



Executive Board Sub Committee

**Thursday, 2 April 2009 10.00 a.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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PART II

In this case the Sub Committee has a discretion to exclude the press and public, but in view of the nature of the business to be transacted it is **RECOMMENDED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 2 April 2009
PRESENTED BY: Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT: To seek a waiver of Contract Standing Orders
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek a waiver of Contract Standing Orders to permit the extension of the contract of the BSF Programme Director (Daniel Hennessy) from MD Consultants until 31st March 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) That the Strategic Director Children and Young People be authorised to agree a contract for 217 days per annum at £786 per day for a period from September 2009 until 31st March 2011.**
- (2) Legal Services be requested to revise the current contract for the BSF Project Directors role.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current arrangements for the BSF Programme Director were approved at the Executive Board Sub Committee on 19th July 2007 and a two year contract was agreed until September 2009. However, prior to submission of the Outline Business Case on 22nd April 2009 Partnerships for Schools require confirmation of the future Programme Director arrangements so that they can assess whether the authority is sufficiently prepared to enter competitive dialogue.
- 3.2 The BSF Programme Director role is crucial as it provides the Strategic Direction for the Programme. The current Programme Director has provided leadership, direction and focus to the programme and has ensured that the Programme has met all the key milestones and objectives to date. The Programme Director (Daniel Hennessy) has extensive experience as a 4PS adviser and Gateway Reviewer for BSF and his advice is often sought nationally and by other authorities.
- 3.3 As the DCSF prepare to announce the next Wave of BSF Programmes many authorities are now looking for experienced BSF Programme Directors and Managers to lead their Programmes.

- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that the current BSF Programme Director contract be extended so that he can provide 217 days support to Halton per annum and that the daily rate of pay be £786 from September 2009 until 31st March 2011. The BSF Framework provides information on the Programme Director rates across the country with North West, North East and Midlands rates vary from £745 to £1075 per day.
- 3.5 It is essential that as Halton moves into Programme Delivery there is sufficient appropriately qualified staff. Interim arrangements still exist for the Programme Managers post as it did not prove possible to recruit to this position initially. This post has now been advertised and interviews will take place on 1st April 2009.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of the BSF Programme Director will be covered by the BSF revenue budget until 31st March 2011.
- 4.2 If the development of a Joint LEP between Halton and Warrington is agreed there will be the opportunity to share the costs of the Programme Director across the two Programmes.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Part of the assessment of the authority's readiness to enter into the procurement phase of BSF will rely on whether Partnerships for Schools consider the authority has an appropriate qualified and resourced team of both in house officers and external consultants. Failure to secure the BSF Programme Director may have major implications in terms of the assessment of the Outline Business Case which could lead to Programme delay.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

BSF Programme seeks to transform secondary provision across the borough.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Through access to an excellent secondary school for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In developing its secondary schools for the future the authority will demonstrate how it will enable schools to meet the school sport Public Service Agreement through its capital investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy living and eating.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Schools for the future will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

6.5 Halton's Urban

Through the BSF Halton schools will become a major resource for communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

If the Programme Director contract is not renewed this could impact on the assessment of the Outline Business Case by Partnerships for Schools.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's secondary and secondary special provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 To secure BSF Programme Director for Halton.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 N/A

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 A decision will be required prior to the submission of Outline Business Case on 22nd April 2009.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Documents

Place of Inspection

Contact

3rd Floor Chester Ann McIntyre –
Building – Grosvenor Operational Director
House, Runcorn and – Business Planning
website and Resources
www.halton.gov.uk/bsf

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Contract extension for the provision of Personal Advisor Service for Care Leavers

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To request the waiving of procurement standing orders 3.1 to 3.7 which places a requirement on the Council to tender for contracts with a value greater than £50,000 but not exceeding £1,000,000.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) In the exceptional circumstances set out below, for the purposes of standing order 1.6, procurement standing orders 3.1- 3.8 be waived in order for the existing contractual arrangements to be extended until 31st March 2010. During the period of extension, the Council will complete a competitive tendering exercise for the Personal Advisor Service for Care Leavers; and

(2) Delegated powers be approved to enable the Strategic Director Children and Young People, subject to an evaluation of value for money in an open tender process, to award a contract to an external provider inclusive of the provision of management and administration.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The current Personal Advisor for Care Leavers contract has been in operation for 5 years; and will terminate on 31st March 2009. The current cost of service delivery is £168,000.

3.2 The Service fulfils the requirements placed on the Local Authority by the Children (Leaving Care) Act, 2000, Regulations and Guidance Chapter 6 Regulation 12: "Personal Advisors". The Personal Advisor service supports young people in making the transition from being in care to living self sustaining and fulfilled lives as independent members of the community.

3.3 Following a competitive tendering process in March 2009, the Panel who considered the proposals from a number of organisations were unable to make a contract award to a single provider. This was

primarily on the basis of service continuity for existing users, with no new provider able to meet the terms of the contract due to the length of the contract lead-in period.

3.3 This report seeks approval to extend the existing contractual arrangements until 31st March 2010 and to recommence a competitive tendering exercise for this service in September 2009, with a view to awarding a new contract from April 2010.

3.4 The proposed tender process will enable the Council to update the service specification and to include improved outcomes nationally and locally for this vulnerable cohort. In addition, it is proposed that the revised specification will ensure that the service provider continually delivers a service that meets identified needs.

3.5 It is proposed that the new contract will last for a period of 3 years and will offer an option to extend beyond that for a further 2 years, subject to specified outcomes being delivered and specified targets being met.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The provider will contribute significantly to improving outcomes for young people leaving care in Halton.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There will be an expectation that the service provider will be required to commit to the Councils NEET Strategy.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

The Personal Advisor service offers advice and guidance to young people on the wide range of health issues that may affect them and signposts them to appropriate services.

5.4 A Safer Halton

None Identified

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The Council has a duty to provide a Personal Advisor service for care leavers and, in the short term, this could not be adequately provided without extending the current contract.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Care leavers are identified as one of the vulnerable groups in our community and are acknowledged as requiring dedicated support.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 - Christine Taylor
Grosvenor House

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: 2009/10 Inflationary uplift for the Supporting People contracts

WARD(S): All wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the inflationary uplift of Supporting People contracts for the financial year 2009/10.
- 1.2 Endorse the suggested inflationary uplift for all Supporting People contracts within the 2.5% inflationary allowance allocated by the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDED – that the proposed 2.5% increase as set out in the report be approved with effect from Monday 6th April 2009.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The proposed inflationary uplift of 2.5% is equivalent to the increase awarded to the Adult Social Care budget 2009/10.
- 3.2 The table below sets out Projected Expenditure after the 2.5% Inflationary uplift has been added for 2009/10.

Table 1 - Projected Expenditure

	2008/09 Projected expenditure to date	2.5% uplift costs for 09/10	SP Projected expenditure with 2.5% uplift 09/10
Supporting People Contracts	£5,745,323	£143,633	£5,888,956
Short Term bid contracts	£1,281,296	£32,072	£1,313,369
Total	£7,026,619	£175,705	£7,202,325

The proposed 2.5% inflationary increase will result in an estimated increase in expenditure of £175,705.

- 3.3 The Supporting People programme currently funds 113 services across

Halton. Of this, 92 are existing contracts across 14 client groups, and a further 21 services are short-term services.

- 3.4 As of the 18th February 2009 there are approximately 1,968 people in receipt of Supporting People services in Halton.
- 3.5 The increased fees will give enable the Providers the ability to plan their businesses to ensure stability and drive up the quality of provision for the service users of Halton
- 3.6 From April 1st 2009 the CLG and Sitra are implementing a new Quality Assessment Framework, which all Providers will be expected to carry out. The new framework will have an additional impact on the work undertaken by SP Providers. The new Quality Assessment Framework will now incorporate Child Protection, under 'Every Child Matters' and additional safeguarding legislation. Further training, documentation and a change in practice will be required.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the inflationary increase can be met within existing Supporting People budgets.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The new SP Quality Assessment Framework and outcomes will ensure that providers are working in line with child Protection legislation from April 2009.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Supporting People services provide support to enable vulnerable clients to access education, training and employment opportunities.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Supporting People services work with vulnerable clients to achieve their goals to achieving a healthy lifestyle, which can include for example support to maintain their mental well being, to register and attend GP and dental appointments.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Supporting People services provide support to a number of socially excluded groups including ex-offenders, people with mental health

problems, people experiencing domestic violence, homeless families and single homeless. The support offered empowers people to secure and maintain a stable home environment in which to rebuild their lives.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.0 Not applicable.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document

Place of inspection

Contact Officer

None

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Draft Southern Widnes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Approval for Statutory Period of Public Consultation

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the publication of the draft Southern Widnes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the purposes of statutory public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The draft Southern Widnes Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix A) be approved for the purposes of statutory public consultation for a six week period;**
- 2) The comments received at the stakeholder consultation stage, as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix C) and responses to them are noted;**
- 3) Further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect the content of the SPD be agreed by the Operational Director - Environmental & Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, as necessary, before the document is published for public consultation; and**
- 4) The results of the public consultation exercise and consequent recommended modifications to the draft document be reported back to the Executive Board for resolution to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

- 3.1 The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008) is an important element of the Mersey Gateway Project that builds upon the adopted vision that it is '*more than just a bridge*' but the '*catalyst*' for regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.2 The Regeneration Strategy is concerned with how the bridge can deliver a new context for place-shaping, set the agenda for a sustained economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration programme over the next 20 to 30 years and reconnect the communities of Runcorn and Widnes.
- 3.3 The Regeneration Strategy covers an area in excess of 20 square kilometres within the Borough of Halton, including the Southern Widnes SPD area. The area was agreed with the Council to provide a statutory planning basis for policy development due to its influence on the Local Development Framework.
- 3.4 Several key elements of this SPD have been informed by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, building upon some of the principles, objectives and development opportunities set out within the document. A number of proposals described in this SPD are therefore based upon the preferred option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Councils Executive Board on 19th June 2008.

Purpose of the Southern Widnes SPD

- 3.5 Southern Widnes has been identified within the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005) as one of the 6 Action Areas in the Borough that requires significant development or redevelopment in order to secure their regeneration. This SPD is therefore supplementary to policy RG1 (Action Area 1 Southern Widnes) in the Halton UDP.
- 3.6 Southern Widnes has also been identified as an Action Area for regeneration and development within the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008) as a result of the long-term opportunities that the Mersey Gateway Project presents. These opportunities are principally facilitated through the de-linking, or downgrading, of existing road transport infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This would result in some areas of land becoming available for development and enabling the existing road infrastructure into Southern Widnes to be improved.
- 3.7 The purpose of the Southern Widnes SPD is therefore to establish and identify potential development or improvement opportunities within the area that arise from the existing context and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Project in order to help sustain the existing community and

deliver regeneration benefits to the area. This current draft has been prepared by GVA Grimley for the formal stages of public consultation.

- 3.8 The Southern Widnes SPD is specifically designed to:
- Ensure a suitable standard of development;
 - Improve the visual and environmental quality of the area;
 - Create a 'sense of place';
 - Improve accessibility particularly to the Silver Jubilee Bridge and Widnes Waterfront; and
 - Improve sustainability of the West Bank community by introducing new employment, housing and a neighbourhood centre.

Sustainability Appraisal – Appendix B

- 3.4 Waterman Environmental were appointed by Halton Borough Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Southern Widnes SPD in order to meet the requirements of planning legislation and regulations. The main purpose of SA (the combined SEA and SA process) is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects.
- 3.5 The SA Framework developed for the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy incorporated the Southern Widnes area as one of the key focal points for regeneration and development. It was therefore considered that the SA Framework developed for the Regeneration Strategy would be applicable to the SA of the Southern Widnes SPD.
- 3.6 Key issues and SA objectives for the Southern Widnes area that emerged both from the existing context and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Project were consulted upon in July 2007. The comments and responses can be found in Appendix D of the Southern Widnes SPD SA.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 3.7 Required under the European Community Habitats Directive, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) must be undertaken when a project or plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).
- 3.8 A HRA Screening Report was produced in May 2008 as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, which covers the Southern Widnes SPD area. The HRA Screening Report is available upon request.

Statement of Consultation – Appendix C

- 3.7 The requirements of the planning system states that a record be kept of any consultees, their comments, and how they have been taken into account throughout the production of an SPD.

- 3.8 An informal draft of the Southern Widnes SPD was circulated between 17th December 2008 and 12th January 2009 to key stakeholders to comment on the appropriateness of the document's content prior to the formal public consultation process. A list of those consulted, comments received and how these were taken into account is contained within the draft Statement of Consultation (Appendix C of this report).

