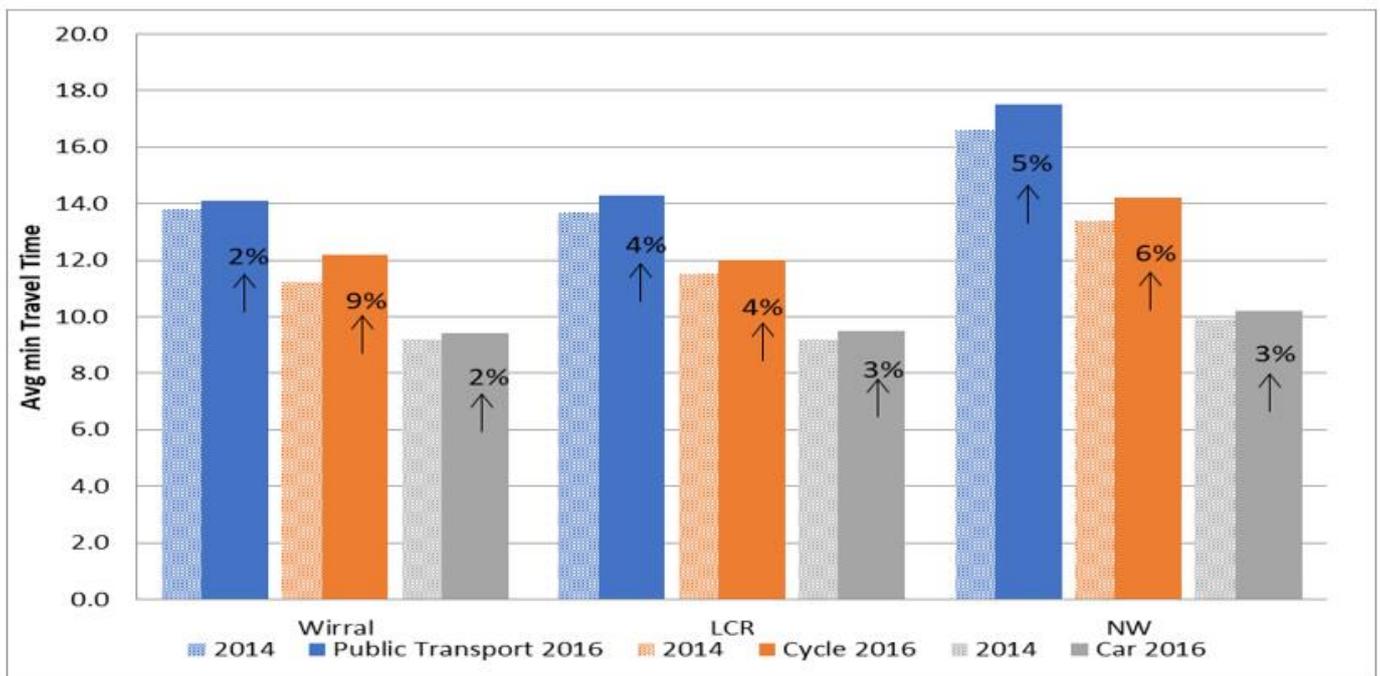
Source: (Department for Transport, 2018).

Figure 10 above highlights the differences in travel times to key services across Wirral, the city region and the north west between different travel modes and the average changes in travel time between 2014 and 2016. For the purpose of this measure, 8 key services are used; (medium size centres of employment, primary schools, secondary schools, further education, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres).

Average travel times have increased between 2014 and 2016 for all modes of transport across Wirral, Liverpool City Region (LCR) and the North West. Cars continue to have the lowest average travel time for all areas shown.

As part of the Liverpool City Region Devolution Deal a Key Route Network (KRN) of main roads, which form the strategic network of the LCR have been agreed. These roads have been managed by the LCR Combined Authority on behalf of the LCR Mayor from May 2017. Ultimately the KRN will benefit from a consistent approach with regard to delivery and highway standards.

Some parts of Wirral's road network currently experience congestion at peak times, the Wirral Traffic Model predicts that certain junctions on the network will experience congestion in the future when considered alongside planned development.

Key parts of the network where junctions are predicted to experience congestion are on the M53 motorway; on the A41; within Birkenhead town centre; and the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock estate.

Wirral Council's car parking offer now includes contactless card and payment via phone as options. This makes it easier for drivers to access and pay for car parking in the Borough.

Figure 11: Key Route Network of Liverpool City Region and associated pinch points (2018)
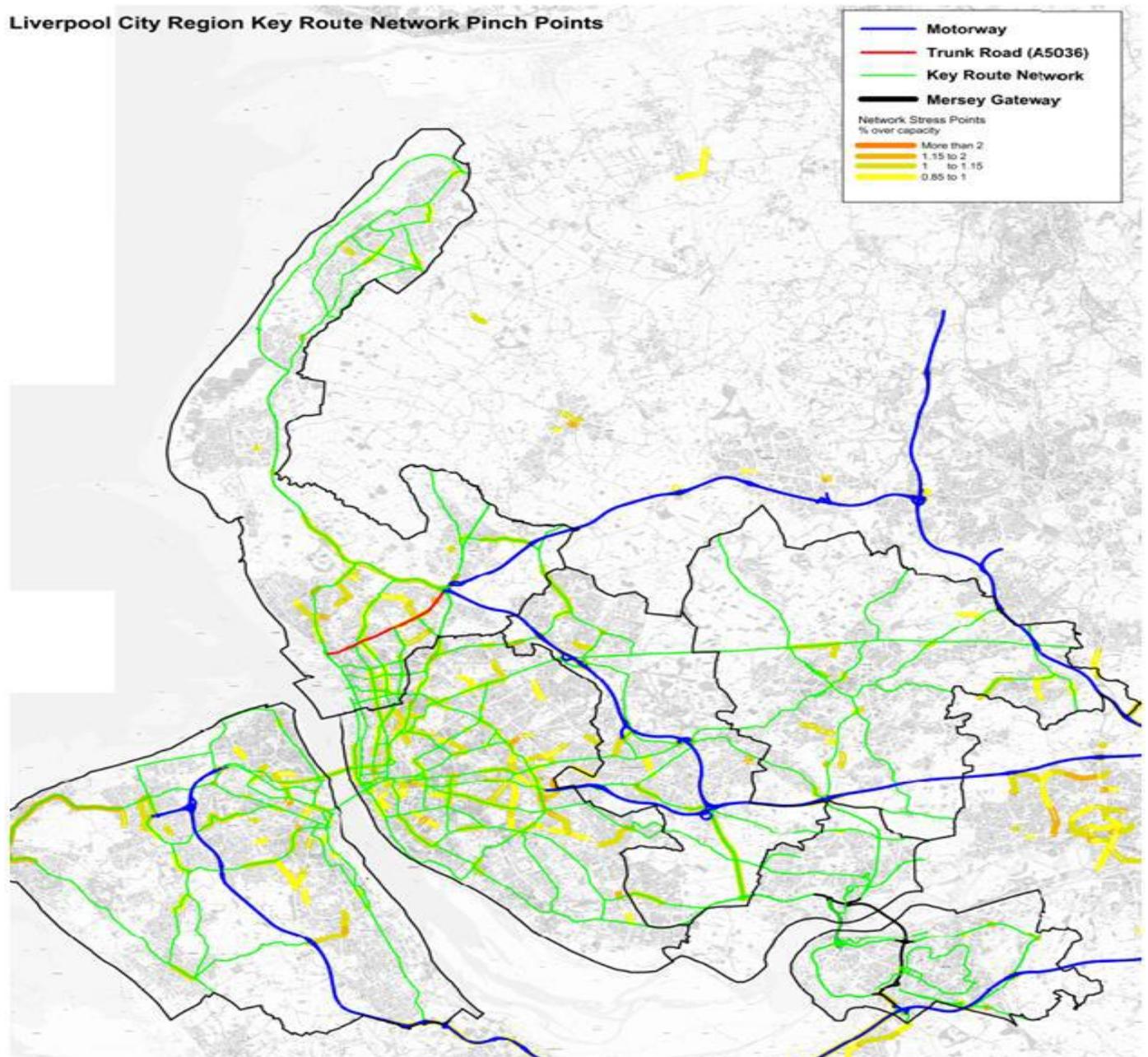
Source: (Mott Macdonald, 2018)

Wirral has over 1135km of roads and the maintenance of roads and footways is a big challenge **(Figure 11).**

Over recent years Wirral has continually invested in the maintenance of roads, footways and bridges and this has proved successful. Wirral has ≤2% of principal A roads where maintenance should have been considered in 2017/18 (Department for Transport, 2018)

The Wirral Transport Network – Bus

Across Liverpool City Region (LCR) over 400,000 bus journeys are taken every day, comprising over 82% of all public transport journeys in the region (Metro Mayor, 2018).

Wirral is served by a network of 38 bus routes. Birkenhead especially has excellent connectivity via bus to the rest of the borough. An interchange at Birkenhead makes it a key point for longer bus journeys. Bus services are provided between many key locations via Birkenhead including to/from Liverpool, Chester, West Kirby and Heswall.

The majority of bus routes are operated by private bus companies (e.g. Arriva and Stagecoach) on a commercial basis which means that the bus operators set the routes and the fares. Routes 1 and 2, and 471 and 472 are part of the Quality Bus Network which means that bus tickets issued by either operator will be accepted on all services on that route. This is a huge benefit to passengers as it increases frequencies and offers great convenience to passengers. Some bus routes are commissioned and subsidised by Merseytravel who provide these services where there is a gap in the network or a particular social need.

Investment by operators has improved the quality of bus services on some routes by providing leather seats, extra legroom, free Wi-Fi, USB charging points, and low emission engines for a cleaner environment. Recent improvements have also seen buses begin to accept contactless payments, reflecting an overall move away from cash across society.

Travel concessions are available on public transport for people aged over 60, and disabled people, as well as young people aged up to 18 including term time only tickets and 'My Ticket', a one day Liverpool City Region wide all day travel bus ticket. Merseytravel's over 60 concession is significantly more generous than the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme which commences at state pension age.

The LCR Metro Mayor has also introduced half price weekly and four-weekly bus passes for apprentices aged 19-24 throughout the Liverpool City Region. This could save apprentices up to £420 a year and is hoped to encourage travel to employment opportunities for apprentices throughout the six districts.

Merseytravel have formed the Liverpool Bus Alliance with the largest two commercial bus operators in the city region, Stagecoach and Arriva. This voluntary partnership has realised many benefits for bus users across the city region such as the fixed price "Solo" ticket accepted by all operators for unlimited travel in a day throughout the Liverpool City Region. Similarly, the "Walrus" smart card has digitised several bus ticket products allowing them to be loaded on to a card and then activated by users for usage. This also provides future opportunities between wider interoperability for tickets between different regions and operators. The work of the Bus Alliance is believed to have assisted in the city region going against national trends of decreasing bus usage. Despite the reduced amount of funding available to Merseytravel to subsidise non-profitable routes. From the three years from Alliance's establishment fare paying passengers across LCR rose by 16.2% (LCR Bus Alliance, 2017).

The Bus Alliance has also established the 'Better By Bus' marketing campaign which seeks to promote buses as a chosen mode of travel rather than being seen as a last resort. Buses offer numerous advantages for users, they cut out the need for car parking, are better for carbon emissions and congestion than users driving individually and can integrate with other transport modes such as walking and trains.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) are exploring options of further bus regulation. In all areas of England except London, buses have been deregulated since 1986. Devolution and the Bus Services Act (2017) provide the LCR CA with several options to explore stronger regulation of buses in the city region. In April 2018 the LCR CA directed Merseytravel to begin evaluating options including:

- Franchising
- Enhanced Partnership

Although bus fares have risen when compared to the overall cost of car driving including fuel, insurance etc. buses still provide good value which is especially important for lower income households. A study commissioned by Stagecoach found that a commuter travelling daily between Heswall and Liverpool via the 471/472 bus using a Megarider weekly pass would make an annual saving of £1582.40 compared to driving in a car (including on costs) (Stagecoach, 2018).

The Wirral Transport Network – Rail

Whilst overall Wirral has good rail connectivity with surrounding areas, within the Borough there is variation in how easy it is to travel within the borough to and from certain areas and into/out of the Borough. **Figure 12** provides a pictorial view of those Wirral (and closest proximity) stations to other parts of the rail network.

Many areas of east and north Wirral are well connected by rail with Merseyrail operating frequent services (between four and six an hour) to Ellesmere Port and Chester, West Kirby, New Brighton and to Liverpool via the Mersey Railway Tunnel. There are up to fourteen trains per hour from Hamilton Square to Liverpool James Street, a journey of three minutes.

Merseyrail is in the process of obtaining a new fleet of trains which will operate from 2020. Currently Merseyrail has the oldest average age fleet of any rail operator in the UK. Unusually, the new trains will be owned by Merseytravel rather than being leased. This local ownership allows for greater control of the 52 locomotives ordered. The new trains will be significantly more accessible all offering step free access (Merseyrail, 2019).

The Borderlands rail line (Wrexham-Liverpool) also operates hourly services from Wrexham to Bidston, where it connects with Merseyrail services providing connectivity to Liverpool. Whilst the line does provide some rail connectivity in the west of the Borough and links to employment at Deeside Industrial Park and Enterprise Zone in North Wales it is limited by the location of some stations (e.g. Heswall station is located far from the centre of the settlement), and limited frequency connections with the Merseyrail network at Bidston.