Next Steps

- 3.9 The SA report, HRA and the draft Statement of Consultation will be made available during the six week formal period of public consultation, alongside the draft Southern Widnes SPD.
- 3.10 Once the formal public consultation exercise has been conducted, the responses will be recorded and taken into account. It is intended that a further report will then be taken to Executive Board, seeking formal adoption of the revised Southern Widnes SPD.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The SPD when adopted will form part of the Local Development Framework for Halton. The development opportunities set out within this SPD are therefore complementary to relevant saved policies of the UDP and other relevant Council SPDs.
- 4.2 Once adopted the content of the SPD will be a material consideration for the determination of any applicable planning application and so provide Halton Borough Council with greater detail and certainty to control and guide new development within the defined Southern Widnes boundary.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No other implications

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

Children and Young People in Halton

- 6.1 The SPD will help to ensure that children and young people in Southern Widnes grow up and thrive in safe environments and communities.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

- 6.2 Providing locally accessible employment opportunities is recognised in the SPD as a vital component of the redevelopment of Southern Widnes.

A Healthy Halton

- 6.3 The SPD is intended to facilitate the development of a safe, attractive and healthy community that incorporates opportunities for recreation and healthy travel options.

A Safer Halton

- 6.4 The SPD seeks to ensure that Southern Widnes contributes to a Safer Halton by creating and sustaining environments that are well designed, well maintained, safe and valued.

Halton's Urban Renewal

- 6.5 The redevelopment of Southern Widnes is fundamental to Halton's urban renewal. The emerging policy content of the SPD will aid the transformation of Southern Widnes's urban fabric, develop safe and attractive public spaces and create a dynamic and high quality mixed-use environment which will play a significant role in the area's regeneration.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 No legal or financial risks to the Council can be identified so long as the statutory procedures for the preparation of SPDs are met.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no identifiable equality and diversity implications contained in the SPD.

9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION

- 9.1 These are set out in Section 3, Supporting Information.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 This has been covered by the preparation process of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

- 11.1 The SPD will be effective from the date of adoption by the Council's Executive Board.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell
Statement of Community Involvement (2006)	Rutland House	Neil MacFarlane
Draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy (2007)	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Local Development Scheme (2007)	Rutland House	Neil MacFarlane
Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell
Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (2008)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell

Southern Widnes

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Draft

P. Watts
Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GW

February 2009

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- APPENDIX D: STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This document is a draft version of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Southern Widnes, situated within the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area as identified in the Saved Policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). It has been prepared for the purposes of public consultation and approved by Halton Borough Council's Executive Board Sub-Committee.
- 1.2 The document serves to give supplementary planning guidance to the existing policies set out in the Halton UDP. The UDP identifies Southern Widnes as one of six Action Areas in the borough of Halton that require significant development or redevelopment to secure their regeneration. The Action Area Policies identify appropriate land uses for each, and the principles of development that should be applied. However, these policies do not allocate individual sites for specific land-uses. The proposals set out within this SPD are therefore supplementary to the relevant saved UDP policies, and provide Halton Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority with greater detail and certainty in order to control and guide new development within the Action Area.
- 1.3 The SPD is being prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12: *Local Spatial Planning*. Before this SPD can be used with any weight for development control purposes, it must first be prepared in consultation with the general public, business and other interested parties, and their views should be taken into account before it is finalised. The draft SPD will then be the subject of a Council resolution to formally adopt it as a supplementary planning document.
- 1.4 The majority of the SPD boundary falls within the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area as identified within the Halton UDP (figure 1.1). Policies and proposals contained within this SPD however, relate to the totality of Southern Widnes and are not confined to the UDP-defined Action Area. The SPD boundary therefore incorporates additional land outside of the defined Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area (figure 1.2). This wider land intake will provide for the comprehensive regeneration of Southern Widnes as opposed to piecemeal redevelopment.

Figure 1.1: Halton Council Regeneration Action Areas

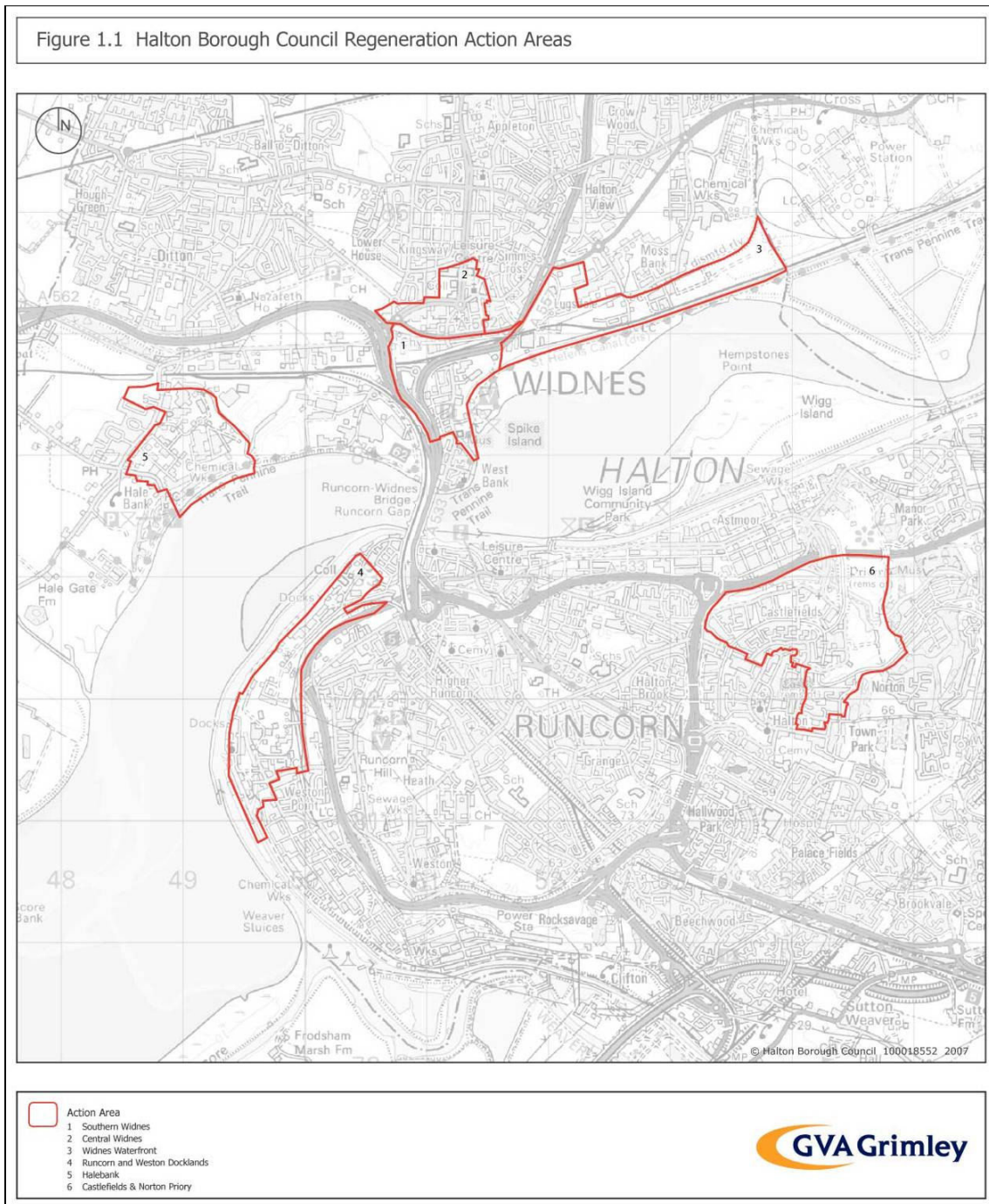
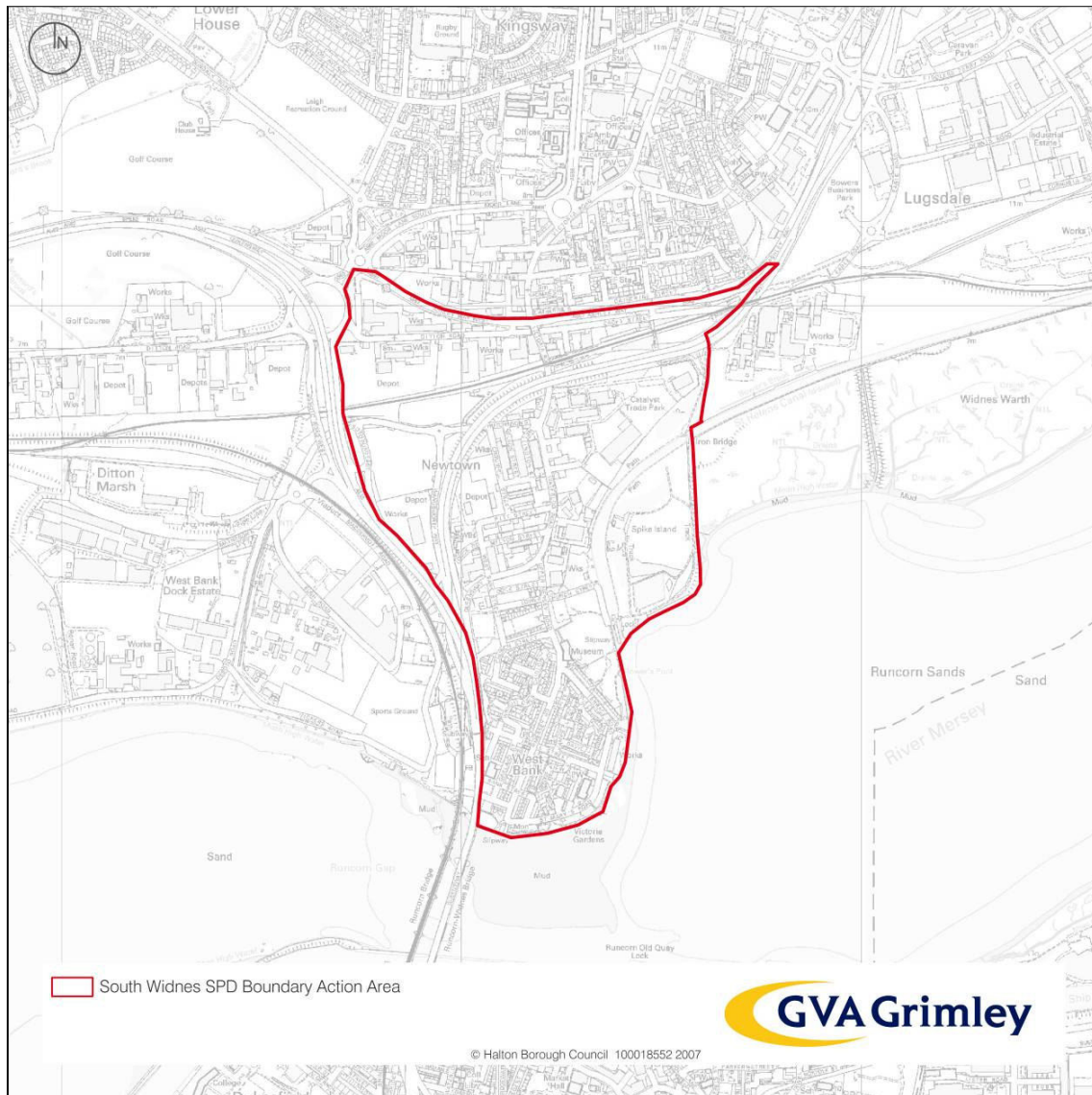


Figure 1.2: Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area SPD Boundary



Purpose

- 1.5 The purpose of this SPD is to establish and identify potential development or improvement opportunities within Southern Widnes in order to help sustain the existing community and deliver regeneration benefits to area. The SPD also seeks to ensure a suitable standard of

development is achieved that will improve the visual and environmental quality of the area. The SPD will specifically lend itself to addressing the following opportunities:

- creating a 'sense of place';
- improving local accessibility; and
- improving sustainability.

1.6 This SPD will be used alongside the Saved Policies of the Halton UDP and other relevant documents within the Halton Local Development Framework, including other Council Supplementary Planning Documents to determine development proposals submitted to the Council for approval within the defined Southern Widnes area. It also forms the justification for the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire land under section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 to enable the regeneration of West Bank to take place.

1.7 The SPD is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, including a Sustainability Appraisal, an Appropriate Assessment (a requirement of the Habitats Directive) and a Statement of Consultation.