Figure 12: Map of local rail services in Liverpool City Region (2019)
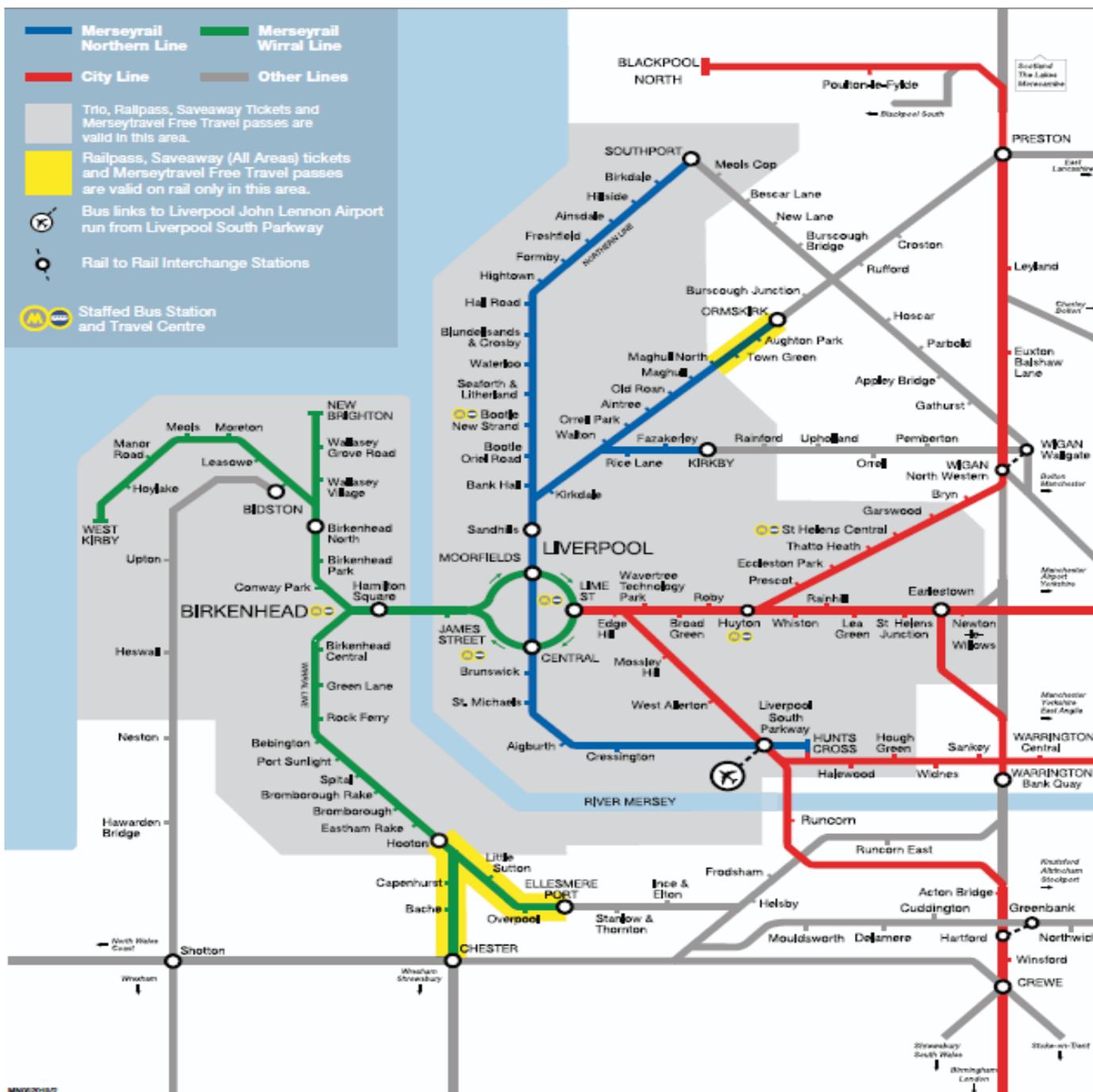
Source: Merseyrail 2019

In October 2018 Keolis Amey took over the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise from Arriva Trains Wales. This operates under a Welsh Government owned brand and company as Transport for Wales.

The franchise includes several key routes in the Northwest such as Manchester Airport to Holyhead. It also includes the Borderlands Line which runs from Bidston on the Merseyrail Wirral Line down through West Wirral to Deeside finishing in Wrexham. As part of their bid Keolis Amey intend to introduce major changes to their routes including the Borderlands Line.

This provides opportunities for Wirral residents and businesses, combined with a new operator it provides other opportunities for new partnerships between Wirral Council, Merseytravel and the Combined Authority with Transport for Wales (TfW).

This includes:
- Services on the Borderlands line will increase to two trains per hour by December 2021. One of these services will be a limited stop service. TfW sees this as part of a "Northeast Wales Metro".

- Station investments are planned across TfW's network e.g. ticket machines, key investment sites include Shotton and Wrexham General on the Borderlands Line.

- Refurbished Class 230 Diesel units will be provisioned on the Borderlands Line from 2019. With greater capacity and reliability, TfW believes this will improve commuter confidence in the Line.

- Additional Sunday services on Borderlands Line.

In total on Wirral there are 25 stations, 23 on the Merseyrail Wirral line and two on the Borderlands line (**see Figure 12**).

There are some stations in Wirral which are not fully accessible or require improvements, Increased number of park and ride spaces or new park and ride facilities would benefit passengers seeking to split their commute between rail and private vehicles. In turn this would benefit congestion and reduce usage of the Mersey Tunnels.

The 2011 Census indicates that over 18,000 people commute from Wirral to Liverpool everyday with 27% (4,860 people) travelling by train (Office for National Statistics, 2011). In 2018/19 the Merseyrail network provided 42.1million passenger journeys, up 2.8% from 2017/18 (at 40.9million) (Office of Road and Rail, 2018). Birkenhead Hamilton Square was the eighth most used station in Merseyside in 2018/19 with 1,952,446 entries and exits estimated for the year (Office of Road and Rail, 2018).

For longer term rail journeys, Liverpool itself has a major railway station at Lime Street. However, this is relatively poorly connected for direct services to major cities around the UK, given the size of Liverpool. There are twenty cities across the UK with greater rail connectivity than Liverpool but only seven of these have a larger population (Liverpool CIty Region Combined Authority, 2018).

The Wirral Transport Network - Ferry

Wirral is served by a direct commuter shuttle ferry service from Seacombe to Pier Head in Liverpool operating in morning and evening peaks every twenty minutes Monday – Friday. Between these times and at weekends a tourist focused 'river explorer' ferry service operates that calls at Woodside in Birkenhead in addition to these two stops. Each year there are 450,000 to 500,000 passengers using the river explorer service which outnumbers the commuter service approximately three to one (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2016) **(see Figure 13).**

The running of the services and terminals at Seacombe and Woodside are heavily subsidised by the Combined Authority. The commuter service currently operates on an approximate annual subsidy of £625,000 which challenges the long-term viability of the ferry service (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2016).

This service is also popular with cyclists crossing the Mersey due to the greater space for bicycles compared to Merseyrail services.

Increasingly the Mersey Ferries are being developed as a cultural and visitor attraction in their own right aside from their core purpose as a mode of travel to boost their viability. For example, evening cruises and cruises down the Manchester Ship Canal are operated. At the two ferry terminals in Wirral tourist attractions operate from them, the U Boat Story at Woodside in Birkenhead and Spaceport at Seacombe in Wallasey. Soon this will be developed into a new Children's Museum Eureka! Mersey developed by the National Children's Museum in Halifax. The site is set to open in 2021 within the buildings of the Seacombe Ferry Terminal.

Similarly, the former booking hall at Woodside Ferry Terminal has been taken over by Wirral Chamber of Commerce and has opened as Woodside Village in 2019. A range of food and drink vendors have taken residence in the building, similar to the style of Baltic Market in Liverpool. Woodside Ferry Terminal had been considered for closure in 2016 as part of the long term strategy for the Mersey Ferries (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2016). But this decision was reversed due to political pressure.

Figure 13: Map of Mersey Ferry sites (2019)

Source: Mersey Ferries 2019

Plans are also underway, as per the strategy, for a new ferry to replace the two ferries currently used which were both built in 1959. A new ferry could be better designed for alternate uses and events and reduce running and maintenance costs for the service.

The Wirral Transport Network – Walking and Cycling

Wirral benefits from a number of local on and off road cycle routes and paths, as well as the 44 mile National Cycle Network Route 56 which runs from Seacombe along the coast to New Brighton and Leasowe, and then south through Wirral via Brimstage to Neston, and the Wirral Circular Trail (Regional Route 89), a 35 mile route which runs predominantly along Wirral's coastline. Over recent years significant investment has been made in improving infrastructure for pedestrian and cyclists and as a result key routes such as the A41 and commuter routes have new facilities making it easier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians to undertake journeys by bike and on foot.

Wirral is also fortunate to have a high number of quality green spaces such as Wirral Country Park and the North Wirral Coastal Park. There are also numerous public rights of way throughout the Borough, including promenades on the coast and routes though woodlands.

Town centre and urban area provision is varied however in some areas such as New Brighton, public realm improvements have greatly improved the facilities for pedestrians.

Wirral Council maintains about 100 miles of public footpaths, bridleways, byways, permissive paths and cycle tracks throughout the Borough. Wirral forms part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 which details future and committed projects for improving rights of way in the Borough and the wider city region (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2018).

There are 22 automatic cycle counters on key commuter and leisure routes across the Borough. In the past 10 years there has been a steady increase in cycling across the Borough – up by 43% between 2008/09 and 2016/17 (Merseyside Cycle Monitoring, 2017). An indexed chart **(Figure 14)**, where 2008/09 = 100, is shown.

Figure 14: Change in number of cyclists passing automatic cycle counters in Wirral 2008/09 – 2016/17
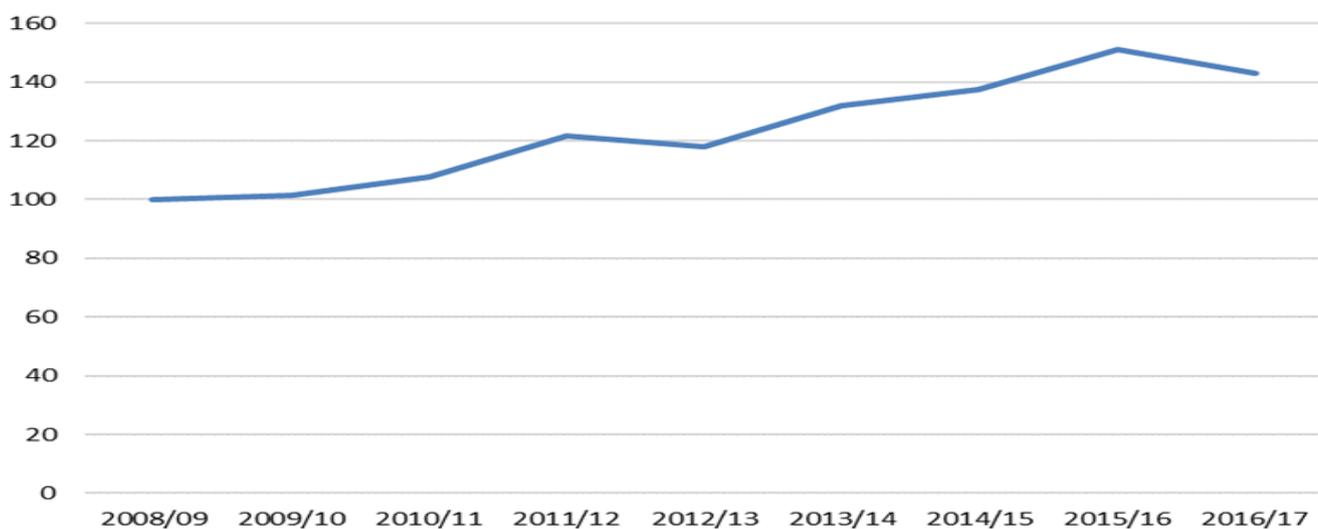
Source: (Merseyside Cycle Monitoring, 2017)

Cycle times have seen the greatest increase by mode of transport in average travel time to key services between 2014 and 2016 (9%). Wirral also has seen greater rises in average travel times by cycle to key services than Liverpool City Region (LCR) or the North West **(Figure 10).** This does not mean that cycling has not been invested in locally. Cycling investments in infrastructure may not decrease journey times but often focus on the safety and desirability of cycling routes (e.g. separation from road traffic). However, the average travel time by cycle to key services in 2016 was still 2 minutes less than the North West average and just 0.2 minutes more than the LCR average.

Cycle parking is available at twenty Merseyrail stations in the Borough, users can apply for a free fob to access secure cycle storage areas. This provides great connectivity between rail and cycling, opening up more opportunities for journeys which combine these two modes of travel. Bicycles can also be taken on Merseyrail services without a need to reserve spaces etc, cycle storage provision is provided for within carriages.