Structure of the Document

1.8 The following sections of this SPD are structured to establish the context the Southern Widnes area in light of existing national, regional and local planning policy, culminating in the identification of potential land-uses across the area, and the phased delivery of this new development. The delivery of the development opportunities identified within this SPD are supported by the following:

- Strategic principles which will be applied across the area; and
- Sub-area policies and proposals which will apply within each of the individual sub-areas.

2. CONTEXT AND LOCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Historical Context

- 2.1 The Cheshire Historic Towns Survey – Widnes Archaeological Assessment (2003) establishes a clear picture of Widnes' historical context. This traces back to 1849, the time at which the first chemical manufactory was constructed in Widnes by John Hutchinson. By the 1860s, the town had grown into an international centre for alkali production. Before industrial development altered the local landscape, Widnes largely comprised moor and marshland, and scattered farmsteads. With the decline of the chemical industry, Widnes lost its central function and its population actually declined between 1891 and 1901: its subsequent growth has been a steady process
- 2.2 Early in the 20th century there were a number of important civic developments within the Town. These included the laying out of Appleton Park and the Victoria Promenade, and the construction of the Transporter Bridge. Road access was also greatly improved with the replacement of the Transporter Bridge by a new road bridge in 1961: The Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Figure 2.1: Transporter Bridge



View of the approach to the Transporter Bridge, which provided the sole vehicular link between Runcorn and Widnes until 1961.

- 2.3 Following the loss of the town's principal economic driver, the lack of a suitable replacement is still apparent within Widnes today, over 100 years later. The landscape now comprises large areas of derelict land, in particular within Southern Widnes.
- 2.4 In light of the town's industrial history, the *Area of Archaeological Potential* defined by the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey includes the West Bank Area of Widnes. This designation reflects the location of sites within this area previously occupied in advance of the industrialisation of the area during the 19th century. Further, the area contains a variety of industrial remains, evidence for which survives both above and below ground.
- 2.5 In 1974 the *Welcome to Widnes* project was launched. This was designed to enhance local environmental quality. This process has involved extensive programmes of reclamation within the town, and a significant amount of debris from former industrial uses has been cleared away. Concurrently, there have been attempts to provide an interpretation of the areas former industrial heritage through the creation of the Catalyst Museum and displays at Spike Island. The modern town of Widnes now covers a large area, incorporating a self-contained town centre.

Locational Characteristics

- 2.6 The Southern Widnes Area currently comprises a variety of different land uses, albeit predominantly including residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- 2.7 The character of Southern Widnes can be broken down into a number of discrete 'zones', which are largely defined by the infrastructure of roads, railway lines, and waterways, all of which dissect the area from Widnes Town Centre and other parts of the Borough.
- 2.8 The poor circulation and lack of permeability, which afflicts the area today, can be traced back to successive infrastructure projects, aimed at improving the wider transport network. Undoubtedly, these have enhanced the wider network and opened up specific sites but these improvements have often been at the expense of local permeability.
- 2.9 There are a number of man-made and natural barriers, which collectively dissect the area and isolate its community. The River Mersey creates a definitive edge forming the eastern boundary and a natural barrier to movement.
- 2.10 The estuary landscapes offer few access points for pedestrians and the disused Sankey Canal reinforces the separation between the river corridor and the residential hinterland.

-
- 2.11 Spike Island is crossed by tracks which continue northwards threading their way through industrial estates and the railway line, which defines the northern perimeter of the area.
- 2.12 Links across the Mersey (at this location) are restricted to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which runs between Runcorn and Widnes South predominantly serving the wider transport network. Local links are frustrated by the congestion arising from the volume of traffic running across the bridge resulting in poor inter-town connectivity.
- 2.13 The railway viaduct and the expressway (A533) run north to south, forming the western boundary.
- 2.14 Victoria Road forms a further division, running north to south, through the centre of the area. As a gateway to Widnes south (the junction of Ashley Way West and Victoria Road), it is unfortunately restricted and narrow in character. The feeling of separation between the town centre and Widnes South is further accentuated by Ashley Way West itself, which as a main vehicular thoroughfare presents a number of challenges for pedestrians and local traffic wishing to cross it. The A562 (Ashley Way) forms the northern boundary of the Widnes South area.
- 2.15 The freight line off the West Coast Main Line railway line runs parallel to the south reinforcing the divisions, which exist between Widnes Town Centre and Widnes South. The railway also passes over Victoria Road next to an overhead road bridge of the A568 Widnes Eastern Relief Road, which heads north through the area before turning eastwards at the railway forming yet another boundary along Victoria Road.
- 2.16 The location is dominated by vehicles and road infrastructure creating an environment, where pedestrians are only likely to use the route out of necessity (most likely preferring to use the route within day light hours). The current layout means that pedestrians are less likely to feel safe or comfortable walking along Victoria Road and this creates an 'obstacle' impeding free movement between West Bank and the town centre where inter-area visibility is reduced and the Waterloo Centre left located in a poor setting adjacent to the bridges.
- 2.17 Other site constraints comprise the following:
- **Contamination:** All of the sites identified as suitable for development in the Action Area are subject to varying degrees of land contamination due to the legacy of past chemical works on the site.
 - **Flood Risk:** The Flood map affecting this area is available on the Environment Agency's web site <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>. This shows much of the area as lying

within Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high probability of flooding). In accordance with the provisions of PPS25, flood risk must be taken into account at all stages of the planning process.

- **Sankey Canal:** British Waterways have a consultation zone 150 metres from the canal. They should be consulted on any applications involving work that affects the safety and structural integrity of the land and/or an increase in surface water discharge.

3. THE MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT

- 3.1 A key characteristic of the local area is the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB), a Grade II listed structure linking the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes. However, the Bridge is now operating beyond its capacity at over 80,000 vehicles every weekday, significantly exceeding its original operational capacity, thus creating a congestion bottleneck during peak hours.
- 3.2 To relieve the increasing problem of congestion, Halton Borough Council is promoting the delivery of a New Mersey Gateway Crossing across the River Mersey, situated c. 1.8km upstream of the SJB¹.
- 3.3 The case for an additional crossing of the Mersey at Halton dates as far back as 1978, in which a number of options for route alignment have been considered culminating in the submission of a Major Scheme Appraisal to the Department for Transport in July 2003 as part of Halton's Local Transport Plan.
- 3.4 The vision for the Mersey Gateway is that it is '*more than just a bridge*' but the '*catalyst*' that will connect communities and lead to regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.5 The main objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project are to:
- relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local traffic needs;
 - apply minimum toll charges to both Mersey Gateway and the Silver Jubilee Bridge consistent with the amount required to satisfy affordability constraints and to manage road travel demand to ensure the delivery of transport and environmental benefits by maintaining free flow traffic conditions on the MG and SJB;
 - improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities;
 - improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment; and
 - improve public transport links across the river and to encourage the increased use of cycling and walking; and

¹ Halton Borough Council has also produced a Parking and Access Study (2008) for the authority inclusive of access plans to improve accessibility throughout Halton.

- restore effective network resilience for transport across the River Mersey.

3.6 The reconfiguration of public transport and sustainable movement modes will be achieved through the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS). The principal objective of the STS is to *'identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of Halton's Local Transport Plan and the Mersey Gateway Project'*.

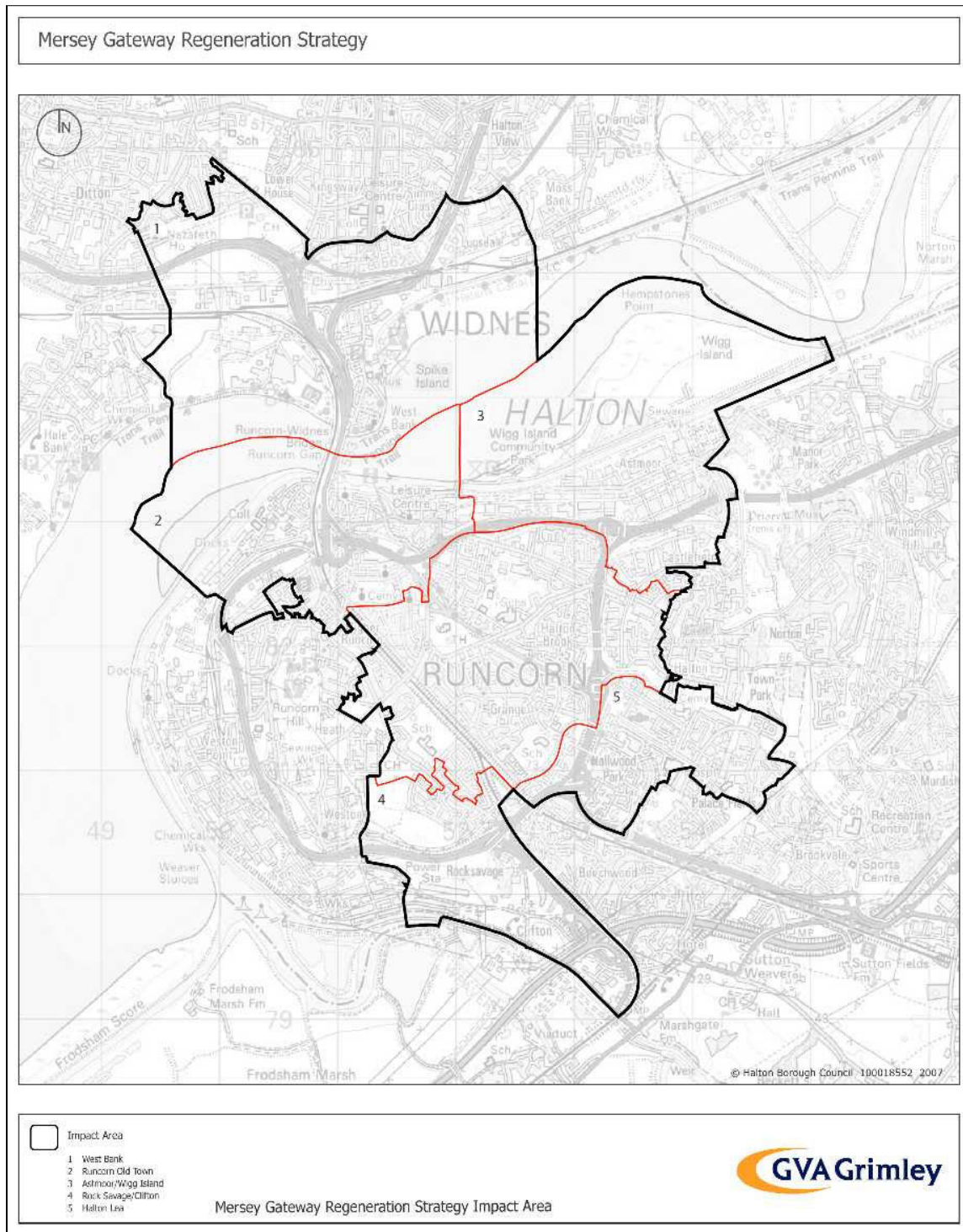
The Route

- 3.7 The scheme comprises 2.4 km of new dual 3-lane highway, a major river estuary crossing and several crossings of other obstacles (i.e. road, canals and a railway).
- 3.8 From the existing A562 Speke Road, the route would head eastwards towards a new junction called the Ditton Interchange, which would replace the Ditton roundabout. It would cross St Helens Canal, Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, Astmoor Saltmarsh and Wigg Island, as well as the Mersey Estuary itself, before turning southwards over the Manchester Ship Canal and across Astmoor Industrial Estate on the southern side of the river. It would connect into the existing road network in Runcorn by joining the Central Expressway and would join up with the M56 Motorway at Junction 12 to the south of Runcorn.
- 3.9 The Mersey Gateway Project would reduce the volume of traffic crossing the Silver Jubilee Bridge by directing the natural movement of through traffic over the new crossing, a process known as 'delinking' from the strategic highway network, which would require the physical process of removing unnecessary pieces of highway infrastructure.
- 3.10 The de-linking process would remove the direct links to the Silver Jubilee Bridge encouraging non-local traffic to use the Mersey Gateway, resulting in significantly less congestion and traffic flow and returning local highway infrastructure to local uses. This would ultimately improve local access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge from the local highway network and provide a local link across the river between Widnes and Runcorn.
- 3.11 The de-linking of redundant road infrastructure would also create new development opportunities and herein the chance to physically regenerate and improve a number of Halton's local centres and neighbourhoods. This includes a significant tract of land within both Southern Widnes and Runcorn Town Centre.