Seven Merseyrail stations and Seacombe Ferry Terminal also offer affordable bicycle hire via the Bike and Go scheme. Users can access bicycles for hire from stations in Wirral and around the country. Similarly, to bicycle parking his offers greater connectivity options for either leisure or business journeys. Although primarily for short trips, walking accounts for 21% of all trips across Merseyside (Mott Macdonald) (2018).   Walking is an important part of the network and is often part of a longer journey e.g. walking to and from a station or bus stop, or from the car park.

The Wirral Transport Network – Safety and Efficiency

An efficient, well maintained and safe network is essential to support the delivery of the Council's economic growth and regeneration plans. Residents, business and visitors must be able to get to where they need to go safely and efficiently. Wirral Council invested in improving the street lighting within the borough through Phase 1 of the Light Emitting Diode (LED) programme delivered in 2015/6 saw the conversion of 7,533 high energy sodium lamps replaced with LED lighting.

Phase 2 will see the conversion of more than 27,000 units, over a 3-year period. Our road and rail network need to be able to support businesses with well-maintained and well-managed infrastructure which enables reliable journey times. An efficient and attractive bus network is reliant on a well maintained and managed highway.

Safe travel on our network is essential to our everyday lives – and includes those who visit, live or work in Wirral, whether as passengers, drivers, riders, pedestrians or cyclists. We are committed to improving road safety for all road users and continue to work with partners such as Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Merseyside Police and health services to educate road users and to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads via the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership.

Overall, there is a long-term improving picture of safety on Wirral roads with 430 injury collisions in 2018 compared to 1,379 in 2000. Whilst measuring collision data year to year is affected by annual random fluctuations, there were 1.6% fewer people injured on Wirral in road crashes in 2018 compared to 2017 and 24% fewer people injured comparing the average of the last 5 years (2014 – 2018; 651 casualties) to the average of the previous 5 years (2009 -2013; 860 casualties) (Wirral Council, 2018).

Merseyrail has agreed to retain guards on its trains once the new fleet of locomotives is fully introduced from 2021. As the new locomotives have driver operated doors, Merseyrail was considering removing additional guard staff from services. A retention of guards on the trains could be beneficial for passenger safety and perception of safety.

British Transport Police have overseen the national transport safety campaign "See it, say it, sorted" which encourages passengers to report suspicious activity simply via either text or phone. An advertising campaign has supported this campaign nationally including across Merseyside. Other key considerations of efficiency may include:
- Local businesses are easily accessible enabling them to thrive and increase the number and range of jobs in Wirral
- High quality transport infrastructure links Wirral to national and regional networks making Wirral an attractive place for businesses to thrive and invest
- Residents can access education, training and employment opportunities to develop workforce skills and gain employment
- Businesses on local highs streets and in district centres can be easily accessed by customers
- Tourism designations are easily accessible from inside and outside the Borough ensuring a vibrant tourism economy

The Wirral Transport Network – Reliable and Affordable

As noted earlier many residents do not have access to a car, and even those that do still use public transport. We know that for many people there are barriers to using public transport – such as cost, information, accessibility and confidence.

In 2018 a report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation noted that "Residents in low-income neighbourhoods are willing to travel to work but find commuting options constrained by unaffordable or unreliable public transport, especially when combined with the prospect of low-paid or insecure employment." (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018).

Transport is therefore vital for improving social equality via access to employment opportunities.

Public transport needs to be both attractive and affordable to encourage more people to switch from cars to public transport modes.

The Wirral Transport Network – Healthy, Active Travel

Fifty percent (50%) of journeys (under 5 kilometres) in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) are undertaken by car (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2017).

The benefits of switching these journeys to active travel, walking or cycling are numerous. As well as tackling emissions from transport and encouraging a shift to walking and cycling as cleaner, non-polluting modes the benefits of active travel on an individual's health are well recognised.

Building walking and cycling into people's daily lives is one of the most effective ways of raising physical activity levels. Physical inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and costs £7.4 billion a year to business and wider society. Growth in road transport has been a major factor in decreasing levels of physical activity in the population and subsequently increasing obesity (Public Health England, 2016).

In LCR encouraging people to switch from other modes of travel to walking and cycling could be particularly effective for short journeys because of the existing high proportion of short journeys which are taken by car.

This means that there are many potential journeys which could be "converted" to active travel. Secondly short journeys under 5 km are the most practical for switching to active travel because of their physical practicality. E.g. many people would be physically be able to walk or cycle short journeys.

Key considerations may include:
- Residents have healthier lives through a transport network that is safe, well maintained and promotes healthy travel modes such as walking and cycling
- Residents can use alternative travel modes to the private car to reduce carbon emissions and improve standards of air quality
- Residents have an improved quality of life by easy access to leisure and cultural opportunities and important local facilities

The Wirral Transport Network – Inclusive, Integrated Transport

Transport provides access to jobs, education, services, and recreational activities. There are clear links between transport and social exclusion. Overcoming barriers to opportunities and services is a key issue. We need a transport offer for disabled and vulnerable people that improves quality of life and encourages independence.

Key considerations include:
- Older people can access key services to help them live independently and prevent social isolation
- Children can travel to school in a way that is safe and promotes their health
- All young people can access education, training and employment opportunities
- Families in poverty have affordable transport modes to access education, training and employment opportunities
- Disabled people can access education, employment and training opportunities

The new step free Merseyrail rolling stock as previously described will increase the overall accessibility of the local rail network. Furthermore, the generous concessionary travel offers in LCR for residents 60+ allows older people to stay independent and offers more travel options than similar concessionary passes nationally (e.g. LCR offer includes Mersey Ferries). Under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme Disabled Person's bus passes are also provisioned for.

Merseytravel wishes to further develop the smart ticket Walrus card beyond its current provision on buses. Smart cards offer significant potential for more integrated transport systems. E.g. Merseytravel ticket products are interoperable between different transport providers. Future products could include better regional interoperability and better use between different modes of public transport.

Transport and Air Quality

Transport policies can have a detrimental impact on health and the environment, as a leading source of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In cities, over-reliance on private vehicles, particularly older vehicles and diesel vehicles and fuels are major drivers of urban air pollution.

In 2017 transport accounted for 28% of UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the largest emitting sector of the UK economy (Committee on Climate Change, 2018). As well as being a leading source of GHG emissions, the transport sector is responsible for a large proportion of urban air pollution.

Road transport is the main source for 96% of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) declared for NO_2 pollution and for 75% of AQMAs declared for PM10 pollution (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2018).

Transport and transport accessibility – notably the City Region's overreliance on cars for many short journeys (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2017)- plays a significant role in our air quality outcomes. Supporting active travel, greater use of public transport and zero emission vehicles can help us improve local air quality.

We must balance our social and economic needs for transport with the potential negative incomes it can have for our health, climate and wider environment.

What does the future look like?