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

- 3.12 The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (May, 2008) is an important element of the Mersey Gateway project. Based on the adopted vision of *'more than just a bridge'*, it is concerned with how the bridge can deliver a new context for place-shaping, set the agenda for a sustained economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration programme over the next 20 to 30 years, reconnect the communities of Runcorn and Widnes and facilitate regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.13 The Regeneration Strategy is **Bold**; it is **Challenging** and it will **Change Perceptions**:
- **Bold** – A visionary and ambitious holistic framework for investment in Halton within a detailed phased 20-year delivery horizon, setting the agenda for new capital and revenue investment based upon the opportunities that the Mersey Gateway will create;
 - **Challenging** – A plan for dealing with some of the most contaminated and constrained land in the country, as part of an ambitious place-shaping regeneration programme, based upon the opportunities that the Mersey Gateway will create;
 - **Changing Perceptions** – Setting a new agenda for investment in delivering a place that people can be proud of and that people aspire to live and work in, invest and spend time.
- 3.14 The Regeneration Strategy covers an area in excess of 20 square kilometres within the borough of Halton (figure 3.1). It includes an area of Widnes to the south of the town centre, to the east of the Mersey Multimodal Gateway and to the west of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone. The Regeneration Strategy also incorporates a larger expanse of Runcorn, including Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea Town Centre, Astmoor Industrial Estate, Rocksavage and Clifton and also includes the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge as well as the proposed route of the new Mersey Gateway.
- 3.15 The area was agreed with the Council to provide a statutory planning basis for policy development due to its influence on the Local Development Framework. Several key elements of this SPD have been informed by the Regeneration Strategy, building upon some of the principles, objectives and development opportunities in the document.

Figure 3.1: Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy – Area of Influence



4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section of the SPD outlines the planning policy context applicable to all emerging development proposals within Southern Widnes. The Halton UDP should be read alongside this document as a whole as other generic policies, not addressed within this SPD, will also be of relevance in determining and future development proposals. This SPD should also be read in conjunction with other relevant Council planning policy and corporate documents.

4.2 Planning policy of relevance to new development within Southern Widnes is set out at three tiers; national; regional; and local. Those policies of direct relevance to the regeneration and redevelopment of Southern Widnes are discussed below:

National Policy

4.3 **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): *Delivering Sustainable Development***, states that planning policy should promote the delivery of high-quality design through new developments. It recognises the need to focus development that attracts a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion, and sustainable patterns of development.

4.4 **Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1*** sets out the contribution of spatial planning to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change when providing for new development and infrastructure to serve the needs of communities. The guidance aims to:

- Ensure planning policy contributes towards the Government's Climate Change Programme;
- Deliver energy efficient homes;
- Deliver sustainable patterns of urban growth; and
- Secure developments that shape places resilient to the effects of climate change in ways consistent with social cohesion and inclusion.

4.5 Government policy on new retail development is set out within **PPS6: *Planning for Town Centres***. This establishes the key objective to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by virtue of:

- [Planning for the growth and development of existing centres;](#)

-
- Promoting and enhancing existing centres, focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all;
 - Delivering more sustainable patterns of development, ensuring that locations are fully exploited through high-density, mixed-use development; and
 - Promoting sustainable transport choices, including reducing the need to travel and providing viable alternatives to the private car.
- 4.6 To deliver the Government's key objectives, PPS6 requires proposals for town centre uses outside of existing centre's to demonstrate the need for development that it is of an appropriate scale, sequentially compliant and accessible, and will not unacceptably impact upon the vitality and viability of existing centre's.
- 4.7 **PPS9: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*** refers to the role of urban renaissance in enhancing biodiversity. The guidance specifically states that development proposals should;
- Promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development;
 - Conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat;
 - Enhance biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people's sense of well-being; and
 - Ensure that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.
- 4.8 **PPS23: *Planning and Pollution Control*** seeks to ensure the sustainable and beneficial use of land. Within this aim, polluting activities that are necessary for wider social and economic reasons should be carefully sited and planned, and subject to such planning conditions so that their adverse effects are minimised and contained within acceptable limits.
- 4.9 PPS23 states that the planning system should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, and the impacts of those uses, rather than the control of processes or emissions.
- 4.10 The presence of ground contamination is considered to affect or restrict the beneficial use of land, though development can present an opportunity to deal with it. Where land is affected by

contamination, “development can provide an opportunity to address the problem for the benefit of the wider community and bring the land back into beneficial use.”

- 4.11 The Governments objectives for contaminated land are set out in DEFRA Circular 01/2006, *Contaminated Land*. These include:
- a. *to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;*
 - b. *to seek to bring damaged land back into beneficial use; and*
 - c. *to seek to ensure that the cost burdens faced by individuals companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and economically sustainable.*
- 4.12 **PPS25: Development and Flood Risk** sees to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas the policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.
- 4.13 PPS25 requires Flood Risk Assessments to be carried out to the appropriate degree at all levels of the planning process. The guidance advises that landowners have the primary responsibility for safeguarding their land and other property against natural hazards such as flooding. Individual property owners and users are also responsible for managing the drainage of their land in such a way as to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, adverse impacts on neighbouring land. For development within Zones 2 and 3, PPS25 recommends the application of the Sequential and Exception Tests at all stages of the planning process with the aim to steer new development to areas of lower probability of flooding.

Regional Policy

- 4.14 Regional planning policy for the North West is set out in the North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008). RSS comprises several policies of direct relevance to the regeneration objectives of Southern Widnes, as follows:
- 4.15 **Policy DP1 (Spatial Principles)** sets out the key principles underpinning the RSS, namely:
- Promote sustainable communities;
 - Promote sustainable economic development;
 - Make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure;
 - Manage travel demand, reduce the need to travel, and increase accessibility;

-
- Marry opportunity and need;
 - Promote environmental quality;
 - Mainstreaming rural issues;
 - Reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.
- 4.16 **Policy DP4 (Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure)** affords priority to developments in line with the regional and sub-regional spatial framework set out in Policy RDF1. Developments are required to conform to the following sequential approach:
- (i) using existing buildings and previously developed land;
 - (ii) using other suitable infill opportunities; and
 - (iii) the development of other land where this is well-located in relation to housing, jobs, other services and infrastructure.
- 4.17 The accompanying text advises that the re-use of disused land and buildings, where appropriate, is vital to enhancing the image of the North West.
- 4.18 **Policy RDF1 (Spatial Priorities)** affords priority for growth and development within the regional centres of Manchester and Liverpool, and then the inner areas surrounding these regional centres. Widnes is afforded third tier priority for growth and development, focused in and around its town centre.
- 4.19 **Policy LCR3 (Outer part of the Liverpool City Region)** refers to the outer part of the Liverpool City Region, beyond the city centre and its inner areas. The policy aims to focus economic development in towns and cities, including the district of Halton.
- 4.20 **Policy EM3 (Green Infrastructure)** requires schemes to incorporate environmental and socio-economic benefits by:
- Conserving and managing existing green infrastructure;
 - Creating new green infrastructure; and
 - Enhancing its functionality, quality, connectivity and accessibility.

Halton Unitary Development Plan (Saved Policies)

- 4.21 The Halton UDP was adopted in April 2005, and sets out the Council's planning policy framework for the social, economic and environmental improvements of the Borough, within both Runcorn and Widnes. Maybe add sentence about Saved Policies here? The UDP identifies six specific Action Areas which are considered to represent an important tool in support of the Council's priority of promoting urban renewal to encourage regeneration in a number of areas within the Borough. The principles of this are set out under the "Spatial Strategy" in Part One of the UDP.
- 4.22 The introductory section of the Regeneration Chapter of the UDP explicitly sets out the aims associated with designating Action Areas. It describes how the UDP, in identifying Regeneration Action Areas, can help to contribute to the regeneration of Halton Borough, in accordance with the Council's Regeneration Strategy (1998). The purpose of the Regeneration Strategy (1998) is:
- to build on strengths and embrace opportunities;
 - to drive forward the regeneration of the Borough;
 - to create a thriving area in which people will want to live, work and invest; and
 - to revitalise Halton.
- 4.23 The UDP seeks to implement these objectives as spatial policies and proposals, where appropriate.

Policy RG1 - Action Area 1 – Southern Widnes

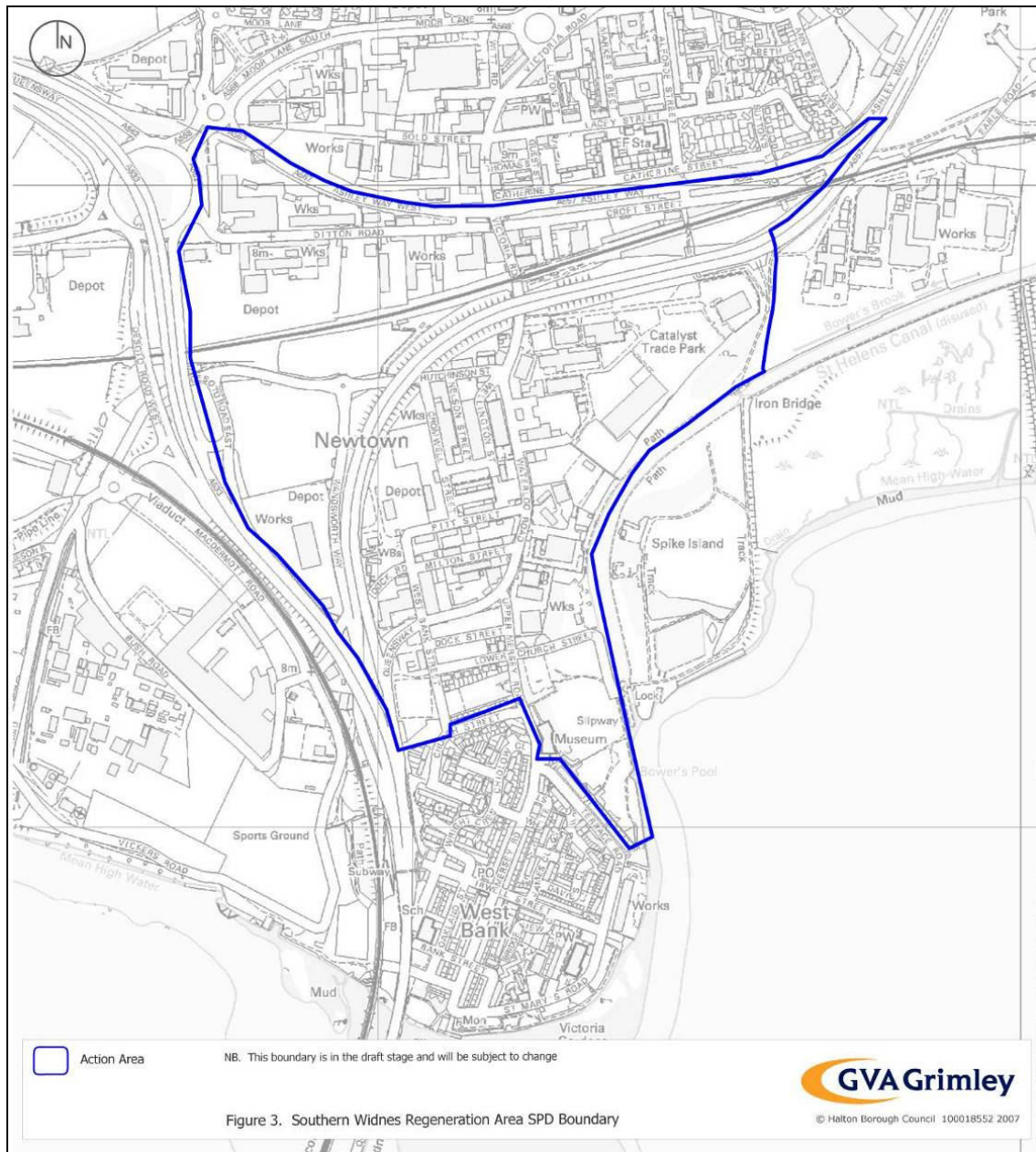
- 4.24 Policy RG1 of the Halton UDP identifies the Southern Widnes Action Area (amounting to c. 59.8ha) as being in need of regeneration, with preference for mixed-use development, including residential development. The policy identifies appropriate land uses as
- Business Use (B1);
 - General Industry (B2);
 - Residential (C2);
 - Dwelling houses (C3);
 - Community Facilities (D1);
 - Shops (A1);

- Food and Drink (A3);
- Recreation and Leisure (D2); and
- Open Space.

4.25 Policy RG1 advises that new forms of development should provide people with the opportunity to work within walking or cycling distance of home. The policy states that the car should be safely accommodated without “encouraging its use in preference to other means of transport.” The supporting text states that to support this objective, the layout of streets, buildings and spaces forming part of new development should aim to “minimise journeys by car and encourage movement by foot and bicycle.” The policy requires the “visual quality of the built and natural environment to be enhanced”, and the quality of design to “enhance its surroundings to raise the overall image and appearance of the area”.