Transport is changing and becoming more focussed on the principle of "mobility" across all modes and providers rather than single dominant modes of transport (e.g. cars). The revolution in the on-demand nature of taxi services is an obvious example (e.g. Uber, Arriva Click). The concept is intrinsically linked to a cleaner, more efficient transport system which has less negative impact on population health. It is impossible to predict the future of transport but there is a strong potential that transport will be seen as more of a service rather than being seen in terms of cars and other assets.

Allied to this is the emerging theory of "peak car" (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 2013). This suggests that car usage has peaked and challenges the need to plan for continued usage in private cars. Changes in travel behaviour are influenced by wider economic factors such as the trend towards a shared economy of service provision rather than product ownership. Traditionally cars have been seen as a socially desirable mode of transport and something that individuals should aspire to own. As public awareness around climate, air pollution and health increase we may see public perceptions around the desirability and draw of cars change. Presently public transport may be seen as a last resort or second choice when individuals make decisions about how they travel.

Nationally and internationally developments are underway regarding both electric and autonomous vehicles. Electric vehicles are zero emission in use, however for them to be truly zero emission the electricity that powers them has to be generated from sources that do not emit CO_2 e.g. wind, solar. Presently whilst low and zero carbon energy sources contribute to the energy mix in the UK, we still rely on burning fossil fuels such as coal and gas to meet much of our electricity demands. Similarly, autonomous vehicles may prove to be safer than cars driven by humans, and as they develop and become adopted roads may become safer.

However, it's important that electric and autonomous vehicles aren't seen as a panacea to existing transport issues in Wirral and the wider Liverpool City Region. Fundamentally they continue to rely on a model of transport where many individuals continue to own and drive private vehicles. This presents the same issues as presently experienced around congestion, domination of roads by cars and lack of transport equity with lower income individuals being less likely to drive and missing out opportunities as a result.

Locally and nationally we need to see a change in how transport and travel is planned and designed to put all road users on equal footing, no matter how they are travelling. This is about approaching placemaking from a people not a car perspective.

A window of opportunity exists over the next few years for politicians and decision makers in Wirral, regionally and nationally to advocate for new models of transport that differ from a continuation of existing models. The establishment of the LCR Combined Authority allows Wirral in coordination with the CA, Merseytravel and other partners better opportunities to advocate for a change in direction.

Nationally many examples already exist of the ability for policy to drive changes in transport. For example, when it was discovered that diesel motor vehicles were more polluting than previously thought government amended car tax rates to reflect this in 2017. In 2018 there was a 30% decline in the number of diesel cars being registered for the first time compared to 2017 (Department for Transport, 2019).

The government identified several grand challenges as part of their development of the UK Industrial Strategy. The future of mobility was identified as one of these challenges:

"We are on the cusp of a profound change in how we move people, goods and services around our towns, cities and countryside. This is driven by extraordinary innovation in engineering, technology and business models." - (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2019)

The government has identified a "mission" to respond to this challenge by aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles, with all new cars and vans effectively zero emission by 2040 (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2019).

The way we work is changing, more businesses and organisations may offer employees the chance to work from home or from other locations. Technology continues to develop e.g. phone calls from laptops, video conferencing, virtual meetings etc. which allows many office or field based employees the ability to perform work duties remotely.

Therefore, the traditional transport demand arising from commuting to and from a place of work may change:
- We may see fewer journeys for the purpose of work/commuting on roads and public transport networks.

- We may see fewer journeys at conventional peak times on roads and public transport networks, employers may offer flexible working arrangements for employees e.g. for parents. Employees may also utilise flexible working to avoid traditional peaks in traffic, e.g. arriving and leaving work earlier/later than 9-5 Monday-Friday pattern.

Some jobs are less likely to transition to agile working because of necessity e.g. frontline roles in service delivery, manufacturing etc. Or because of technical barriers that would otherwise make it difficult for employees to work remotely.

Concerns around health and wellbeing have also become more prevalent in the workplace. Employers may encourage employees to commute via active travel methods either from perspectives of mental and physical health or sustainability. For example, employers may offer cycle to work schemes to assist employees seeking to start cycling. Employers may also offer showers, cycle storage facilities etc.

Technological developments have altered other journey motivations too. Online retail has grown significantly and is challenging high street/town centre retail. Therefore, people may make fewer journeys for the purposes of retail etc. particularly to town centres and retail parks. Many areas of high street or out of town retail have been built and designed principally for car access e.g. with good road access, extensive car parking etc. A change in retail demand may provide opportunities for redesign of town centres and their transport access as the offer changes from conventional retail to the concept of town centres focused on "experience" with more leisure and recreational opportunities on offer alongside retail.

We cannot second guess how technology will develop, but we must be open to new technology in relation to transport and be aware of any potential risks/benefits and develop and understanding so we can minimise any risks and maximise any benefits. As we move towards a future where sustainable transport is linked to growth for public and economic benefit there is a need to move to a people centred approach to support our placemaking rather than relying on people still driving in single occupancy vehicles:

- Encourage usage of public transport through improved provision (such as an improved bus network, new or improved rail infrastructure and ensuring these are complimentary)
- Encourage healthy active travel by supporting the roll out of an LCR cycling and walking network and;
- Drive innovation in transport delivery (through 'on demand' services, improved ticketing provision, and 'greening' of travel)

The Liverpool City Region's (LCR) transport network remains heavily reliant on fossil fuel and decarbonisation is needed to support the Metro Mayor's ambition for a zero carbon city region by 2040.

At the time of writing a Mayoral Transport Strategy is under development which will likely include measures to decarbonise the city region's transport system. The City Region also has strengths in hydrogen and alternative fuel technologies reinforcing LCR's position as an energy city region with wind and tidal now and into the future.

What are we doing and why?

Growth and Jobs

Transport supports the Liverpool City Region's growth priorities in three main ways:
  a) Supporting access to key growth sites and places of learning either via enhanced connectivity or though wider ticketing or mobility enhancements to address barriers to accessing work, education or key facilities.
  b) Ensuring that the Liverpool City Region's transport interventions orientates economic growth opportunities (e.g. ports, airport, Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2) and the movement of freight, which are clearly evidenced in a way that supports our people and our businesses.
  c) Ensuring that these transport and growth interventions support the inclusive growth agenda through contributing to a radical reduction in emissions, use of resources and positively improving levels of equality, health and wellbeing.

Good quality transport networks help support a sustainable growth pattern which benefits our people and businesses. Inter-regional connectivity is vital for supporting growth, attracting high skilled employees and maximising our competitive advantage.

Building Local Partnerships

Wirral Council actively participates and contributes to a wide range of regional partnerships. These include statutory bodies such as the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Merseytravel and wider regional bodies.