4.26 The supporting text advises of the need for regeneration within the area, particularly investment in the current housing stock, redevelopment of derelict and contaminated sites, and overall improvements in the living and working environment. The supporting text advises that the aim of this Action Area is to provide a convenient, efficient and pleasing place within which people can live, work and pursue their daily lives.

Figure 3.1: Policy RG1 Boundary



- 4.27 In addition to policy RG1 (Figure 3.1), the Halton UDP includes the following policies that are relevant to the consideration of development proposals within the West Bank Action Area. These have been taken into account in the preparation of this guidance.

Policy BE3 - Environmental Priority Areas

- 4.28 This policy defines the two Environmental Priority Areas within the Borough, focused largely upon the waterfront / townscape fringes of Runcorn and Widnes. Within the Environmental Priority Areas, policy BE3 advises that proposals for development will be:

- i. Expected to be of a quality of design that enhances the quality and appearance of the area; and
- ii. Development, visible from main transport routes, and of a high quality in terms of landscape, boundary treatments and facing materials.

- 4.29 West Bank is situated within the designated Environmental Priority Area. Proposals for development in this area will therefore need to have full regard to the provisions of policy BE3.

Policy BE5 – Other Sites of Archaeological Importance

- 4.30 This policy states that development proposals likely to have an unacceptable affect on other known sites and monuments of archaeological significance will not be permitted. Appropriate mitigation measures may be appropriate with the agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Policy BE6 – Archaeological Evaluations

- 4.31 Where development proposals may affect sites of known or suspected archaeological importance, the Council may require the applicant to submit an archaeological evaluation prior to the determination of any planning application. The prime archaeological objective is the preservation in situ of important remains. Potential measures by which this can be achieved include design modification and landscaping within sensitive areas.

Policy BE9 – Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings

- 4.32 The predominant consideration in applications for internal or external works to a listed building or structure will be the preservation of the special architectural or historic features and character of the building or structure. This policy sets out the special criteria which apply for proposals which seek to alter or extend a listed building, as follows:

- Extensions must respect the character and scale of the original buildings and not be allowed to dominate;
- The replacement of doors, windows and other features in non-traditional materials will not be permitted;
- Attention should be paid to the retention of the original plan form, roof construction, and interior features of merit, as well as the exterior of listed buildings;
- Extensions must as far as possible be built of materials matching those of the original building.

4.33 All alterations and additions should not unacceptably affect the essential character of the building, and it should be in-keeping with its architectural style and features. Development should be of a high standard of design and external appearance and materials will be expected to match, as near as possible, those of the existing buildings in kind and in detail.

Policy BE10 – Protecting the Setting of Listed Buildings

4.34 It is a requirement of this policy that development likely to affect the setting of a listed building should aim to preserve both the character of that setting and its historic relationship to the listed buildings. This will include the preservation of trees and other landscape features. Close control will be afforded to the quality of design of development in close proximity to a listed building.

Policy BE12 – General Development Criteria Conservation Areas

4.35 This policy states that development affecting a Conservation Area will only be permitted if it will preserve or enhance the special architectural or historical character and appearance of the area. Development proposals will need to apply a high standard of design which respects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including building materials and boundary treatments. Development should also harmonise with adjoining buildings to enhance the existing street-scene and views and vistas. Important architectural and historical street features, landscape and ecological features should be enhanced where possible.

4.36 Victoria Promenade at West Bank was designated as a Conservation Area in 1978.

Policy BE13 – Demolition in Conservation Areas

4.37 Policy BE13 states that demolition of buildings or structures will only be permitted provided that they do not contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Consent

for demolition of a building or a structure within a Conservation Area will only be permitted where one or more of four exceptional circumstances are satisfied, as follows:

- It is proved to be wholly beyond economic repair;
- It is incapable of reasonable beneficial use;
- It is not of intrinsic architectural, historic or townscape importance and its removal or replacement would enhance the appearance or character of the area; or
- Its removal would allow the redevelopment or rehabilitation of an adjacent larger site which is underused, neglected or derelict if this would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Policy GE6 – Protection of Designated Greenspace

4.38 This policy advises that development within designated and proposed Greenspace will not be permitted unless it is ancillary to the enjoyment of the Greenspace, or in the case of designated Greenspace within educational use, it is specifically required for educational purposes. Policy advises that exceptions may be made where the loss of the amenity value is adequately compensated for where either of the following criteria can be satisfied:

- i. Development on part of the site would fund improvements that raise the overall amenity value of the Greenspace; or
- ii. The developer provides a suitable replacement Greenspace of at least equal size and amenity value, or significantly enhances the amenity value of nearby Greenspace.

4.39 The policy notes that no proposal should result in a loss of amenity for local residents by forcing them to travel to a less convenient location, and that in all exceptional cases, there would need to be clear and convincing reasons why development should be permitted or that loss of amenity value could be adequately compensated. The supporting text identifies that Greenspace, regardless of whether or not it is publicly accessible, makes an important contribution to the quality of life of those who live and work within the Borough.

4.40 The defined West Bank area incorporates existing greenspace allocated under this policy. Proposals should therefore seek to retain this existing greenspace, or provide compensatory greenspace in accordance with the provisions of policy GE6.

Policy GE24 - Protection of Important Landscape Features

- 4.41 This policy advises that development will not be permitted where it will result in an unacceptable effect on the visual or physical characteristics for which a site was designated as having 'Important Landscape Features.' The policy identifies a number of such areas including the Trans-Pennine Trail (West Bank Dock section) and Spike Island in Widnes. Development proposals should seek to protect these existing Important Landscape Features and where possible maintain and enhance them.

Policy GE28 – The Mersey Forest

- 4.42 This policy identifies locations where planning permission for development will be conditional upon the carrying out of tree planting and other landscape improvements, as identified on Map 7 of the UDP. The Council is committed to supporting the principles of the Mersey Forest, which aims to increase woodland planting around urban edges and extend planting into urban areas for the benefit of the public and environment. To this end, appropriate tree planting and other landscape improvements will be required within the West Bank Action Area with the aim of contributing to the relevant targets for woodland coverage.
- 4.43 The accompanying text states that the Mersey Forest is the largest in area of the twelve community forests being established throughout England. Identified opportunities for extended tree planting and woodland areas include the *"corridor between the A562 and the River Mersey."* The supporting text advises that an expansion of the woodland cover of the Borough will deliver many recreational, educational, landscape and wildlife benefits, whilst helping to absorb housing, transport routes and commercial development into a greener environment. It will also assist in improving air quality standards, given trees remove carbon dioxide, release oxygen and filter out harmful pollutants.
- 4.44 The accompanying text states that the guiding principles for the Mersey Forest in Halton are:
- i. Provide a woodland buffer around the urban edge and created a wooded edge to the Mersey Estuary:
 - ii. Extend planting into the urban area using all appropriate and available open land, including derelict land;
 - iii. Provide a new woodland structure for surrounding agricultural areas;
 - iv. Protect and manage the existing resource of urban trees and woodlands in a sustainable manner.

- 4.45 Development proposals within Southern Widnes will need to have regard to the provisions of policy GE28.

Policy GE30 - The Mersey Coastal Zone

- 4.46 Policy GE30 advises that proposals for development within the Undeveloped Coastal Zone will not be permitted unless the development specifically requires a coastal location, relates to the recreational use of the zone, or is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety. Policy advises that proposals which would contribute to regeneration, such as within Southern Widnes, and/or to the enhancement of environmental quality, tourism and recreation will be encouraged. The policy advises that development within the Developed Coastal Zone need not be limited to those which require a coastal location. However, policy advises that proposals within the Developed Coastal Zone should pay particular regard to environmental quality, and where possible to improving accessibility to the coast.
- 4.47 The Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area as identified on the UDP proposals map falls partly within the Mersey Coastal Zone. Development proposals within this area should conform to the requirements of policy GE30.

Policy H8 Non Dwelling House Uses

- 4.48 Policy states that within existing residential areas, including West Bank, proposals for development other than Class C3 (dwelling houses) will be considered mainly with regard to their effect on residential amenity. In such cases, it must be demonstrated that proposed development will not detract from the character of the area or the amenity of residents; will not result in an over-concentration of non-dwelling houses uses to the detriment of the character of the area or amenity of residents; and where car parking is to be provided fronting a highway, one third of that area should be provided with soft landscaping and screening.

Policy TP4 - New Public Transport Facilities

- 4.49 The policy states that development likely to prejudice the opportunity for new railway stations, including that proposed within Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area, will not be permitted. Policy TP4 advocates the development of new stations and other new public transport facilities, including bus and rail interchanges and part and ride facilities. The supporting text states that the opening of new public transport facilities will enable more people to use the public transport network, and *“thus reduce the need to travel by private car.”* These are also fundamental objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project.

- 4.50 The supporting text states that providing new public transport facilities will increase the prospects of more people travelling by a variety of modes of transport other than the car, as will providing interchanges between rail and bus. This will also “*increase the potential for access to Liverpool Airport using public transport.*”

Policy TP10 – The Trans-Pennine Trail and Mersey Way

- 4.51 The Trans-Pennine Trail and Mersey Way are important routes in the Greenway Network. They also form important sections of longer distance recreation routes, providing valuable routes for the residents of the Borough, opening up the riverfront to public access. The Trans-Pennine Trail is also an important tourist asset, potentially bringing hundreds of walkers and cyclists to the Borough. A key conceptual element of the Trans-Pennine Trail is the provision of associated facilities for its users including car parking, toilets, visitor centres, cafes, pubs, restaurants and overnight accommodation. The Council is seeking to encourage the development of such facilities where they would enhance the recreational and tourism role of the trail.

Policy PR14 – Contaminated Land

- 4.52 This policy establishes a number of criteria which must be satisfied prior to the determination of any planning applications for development on or adjacent to land which is known or suspected to be contaminated, comprising the following:

- Submit details to assess the nature and degree of contamination (type, degree and extent of contamination);
- Identify remedial measures required to deal with any hazard to safeguard future development and neighbouring uses;
- Submit details of a programme of implementation for the roll out and completion of mitigation measures to be agreed with the Council.

- 4.53 The requirement to undertake the above will be controlled either by planning conditions or, when necessary, by planning obligations. Within Southern Widnes, there are historic areas of landfill, notably at Ditton Road, ICI Coal Stockyard, and Spike Island. An assessment of their potential contamination may therefore be required as part of any planning application.

PR16 – Development and Flood Risk

- 4.54 Development will not be permitted on sites:

- At risk from fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding;
 - It would contribute to the risk of flooding elsewhere;
 - It would cause adverse access or maintenance problems on or adjacent to watercourses;
 - It will cause loss of functional floodplain;
 - It will adversely affect the integrity of existing fluvial or tidal flood defences;
 - It will adversely affect the geomorphology or channels, or increase instability and erosion;
 - It will result in extensive culverting; unless the site is protected to the appropriate standard of defence and it can be clearly demonstrated that sustainable and appropriate mitigation methods can be implemented.
- 4.55 In accordance with the provisions of policy PR16, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required where it is considered that there would be an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development or the development itself would be at risk of flooding. Where development is allowed, mitigation measures are likely to be required to alleviate flood risk both on and off site. These measures should be derived from the FRA and be included as part of the development proposals.

General Policy

- 4.56 Other saved policies in the UDP relating to land surrounding the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area that are allocated with specific land-uses can also contribute to the aims of the Regeneration Action Area. The aims are to promote social, economic and environmental regeneration, but must not prejudice the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area and its development potential.

Local Development Framework

- 4.57 The Halton LDF is intended to replace the UDP as the principal planning policy framework for Halton over the next few years. In the meantime – under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – it is necessary to continue to ‘save’ a number of UDP policies until replaced, merged or deleted as appropriate by emerging LDF documents.

4.58 The Council's Local Development Scheme (2007)² provides details on key emerging Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Those relevant to development within Southern Widnes, are as follows:

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- **Core Strategy (DPD)** – this will establish the vision and objectives for future spatial development across the Borough, scheduled for adoption in 2009;
- **New Residential Development (DPD)** – this will allocate sites for residential development within Halton, and comprise detailed policies on the delivery of new housing provision. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;
- **New Employment Development (DPD)** – this will allocate future employment sites across the Borough alongside an accompanying policy framework. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;
- **New Retail and Leisure Development (DPD)** – this will allocate sites for retail and employment development, incorporating specific policies to control the delivery of these facilities. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

4.59 There are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (adopted and emerging) that will be of relevance to development proposals within the defined Southern Widnes SPD area. Key amongst these are:

- Shop Fronts, Signage and Advertising;
- Designing for Community Safety;
- Design and of New Industrial and Commercial Development;
- Design of New Residential Development;
- Transport and Accessibility;
- Provision of Open Space; and
- Affordable Housing.