These include Transport for the North, England's first sub-national transport body. This brings together twenty local transport authorities and business leaders together with Network Rail, Highways England, and HS2 Ltd, working together to represent the north of England in discussions with government. This means that the north of England can speak with a single voice when discussing transport with government, this unity strengthens our position. Similarly, we engage with the Northern Powerhouse partnership work between government and partners across the north of England.

Connecting Wirral – Wirral Transport Strategy

The Wirral Plan provides the overall direction of the Wirral Partnership, all the agencies in Wirral delivering public services. A series of strategies underpins the overarching Wirral Plan. The Wirral Transport Strategy covers transport in the Borough up to 2020.

The Wirral Transport Strategy provides a list of priorities for transport in the Borough. This directs the local vision for transport:
- Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently
- Reliable and affordable public transport
- Encourage healthy active travel
- Inclusive integrated transport that supports our residents needs

These priorities set the action plans for the strategy the Transport Steering Group, consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders which informs the delivery plan for the strategy. This ensures it remains relevant and aware of local, regional and national developments around transport policy and delivery. Wirral's transport network and transport services are fundamental to supporting the delivery of every theme of the Wirral Plan.

Wirral's Road Safety Plan

Wirral's Road Safety Plan covers the period from 2018-20, built around the ethos of "shared roads, shared responsibility". This supports the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership's Liverpool City Region wide vision "A reduction in the numbers of those killed and seriously injured to fewer than 400 by 2020, with the ultimate vision of a future where no-one is killed on Merseyside's roads and the injury rate is reduced."

The Road Safety Plan contributes to the three themes of the overarching Wirral Plan for the Borough up to 2020:
- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Driving economic growth
- Improving the local environment

It also links closely with the Wirral Transport Strategy described above which pledges to "Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work".

Wirral Council is a key partner of the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, working together to delivering engagement and educational activities around road safety. We are committed to reducing the number of injury collisions on our roads to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured. No one should be harmed or affected by road traffic collisions going about their daily life.

Network Management Plan

We are committed to tackling congestion and causes of disruption on the highway network. Making the best use of our current road network is important for both economic vitality and society in general. Roads facilitate the transport of people and goods, provide access to homes, businesses and other destinations, and provide public space where people shop, socialise or relax.

This plan sets out the framework of how we manage the highway network in order to minimise disruption and ensure the efficient movement of people and goods in Wirral and throughout the Liverpool City Region as a whole. Whilst road users may have differing expectations, reliable journey times are important to the majority of users. Therefore, we must identify current and future causes of congestion and disruption and put plans in place to take appropriate action.

It is important to ensure that the network caters for all road users/modes of transport. There is an emphasis on providing sustainable alternatives to private car usage by promoting walking and cycling, thus improving the environment (air and noise quality) and making Wirral a more 'liveable' Borough. In order to achieve this, there are two streams to the road hierarchy which must be considered, including:
- Road User Hierarchy and
- Road Mode Hierarchy

By this we mean defining the priorities and hierarchical importance of different categories of road users. Traditionally cars have been prioritised but now we want to prioritise more vulnerable road users such as walkers and cyclists.

Birkenhead Urban Blueprint

Birkenhead is at a turning point. The Council has established a joint venture partnership with Muse Developments – the Wirral Growth Company – to redesign and develop the existing assets of Birkenhead Town Centre to transform it into a modern, thriving centre with a reconfigured commercial business district, a new and vibrant market dedicated to quality food and fresh produce and an enhanced public realm, leisure, commercial and retail offer.

The layout of the road network in parts of Birkenhead is not conducive to creating the accessible and connected environment that is needed to support a vibrant thriving centre. There are opportunities to enhance the overall attractiveness for investment through improved walking and cycling routes in Birkenhead and the surrounding area. Encouraging more active modes of transport would support health and wellbeing and increase overall football into the town centre. Sustainability Central and Wirral Waters cycling prospectus.

Sustainable Transport Enhancements Package (STEP)

STEP is investing in new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, bus and rail upgrades and public realm improvements within the Borough to address bottlenecks on our road network, provide low carbon infrastructure and support a door to door sustainable travel experience.

The transport network depends on investment in both major schemes and smaller sustainable transport programmes to improve transport links and open up a choice of travel to Liverpool City Region visitors and residents. It is therefore crucial to ensure that investment in this area continues and contributes to an environment that is accessible, efficient, safe and reliable and will provide a STEP change toward further sustainable growth.

£4.52m has been invested within Wirral between 2017/18 and 2020/21.

Tower Road Civilised Street

Tower Road has historically been part of the dock estate between Birkenhead and Wallasey. Until recently it served as a transport corridor rather than a destination due to the lack of facilities in the vicinity. The Tower Road corridor is vehicle dominated, has a poor safety record (especially for vulnerable road users), with a poor environment and image.

The existing layout of Tower Road creates severance issues for the existing occupiers, including Wirral Metropolitan College and the Contact Company. The environment is not attractive for pedestrians and cyclists which discourages the use of active travel modes.

The scheme consists of major public realm improvements to the A554 Tower Road with the provision of wider pavements to provide high quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, shared surface areas and reduced carriageway widths to reduce traffic speeds, which will benefit road safety and the experience for road users.

The A554 Tower Road Civilised Street bid is for a total of £3,200,000, with £2,100,000 applied for from the Department for Transport (DfT) and a 30% local contribution making up the remaining £900,000.

European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF)

The walking and cycling infrastructure around the dock estates for Wallasey and Birkenhead is poor, with narrow footways and limited use of dropped kerbs. The proximity of the RoRo (Roll on, Roll off) ferry terminal on Tower Road mean that they are more frequently used by HGVs (Heavy Goods Vehicles), which can be intimidating for cyclists riding on the road.

Until the investment in a new bascule bridge on Tower Road the cross dock movement had been a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists due to narrow unattractive facilities on the bridges.

Wirral Council, in conjunction with Peel Holdings Ltd, as part of a Liverpool City Region (LCR) bid for European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) money. The scheme focuses on improving the walking and cycling infrastructure within the dock estate and builds upon the investment and work undertaken through STEP and the new bridges on Tower Road.

Along with the Tower Road Civilised Street Scheme the ESIF scheme will help to improve the walking and cycling environment within the dock estate.

Wirral Councils' element of the bid is for a total of £650,000 which will provide a cycle route on Dock Road (from Duke Street to the Grain Warehouses) and tree planting on Tower Road and Tower Wharf.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

The Liverpool City Region Transport Partnership is leading the development of the Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), an ambitious strategy that sets out the long-term vision for cycling and walking in the city region.

A better, safer, more enjoyable network of paths and pavements will help everyone become an active traveller, and this ten year plan will provide a vision and focus for this. A well-thought-out route network for cyclists and walkers in and out of towns across the whole city region will make LCR a more attractive and desirable place to live, work and visit and is an important part of the city region's growth strategy.