² The Council's Local Development Scheme is subject to annual review through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report, and in line with the new PPS 12: *Local Spatial Planning* (June 2008), thus the projected dates for preparation of these documents may be subject to change.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 4.60 The Council's SCI was adopted in July 2006, outlining the consultation process to be applied by the Council in the preparation of its future Local Development Documents. This SPD will be consulted upon in accordance with the provisions of the SCI.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

- 4.61 The Southern Widnes SPD is intended to contribute towards the implementation of the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy (2006). This Strategy co-ordinates the resources of local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes. The vision of the Strategy is that;

"Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."

- 4.62 The SCS also includes a priority for the borough titled 'Halton's Urban Renewal' with an objective *"to revitalise the town centres to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors."*
- 4.63 Halton Borough Council is committed to contributing to achieving the priorities set out in the SCS, through a number of priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. This plan also has five priorities, including 'urban renewal.'
- 4.64 The priorities in the SCS and the Corporate Plan are based on the priorities set by the people of Halton. These were identified through community involvement via area panels, focus groups, and a telephone survey. The Corporate Plan was based on the same community involvement and statistical information compiled for the State of the Borough Report, 2005.

Waterside Strategy

- 4.65 The Waterside Strategy was launched in March 2005. It seeks to achieve the better integration of waterside frontages in order to achieve environmental improvements, generate additional economic activity and bring derelict and underused sites into active high-quality uses.
-

Local Transport Plan 2

4.66 The Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006/07 – 2010/11 states that the ability of local people to access work, learning, healthcare, shopping, leisure and exercise can significantly impact on their quality of life and opportunities. The Local Transport Plan contains four shared priorities, as follows:

- *Tackling Congestion* – to facilitate the emerging regeneration of Runcorn and Widnes, there is the need to address the problem of congestion arising from increased levels of car ownership to deliver a freer flowing road network and associated economic and quality of life benefits. The delivery of a second Mersey crossing is recognised as an important means of addressing localised road congestion, alongside traffic management, public transport improvements, walking and cycling, and travel planning/smarter choices.
- *Delivering Accessibility* – the ability of people to access places of work, learning, healthcare, shopping, leisure and exercise can significantly enhance the quality of life. Schemes and initiatives to improve accessibility to important services and amenities are encouraged in the Local Transport Plan.
- *Safer Roads* – a key Government target is to reduce the number of annual road casualties across UK roads. The provision of a safe environment and reducing the impact of traffic on local communities is a key ambition, delivered through a range of traffic safety, traffic calming and speed management measures.
- *Better Air Quality* – reducing the environmental impact of road-based transportation is a driving ambition of European policy, adopted at local level through the Local Transport Plan. Opportunities to promote alternative transport modes are encouraged, notably walking, cycling, and public transport.

4.67 Helping to ensure that people can access the services which they need and want is not just a matter of improving local transport, but also of improving the provision of other services and developments in more accessible places at more accessible times. In addition, good access is a crucial element in attracting new businesses to relocate to the area or to establish themselves. The LTP is aimed at meeting the targets in the SCS - clearly this demonstrates that both this SPD and the LTP are ultimately trying to achieve the same goals and each will benefit the other.

Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan

- 4.68 The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process is the current system for the protection, conservation and enhancement of wildlife in the United Kingdom. As part of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Halton's BAP – of relevance to the Southern Widnes area - focuses on Action Areas for People and Nature.
- 4.69 Development proposals within the defined Southern Widnes area will be required to have regard to these policy provisions.

5. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 The purpose of this SPD is to guide the regeneration of Southern Widnes in accordance with the vision and objectives for the area as set out in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008).

Opportunities

- 5.2 The key opportunities for the regeneration of the area stem from its position within the route corridor of the Mersey Gateway Project, a catalyst towards the renaissance of Halton Borough and the regeneration of Southern Widnes. The site also lies in close proximity to key regional transport routes, including the M56 and M62, providing access to the national highway network. The location of the area also provides for national and global multi-modal movements, including via Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Manchester International Airport, the Port of Garston, and the Port of Weston.
- 5.3 At a local level, the strategic location of the area offers the opportunity to exploit its position between Runcorn and Widnes, and location close to the highway network, to create a high-quality mixed-use environment which will play a significant role in the regeneration of Southern Widnes. Furthermore, the regeneration of the area offers the potential to reduce the severance of West Bank from Widnes Town Centre by improving the public realm and pedestrian and cycle environment along Victoria Road and introducing a new commercial development (site 8, figure 8.1) to form a safe and lively physical linkage between the two areas.

Priority Regeneration Objectives

- 5.4 A number of priority regeneration objectives for Southern Widnes have emerged from both the existing context, and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. Care will be taken to ensure integration between these objectives and the emerging Spike Island Masterplan. These objectives are as follows:

Priority Regeneration Objective 1 – Image and Place-Making

- To significantly lift perceptions of Widnes and Runcorn to meet the visionary aspirations held by the Council, as embodied in the Mersey Gateway Project, and ensure any new

development, attributable to the catalytic effect of the Bridge, makes a positive enhancement to the character of the locality in terms of design quality and resource use.

- To build on the strong local sense of community, and place, deliver the considerable regeneration opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway, enhancing and promoting key assets in each of the localities (physical and community).

Priority Regeneration Objective 2 – Accessibility and Sustainable Movement

- To increase the catchment area for labour, goods and markets, such that the Mersey Gateway opens up new opportunities for employment in the Liverpool City Region for Halton's residents and increases the ability to access markets and customers for Halton's businesses.
- To facilitate enhanced sustainable movements by pedestrians, cyclists and local vehicular travellers (particularly by public transport patronage) through the de-linking of unnecessary infrastructure, the down-grading and removal of unnecessary expressway infrastructure and improved access to the expressway / highway system where appropriate in accordance with the Halton Sustainable Transport Strategy proposals.
- To build on the positive impacts for all user-groups attributable to the Mersey Gateway and maximise opportunities for further local connectivity and accessibility for existing communities in promoting ease of movement throughout the area and beyond, particularly by public transport modes but also through greater opportunities for walking and cycling linked to health benefits in accordance with the Halton Sustainable Transport Strategy proposals.

Priority Regeneration Objective 3 – Development and Economic Prosperity

- To significantly improve the commercial, and residential, accommodation in the area having particular regard to local needs, and providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient accommodation to meet contemporary and future market requirements and aspirations, through key redevelopment proposals attributable to the scheme.
- To bring land back into use for new development that is currently occupied by highways infrastructure deemed unnecessary following the completion of the Mersey Gateway, with a particular focus on bringing contaminated land back into use in the West Bank area of Southern Widnes, for new uses.
- To develop land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery of waste.

- To encourage development which, where possible, fully mitigates all environmental constraints including landscaping, contamination, noise, air quality, water quality, flooding, and visual impacts.

5.5 In addition to these Priority Regeneration Objectives, a number of direct key objectives have been prepared relating specifically to the Southern Widnes Action Area. These have been prepared following extensive consultation with local residents and businesses, and reflect the responses which were received during this process;

- **Objective 1:** To re-brand Southern Widnes through the creation of high-quality gateway locations with excellent access to the regions principal conurbations and population – inherent in this is the development of high-quality, aspirational and affordable housing and services. To enable the labour supply to meet, and facilitate, further demand within the local economy, Southern Widnes provides a significant opportunity to encourage skilled workers to permanently reside within Halton.
- **Objective 2:** To facilitate the development of resource efficient high-quality business accommodation, providing mixed-use leisure and recreational facilities, providing resource efficient and affordable housing and upgrading the standard of the public realm including access to high quality greenspace.
- **Objective 3:** To enable local residents to share directly in the wider investment benefits of regeneration working with initiatives such as the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy (LCRES) to develop local skills and capacity, increase local employment opportunities and reduce worklessness in West Bank. It is important that local employment opportunities must remain, and be further encouraged into the area.
- **Objective 4:** To provide investment to support, and develop, training facilities for local sporting provision, incorporating flood lights and changing rooms.
- **Objective 5:** To provide an additional access route, served by public transport through the Sustainable Transport Strategy in particular, but also serving new walking and cycling routes. This waterside boulevard along the Sankey Canal should enhance access into Southern Widnes to negate the existing bottleneck situation, improve east-west connectivity, and upgrade links to Widnes Town Centre and the River Mersey. The de-linking of redundant expressways arising from these works should be utilised to unlock new development opportunities and reduce the severance and isolation experienced by local communities.

- **Objective 6:** To improve safety (incorporating Secured by Design principles), and local physical amenities, by upgrading street lighting and the wider public realm within West Bank and the links from this area to Widnes Town Centre.
- **Objective 7:** to create a new heart for Southern Widnes with the consolidation of local retail, services and improved education and health provision.

6. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 This section of the SPD comprises a number of key principles and overarching development principles which will apply to the redevelopment of Southern Widnes.
- 6.2 Southern Widnes is an area which will be subject to considerable long-term change not least associated with the Mersey Gateway and the delinking of a redundant road infrastructure but also with the subsequent regeneration and redevelopment opportunities that the Mersey Gateway proposal creates. Currently Southern Widnes exhibits a unique blend of natural and manmade place-specific assets which need to be protected and enhanced. To deliver the objectives for the area it is essential that all future developments within Southern Widnes are of the highest design quality, taking into account the character of the area. These development principles expand on the saved policies contained within the UDP.

Creating a Sustainable Mixed Use Quarter

- 6.3 The SPD area offers an excellent opportunity to ensure that future development within Widnes can be concentrated within the built up area of the town where existing and future physical and social infrastructure is concentrated. While the area currently contains a mix of uses, the predominance of employment activities, particularly in the northwest, sit uncomfortably with the residential area ensuring that this edge of centre location is underutilised. As a result, West Bank is isolated from the Town Centre and existing retail and service provision within the area is severely limited. The area does provide an important local employment role, however there is potential to improve the quality of the environment in which it is delivered.
- 6.4 The SPD seeks to establish a new 'walkable' neighbourhood within Southern Widnes. A permeable movement network is promoted with walking and cycling particularly encouraged (see Fig. 8.1b). While a range of housing will be provided the new neighbourhood will be predominately focused toward providing family accommodation and new affordable housing. A neighbourhood centre is proposed which will seek to improve the retail and service offer within Southern Widnes. To support the existing and proposed communities this centre could include a small food store, smaller shops and services and new community uses including education, training and health facilities.
- 6.5 In addition, future development within the area will seek to improve the quality of employment provision. The SPD area given its excellent strategic highway links has the potential to attract larger office and commercial occupiers. The area also offers the potential to address the

current shortage of smaller office and light industrial accommodation within Widnes Town Centre to meet the growing number of small to medium sized businesses in the borough.

Creating a Sense of Place

- 6.6 Southern Widnes currently suffers from a poor image and perception, a major challenge for the SPD is to substantially improve the profile of the area. Despite this, West Bank has a number of place specific assets which should be enhanced by future high quality development. These include the Victoria Promenade, Spike Island, the Catalyst Museum and Sankey Canal.
- 6.7 Furthermore, the area offers excellent views of the Mersey Estuary, the Silver Jubilee Bridge, the Sankey Canal, Spike Island, Runcorn Promenade and Wigg Island and will provide future views of the Mersey Gateway Bridge. Development proposals should ensure that these important view corridors are maintained.
- 6.8 It is essential that the road infrastructure associated with the Mersey Gateway is integrated within the urban fabric of Southern Widnes. Public realm and landscaping improvements are proposed at key points to achieve this. Collectively these create a series of focal points helping to create a sense of place. The future redevelopment of Southern Widnes should tackle the physical and functional severance of the area from the town centre and seek to establish a finer urban grain encouraging well connected active streets.

Encouraging Local Accessibility

- 6.9 In line with the above, the SPD seeks to rationalise existing excessive road infrastructure to the benefit of place making, local accessibility and sustainable modes of transport. Currently the Silver Jubilee Bridge and associated highways connects the M56 with the M62 and results in heavy traffic flows through Runcorn and Southern Widnes. The Mersey Gateway proposal seeks to separate strategic traffic from local traffic resulting in a significant decrease in traffic volumes through both towns. The SPD responds to this opportunity proactively by defining a clear hierarchy of routes within Southern Widnes which improves local links to key destinations and facilitates the opportunity to encourage public transport connections, walking and cycling (See Fig 8.1b).