It is about making the city region accessible, and giving residents and communities access to exciting opportunities, whilst encouraging them to get outdoors and get some exercise, which will massively benefit their physical and mental wellbeing. **(Figure 105).**

Figure 15: Key cycle routes in the Liverpool City Region as identified in Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2019

Source: Liverpool City Region Combined Authority 2019

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan

In 2011 the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Merseyside was published. It sets out the Region's longer term (to 2024) ambition for improving transport across Merseyside. Its vision is to create:

"A city region committed to a low carbon future, which has a transport network and mobility culture that positively contributes to a thriving economy and the health and wellbeing of its citizens and where sustainable travel is the option of choice".

The plan establishes a strategic approach to dealing with key transport issues in the region and broad areas of intervention are focused via the plan's six goals.

The current plan promotes a new mobility culture that recognises the need to find new and smarter ways of travelling in order to support economic growth, reduce carbon emissions and promote health and wellbeing.

A new mobility culture means developing a transport system which supports the objectives and aspirations of all communities and stakeholders across Merseyside. It is about developing a transport system that provides real sustainable options and which supports the continuing regeneration and economic development of the city region.

The full document and supporting annexes can be found at the following link: https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/Site%20Documents/Full%20LTP3%20(lo%20res)%20-%20Regional%20and%20National%20Strategy.pdf

The Liverpool City Region and a Transport Plan for Growth

In 2014 the five Merseyside districts and Halton came together to establish the Liverpool City Region Partnership and as a result there was a need to align the existing Merseyside and Halton Local Transport Plans.

A Transport Plan for Growth is The Liverpool City Region's single strategic investment framework and delivery plan for transport across the region, supporting the long term Local Transport Plans (LTPs).

Much has changed since the current Local Transport Plans were written; therefore, a Transport Plan for Growth is more closely aligned with the Government's high-level economic policy drivers of localism, devolution of power and growth. The new transport plan for growth is also about equality. It is about delivering a transport system which ensures that people have more equal access to employment opportunities, education and health facilities and to leisure, cultural and sporting resources. In this sense it goes beyond traditional transport planning and must be integrated with and support, health, environmental, education, housing and planning policies.

The Transport Plan aims to create a resilient city region that will support a strong and vigorous internationally competitive economy.

It aims to:
- Create a city region of opportunity where all sections of the community can make contact with as many goods and services as possible including jobs, training, education and social, leisure and recreational activities that increase quality of life.

- Contribute to a low carbon city region that recognises the responsibilities of all cities to play a leadership role in carbon reduction and celebrates the opportunities this provides to create competitive and sustainable jobs in green technology industries and activities.

- Create a healthy city region where all transport options, including walking and cycling facilities link to spatial planning and send strong signals in support of high levels of physical activity.

- Create a high quality liveable city region that improves air quality, reduces noise levels and creates highly attractive public spaces and cultural offerings.

A full version of the Transport Plan for Growth is available to view at the link below:
https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Pages/Transport-Plan-for-Growth.aspx

To support these policies a number of projects have been set up and are currently running in Wirral or across the Liverpool City Region.

The development of a Mayoral Transport Strategy is currently underway, which will eventually replace 'A Transport Plan for Growth'. The document will set out an updated strategic vision and delivery plan for transport across the region. We are working closely with the Combined Authority to develop this vision, and ensure the strategy promotes sustainable growth in Wirral, whilst ensuring that the network is inclusive for all users.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority: Local Journeys Strategy

The Local Journeys Strategy presents the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's strategy for local journeys. The Strategy cuts across multiple forms of transport modes and geographies, and as a broad guide, defines local journeys as those with an origin or destination within the Liverpool City Region that are less than 5km in length.

The document provides a framework for guiding the development of services and infrastructure that support sustainable short trips across the Liverpool City Region. It complements the transport strategies that underpin the Transport Plan for Growth. The Local Journeys Strategy provides information on:
- Bus strategy
- Long-term rail strategy
- Freight and logistics strategy
- Road safety strategy
- Cycling and walking investment strategy
- Door to door strategy

Arrive Happy

The Metro Mayor has pledged to increase cycling and walking across the Liverpool City region (LCR). There is a vision for a city region where walking and cycling are safe healthy and pleasant choices for local journeys. We also need to make sure this is factored in to how we plan new communities and regenerate existing ones.

This has led to the establishment of the #ArriveHappy campaign a comms campaign across numerous channels that encourages LCR residents to incorporate active travel more into their daily routines. E.g. in their commute or leisure journeys. A range of cycle maps have been developed and published to show potential routes that cyclists could take to avoid high traffic areas. Interviews and case studies are also presented with individuals who have transitioned to using more active travel and the benefits they have found from doing so.

Local View

Residents' Survey 2017

In 2017 Wirral Council carried out a wide ranging Residents' Survey providing valuable insight into residents' thoughts on the Borough and service provision. A wide range of topics are covered by the survey, including transport (IPSOS MORI, 2017).

27% of respondents stated that public transport networks and facilities are accessible and sufficient was one of the most important things in making somewhere a good place to live. Re. the local area, 2% of respondents stated that this needed improving in Wirral.

Fewer respondents believed low levels of congestion were important in making somewhere a good place to live (9%) but 18% of respondents stated that this needed improving in Wirral.

As stated throughout this document transport is important for individuals accessing products, services and employment. This also extends to volunteering. 11% of respondents said that "If someone could provide transport when I needed it" they would be encouraged to get involved in volunteering in the future.

While the use of public transport by respondents over the past twelve months from the time of the survey in 2017 was high at 87%, public satisfaction with public transport had decreased significantly, down to 68% from 74% when the survey was last conducted in 2015. However, only 7% of residents are very dissatisfied with public transport. The survey report notes that falls in satisfaction of respondents overall between the 2015 and 2017 Residents' Surveys reflected the national mood and may be linked to the pressures on services from austerity.

National Highways and Transportation Perception Survey

The National Highways and Transportation (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey collects public perspectives on, and satisfaction with, Highway and Transport Services in Local Authority areas. It is a unique, standardised, collaboration between Highway Authorities across the UK enabling comparison, knowledge sharing, and the potential to improve efficiencies by the sharing of good practice. The NHT Survey is also referenced in the Department for Transport's Incentive Fund Self-assessment process.

It gives participating Authorities:
- A better understanding of how they are performing in the eyes of the public
- A consistent datum for setting service levels and a means of measuring the impact of service improvements
- Access to the best performers and the opportunity to learn from the good practice of others
- Full transparency of data for benchmarking purposes

2018 results can be viewed at https://www.nhtnetwork.co.uk/isolated/page/255

Underpinning and supporting evidence

View additional information that supports this topic on Wirral Intelligence Service website

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