Sustainability

- 6.10 Where possible flexible development will be encouraged which can sustain a variety of uses over time ensuring that buildings can respond to changing social, technological and economic

conditions. Proposals should also seek to minimise the total environmental impact resulting from new development.

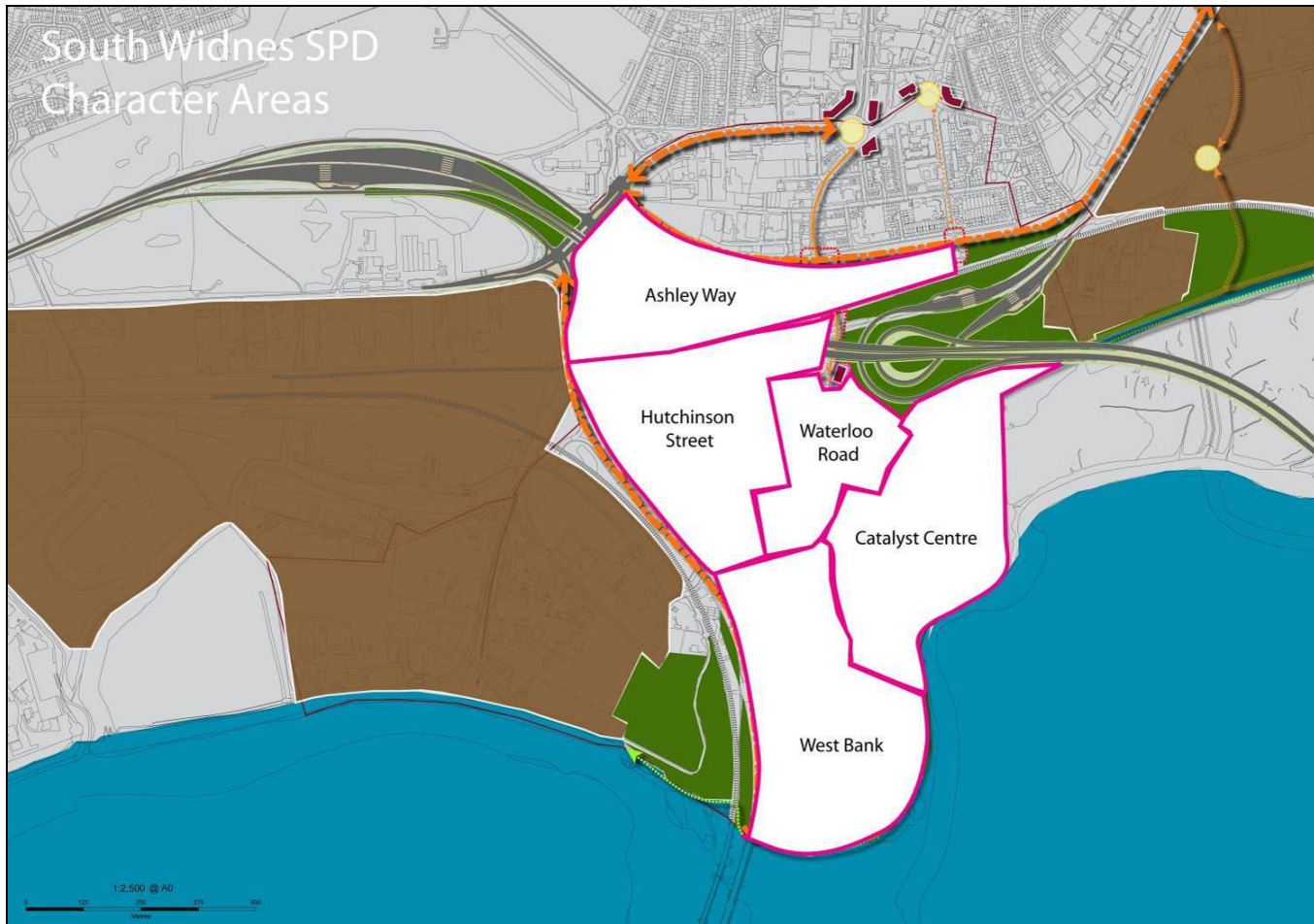
7. SUB-AREA POLICIES

7.1 This section of the SPD sets out a number of key principles and overarching development principles which will apply to the redevelopment of Southern Widnes. It comprises detailed SPD policy, outlining the development proposals for a number of sub-areas (Figure 7.1 overleaf³ provides a visual overview), including:

- Catalyst Centre;
- Hutchinson Street;
- Ashley Way;
- Waterloo Road;
- West Bank residential neighbourhood.

³ Note: The boundaries illustrated in Figure 7.1 are for illustrative purposes and are indicative of the Mersey Gateway proposals.

Figure 7.1: Southern Widnes Sub-Areas



Catalyst Centre

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.2 The original building, which now houses the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre dates from around 1860. It is rendered with slate roof above four storeys, with a two storey wing containing various classical features. The building was originally constructed for the chemical firm of Hutchinson & Co and later used by Gossage's. More recently, the building was converted into a museum with additional fifth glass-surrounded storey and a glass external lift to the east.
- 7.3 The Catalyst Science Discovery Centre stands apart from the grain of residential streets marking an important corner and junction between the neighbourhood of West Bank and the open spaces of the Mersey Corridor. Today it is used as a museum celebrating the Town's historic associations with the Chemical Industry providing an exciting display of interactive and educational facilities. The building is listed and contains four interactive galleries with over 100 different exhibits and a glass observatory at the roof level, which provides panoramic views across Cheshire. The museum also offers free car parking, a shop and the 'Elements Cafe'.
- 7.4 Open space surrounds the building and it provides excellent views of the Sankey Canal, Spike Island and the Mersey Estuary. The Waterside Development Strategy for Halton (March 2005) sets out a number of aims and aspirations for the Sankey Canal Waterfront, which aim to attract development and support an expanded range of leisure uses, which are to date unrealised. These aims are reflected in current policy - South Widnes Action Area RG1 - which promotes mixed use and redevelopment of the waterfront areas.
- 7.5 The Sankey Canal also forms an access point to the Trans Pennine Trail and forms an important access point to the wider estuary for anglers, walkers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- 7.6 In the immediate vicinity of the Museum, the Sankey Canal now has restored lock gates, joining the River Mersey at Spike Island. The Grade II listed lock gates date from 1833 with later alterations and repairs and control a difference in water level of 12 feet (3.6 m) between the canal and the river level.
- 7.7 It is important to note that the regeneration of Spike Island is currently being considered through a Masterplan process undertaken by Halton Borough Council, which is aligned with the proposals of this SPD.

*Policy**Spatial Strategy and Interventions*

- CC1: A new neighbourhood centre is proposed for Southern Widnes and should primarily seek to improve the convenience goods offer of the area, as well as other community amenities. The centre should include A1, A3, A4, limited A5 uses and D1 (non-residential uses).
- CC2: Residential development will be encouraged within the area, particularly where this addresses the new Sankey Square (public space), but retaining the local employment function of the area will remain an important priority, with investment that will positively enhance and contribute to the overall improved image and environment of the area.
- CC3: Recreational and leisure activity associated with existing open space, the Sankey Canal and Spike Island should be encouraged.
- CC4: Protect and enhance the estuary's habitats.

Layout and Design

- CC5: All development should seek to enhance key view corridors of the Sankey Canal, Spike Island, the Mersey Estuary and the new Mersey Gateway Bridge.
- CC6: A new Sankey Square is proposed within this location and the area will be a focus for public realm improvements acting as a viewing platform for the Mersey Estuary. Any development proposals will need to have regard to servicing and junction arrangements agreed through liaison with the local highways authority.
- CC7: The neighbourhood centre should provide ground floor frontage and active uses addressing Sankey Square and fronting along the associated new link road.
- CC8: Elsewhere along the Sankey Canal and Spike Island green infrastructure and landscaping improvements are encouraged where supportive of the Spike Island Masterplan. These improvements should enhance the ecological performance of the area and screen the Mersey Gateway highway proposal.
- CC9: Buildings within the area should enhance the setting of the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and should not exceed 5 storeys. All development will allow pedestrian movement along the waterfront.

Transport and Movement

- CC10: Developments should align with the street hierarchy set out in the Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1b). All development should maintain and improve pedestrian and cycle connections along the waterfront.
- CC11: The West Bank promenade should be extended northward along the Sankey Canal/Trans Pennine Trail and will provide for pedestrian and cycle movement. Pedestrian and Cycle access to Spike Island will be improved as part of the wider Halton Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- CC12: North of the square, a new waterside boulevard (Widnes Boulevard) is proposed which will establish a new vehicle link between West Bank and Widnes Waterfront. The boulevard will prioritise public transport, cycle and pedestrian connections. The alignment of the proposed waterside boulevard is to be protected from redevelopment proposals that may prejudice this opportunity.
- CC13: Development proposals should not prejudice the implementation of these infrastructure proposals.

Justification

- 7.8 Approximately 1,200 people live in the Southern Widnes area. However, current retail provision is limited to two small convenience stores. There is potential to accommodate an additional 560 dwellings within the area. The policy above seeks to ensure that the quality and range of retail provision within the area is significantly improved to serve existing and future communities. It seeks to establish a more sustainable distribution of retail provision within Widnes to ensure that the day-to-day shopping requirements of residents are accessible on foot and by cycling. Improvements should also be made to enhance pedestrian and cycle linkages to the new local centre from West Bank.
- 7.9 The policy also seeks to improve and extend the waterfront promenade helping to unlock waterside development opportunities which are arranged around the key focal points such as Sankey Square while also protecting environmental assets. The policy encourages a direct connection between Southern Widnes to the major employment area Widnes Waterfront which has the potential to create a significant number of new jobs with over eighty hectares of land being redeveloped for commercial, office and light industrial uses.

- 7.10 The importance of the area in providing locally accessible employment is also recognised within the above policy. However, the policy seeks to maximise opportunities adjacent to canal and establish higher value uses which enhance the character of Sankey Canal and Spike Island.

Hutchinson Street

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.11 This area comprises of industrial land lying between Wandsworth Way and the A533. It currently contains a recreational area (sports pitches), storage yards and builders merchants forming part of a low quality gateway into the Southern Widnes area with convoluted access off the A533 and into the core of the area via Hutchinson Street. Unsurprisingly given the predominance of secondary employment uses a coarse urban grain typifies the area leading to limited east-west movement.
- 7.12 Despite this industrial legacy, the area has been the focus for investment and regeneration. An area of contaminated land, the former coal stockyard area has through public sector investment been transformed into the Ted Gleave Fields, an all weather rugby pitch.
- 7.13 The Victoria Road area will be subject to considerable change through the Mersey Gateway proposal. Demolition and relocation of the Catalyst Trade Park will make way for a new junction link with the Mersey Gateway and the A557 Widnes Eastern Bypass. A new bridge is proposed spanning from Widnes, looping over Victoria Road on a high level structure raised 17metres above the existing road at a height which should allow clear visibility and excellent sight lines for pedestrians and motorists, whilst also allowing for high quality development and public realm to be achieved at this important junction.
- 7.14 Directly to the west of the SPD area a new rail/road freight handling and logistics park (3MG) is proposed which has the potential to create 5,000 jobs.

Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- HS1: A new neighbourhood should be created within the area. New development proposals should meet a range of housing requirements in particular, housing of three or more bedrooms designed for families, and other affordable housing. Other uses should be encouraged to support this neighbourhood, including small scale local retail, leisure and service provision.
- HS2: Mixed use development including commercial and office uses are encouraged within the Victoria Road area, where this acts as a buffer to the existing employment area.

Layout and Design

- HS3: Residential development should front onto Ted Gleave Fields. Strong and attractive frontages should be established along Wandsworth Way and Hutchinson Street. Residential development should not exceed three storeys.
- HS4: Victoria Road will be the main focus for public realm improvements and major development proposals should be targeted toward improving the image of such key routes and gateways.
- HS5: Landscaping proposals, particularly on the eastern side of Queensway should seek to screen future developments associated with 3MG.

Transport and Movement

- HS6: Developments should align with the street hierarchy set out in the West Bank Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1b).
- HS7: Queensway should be downgraded to a two-way inter town corridor to the benefit of local Accessibility. Simplified junctions at grade level should be established on Queensway to allow easy access to Southern Widnes.
- HS8: Both pedestrian and vehicle links should be established to existing neighbourhoods and key destinations.
- HS9: Links to 3MG should be encouraged and promoted.

Justification

- 7.15 The census indicates that just over 80% of the housing stock within the SPD area is terraced housing. This is significantly above the stock profile for Halton as a whole which is set at 37%. Detached properties within Southern Widnes are substantially unrepresented.
- 7.16 The Halton Housing Needs Study (2005) has indicated that future demand for housing is predominately for larger dwellings. It indicates that almost 60% of private sector demand is for three or more bedrooms. Demand in the social rented sector does favour smaller properties, yet the study concluded that much of this demand can be met by turnover of existing stock and that there was actually a shortage of accommodation for families requiring four bedroom properties.

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- 7.17 Another key issue facing Halton Borough Council as outlined in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report is where to accommodate future housing growth in the light of the increasing need for additional dwellings as outlined in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West.
- 7.18 Therefore the policy above seeks to meet a number of strategic housing objectives. Residential development proposals should seek to prioritise the provision of family housing within the area, improve the quality of housing available within the area, and maximise the use of previously developed land within the urban area of Widnes. The creation of a new neighbourhood within Southern Widnes will help to increase the spend capacity of the area and support improved facilities and services.
- 7.19 In design terms the new neighbourhood for Southern Widnes will be centred around the leisure and recreational resource of the Ted Gleave Fields and the layout and landscaping proposals associated with future development will seek to reinforce the character of the area.
- 7.20 Integration of the Mersey Gateway proposal into the area remains a priority. The southern part of Victoria Road connects Southern Widnes with the Town Centre. The removal of the existing overhead road bridge of the A568 Widnes Eastern Relief Road clears the way for a prominent mixed-use development forming an important threshold at the gateway location. This area is the most prominent location where the new Mersey Gateway proposal interacts with Southern Widnes and should therefore be a priority for public realm improvements. There is an opportunity to create active street frontage and a quality public realm scheme that creates a feature of the overhead bridge and its supporting pillars.
- 7.21 Finally, the policy seeks to simplify the existing highway infrastructure within the character area to the benefit of place making, local accessibility and sustainable modes of transport. Queensway should be downgraded to an inter town corridor. To encourage local accessibility by all modes the elevated section of Queensway should be replaced with an at-grade section of highway with two simplified junctions.

Ashley Way

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.22 This area is affected by the Mersey Gateway proposals, with land required to deliver the preferred route alignment. It currently contains a number of older industrial premises of low quality located on land fragmented by Ashley Way West, Ditton Road and the railway, which runs east to west along its southern boundary. Current uses detract from the character of this important corridor and include a very visible scrap merchant and numerous low quality storage yards and a mix of under utilised buildings. Pedestrian and cycle crossing is difficult at present and requires substantial improvement. Clearly the area will be subject to considerable change through the Mersey Gateway proposal. It has the potential to meet the requirements of economic sectors which are projected to grow in Halton.

Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- AW1: The area will encourage a mix of B1/B2 employment development opportunities. Provision along Ashley Way will be focused toward encouraging small to medium sized local enterprises as well as larger floorplate uses.
- AW2: Larger scale employment development should be concentrated around the Ditton Road junction. More mixed use development will be encouraged closer to Victoria Road.
- AW3: Development within the area will be expected to demonstrate its contribution to local employment for residents of Widnes as well as wider Borough and regional objectives.

Layout and Design

- AW4: New two / three storey buildings will present active fronts onto Ashley Way and Victoria Road and have their principal entrances facing these streets. Development should seek to improve the Ditton road junction as a key gateway location to the town.
- AW5: Public realm investment and development should seek to strengthen key north south crossing points along Ashley Way particularly Victoria Road.

Transport and Movement

- AW6: Developments should align with the street hierarchy set out in the Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1b).
- AW7: Public transport connections between the area and the Town Centre should be facilitated.
- AW8: Where possible communal car parking should be encouraged and parking should be accommodated in less visible locations.
- AW9: Pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities should be upgraded at Ashley Way to facilitate improved connectivity and movement between Southern Widnes and Widnes town centre.

Justification

- 7.23 Halton's Commercial Property Review (2007) emphasise that the majority of employment land is focused toward regional investment sites with specialist uses likely to be the outcome. Most firms in Runcorn and Widnes are small, 80 percent employ less than ten people and 90 percent less than 50 people. The reduction in business sizes is expected to continue along with a growth in self-employment. Of the total available employment land in the borough, only 90ha is dedicated to local businesses needs. The report indicates that only 19.79 ha is available for local companies, which is approximately a two years supply. Demand is demonstrated for very small space up to 5000 sq ft for offices and up to 10,000 sq ft or smaller for industrial with an overall need for better quality property.
- 7.24 Finally, the Business Survey as set out in the Issues Report for the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2007) has indicated that businesses in Runcorn and Widnes highly value the close proximity of the motorway network. The Issues Report also indicated that between 2006 and 2020 major employment growth sectors will be associated in the computing, professional and other business services.
- 7.25 The policy above provides a range of employment development opportunities within the area which account for approximately 20 hectares. It seeks to address the limited supply of employment land in Widnes targeted toward the encouragement of local employment and business creation. The focus of future development can address the demand for smaller business space. It also seeks to meet the development needs of the projected growth in

identified economic sectors. Ashley Way is located on the edge of the town centre but will also benefit from direct access to the Mersey Gateway.

Waterloo Road

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.26 Despite the isolation and lack of permeability this area continues to support a mix of uses, comprising a garage showroom and workshop surrounded by small industrial units, providing a mix of employment opportunities and valued local employment uses, which are located in a mix of accommodation of varying quality and design. Storage areas and compounds are often arranged in locations that are visible from the adjoining residential streets reinforcing the areas traditional industrial image as an area known for its mix of ageing, moderate quality buildings close to Widnes Town Centre. Trafalgar Court houses a number of workshops and lock up premises.
- 7.27 To the west of the character area the Catalyst Trade Park was developed over the last ten years and houses a mix of employment uses including car hire and leasing businesses, a cleaning company, and a plumbers merchant. The area is affected by the Mersey Gateway proposals, with the land required to deliver the preferred route. Development along the waterfront may include residential uses. Any development should be of a quality that reflects the development of the Widnes Waterfront Area further along the Canal.

Policy

Spatial Strategy

- WR1: Future development should support the general employment focus of the area west of Victoria Road. Targeted investment in public realm priorities and environmental improvements will be made over time. Any future redevelopment of this area, whilst respecting the employment land use, will be of a higher design quality respecting the overall objective in enhancing the image and environment of Southern Widnes.
- WR2: Development along the waterfront could be primarily concentrated on providing a mix of B1/B2 uses.

Layout and Design

- WR3: All development should seek to enhance key view corridors of the Sankey Canal, Spike Island, the Mersey Estuary and the new Mersey Gateway Bridge.
- WR4: Buildings within the area should not exceed 5 storeys. All development will allow

pedestrian/cycle movement along the waterfront.

Transport and Movement

- WR5: Developments should align with the street hierarchy set out in the Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1b).
- WR6: Where possible communal car parking should be encouraged and parking should be provided within development plots in less visible locations.

Justification

- 7.28 The policy above recognises the important role of this area in providing local employment opportunities and seeks to retain the general employment focus of the area west of Waterloo Road. As a latter phase of development this character area will seek to extend higher quality development along the waterside. Waterfront development will be concentrated toward office and commercial development.

West Bank Existing Residential

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.29 The residential community of West Bank is located around a collection of terraced streets, which are predominantly arranged north to south. Older terraced properties are arranged to the east and west of Mersey Road. The condition and quality of the properties appears generally poor with the area inadequately served by shops and facilities.
- 7.30 The permeable housing grid, which characterises the industrial period is disrupted by later infill developments. Inward looking developments such as Davies Close and James Close are typical and restrict access east to west. These newer estates have disrupted the original grid of streets. North to south the links remain largely in tact. However, movement east to west is severely restricted leaving the potential of the Mersey Estuary inaccessible and an unrealised asset.
- 7.31 Key streets face towards the estuary, with the main ones being Irwell Street and Mersey Road linking to either end of a promenade park. Both streets are terminated by a number of expansive views across the Mersey containing many fine views of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and across to Runcorn Old Town, where the new Deck Development takes on a new prominence. A key site (formerly an office building) at the end of Irwell Street (at its junction with Terrace Road) has planning permission for re-use for residential development. Importantly the development brief established for the site considers the importance of keeping the waterside route open in line with policy objectives.
- 7.32 Parts of the area are permeable and legible - that is easy to walk through, with clearly identified routes, streets, squares, parks etc. However in other areas, the urban form is weak and fragmented (or shattered). Locations where these conditions are found can be described as 'Shatter Zones'.
- 7.33 Shatter Zones are typically created where lines of infrastructure (roads and railways) have been threaded through existing neighbourhoods. For example: The proximity of the A533 (and the alignment of the expressway) which runs close to the west, prematurely severs the street pattern and impacts upon the quality of the existing public realm, which impedes permeability through the area making it less clear as to the route to take. Links for example to bus stops on either side of the A533 are poor being accessible only by subways and indirect routes.
- 7.34 In other locations (such as Terrace Road and St Mary's Road) the older street pattern is more legible. However, the character of the street is poor – being aligned by newer, two storey

properties of low architectural merit. Few of the streets are connected to the foreshore areas and the opportunities to present and frame the dramatic views of the Mersey have been ignored.

Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- WBR1: Reinforce the West Bank neighbourhood through the addition of some higher quality residential development, where possible.
- WBR2: Support the continued investment within existing residential stock and seek investment in the existing private sector stock, particularly along Mersey Road and other principal frontages.

Layout and Design

- WBR3: Residential developments on the waterfront should be set back from the waterfront to enable public access to the waterfront itself, and the Trans Pennine Trail to follow the waterfront.
- WBR4: Buildings should not exceed 3/4 storeys in order to preserve views of St. Mary's Church.
- WBR5: All development should seek to enhance the key view of the Silver Jubilee Bridge the Mersey Estuary and St Mary's church.

Transport and Movement

- WBR6: Developments should align with the street hierarchy set out in the Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1b).
- WBR7: Improve pedestrian, cycle and bus routes within the existing residential areas, and along the waterfront.

Justification

- 7.35 As identified above, the housing profile within West Bank is characterised by a high concentration of terraced housing. Halton Housing Trust (HHT) owns a number of properties in this character area, parts of which have been designated as a Housing Investment Area. The comprehensive improvement proposed by the Trust under the initiative aims to replenish the fabric and interiors of the houses to improve their long-term sustainability.
- 7.36 The policy seeks to diversify the current housing offer through new residential development proposals which attract residents to the area. Development will effectively create a high quality edge to the neighbourhood along the line of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and A533. Simplified highway junctions at grade level, allows direct access from West Bank to the A533/Queensway and the Silver Jubilee Bridge and dramatically improves east-west permeability. Effectively a new gateway is created to West Bank.

8. DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS

- 8.1 The vision for Southern Widnes, like the aspiration established for the wider Regeneration Strategy, is bold and challenging, but intentionally so, as the vision is about changing perceptions and setting a new agenda for investment in delivering a place that people can be proud of and that people aspire to live and work in, invest and spend time.
- 8.2 It is also a vision that will not be delivered in the matter of a few years but represents a sustained programme of investment, of at least fifteen years, that is timed with the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway. This is illustrated in an Opportunity Plan (Figure 8.1) located overleaf. Further to this, an appropriate street hierarchy (Figure 8.1b⁴) and Phasing Strategy has been determined.

⁴ Note: Waterloo Road will remain as a distributor roads with surface improvements made.

Figure 8.1: Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan



Figure 8.1b: Southern Widnes Opportunity Plan – Proposed Street Hierarchy



Phasing of Development

- 8.3 Development of Southern Widnes is proposed to take place within three distinct phases proceeding in 2011 and completing in 2026. The diagrams below show the estimated phasing programme for the regeneration of Southern Widnes and its five character areas in detail.
- 8.4 The first Phase of development (Phase 1 – figure 8.2) is scheduled to take place simultaneously to the scheduled commencement of construction of the Mersey Gateway in 2011, and will continue beyond completion of the Mersey Gateway until 2016. This Phase will include the introduction of new highway infrastructure associated with the Mersey Gateway crossing and the removal of redundant existing highway sections. This process will result in a number of opportunity sites being brought forward for redevelopment.
- 8.5 Phase 2 (figure 8.3) is proposed to occur from 2016 until 2021 with the majority of opportunity sites, arising from infrastructure alterations during Phase 1, to be brought forward for regenerative development during this period. A new high quality public realm ‘gateway’ is to be introduced to the Victoria Road Bridge area, improving linkages for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists from Southern Widnes to Widnes town centre. A large mixed-use opportunity incorporating retail and leisure services will be brought forward at Site 10, providing a cornerstone to the fore mentioned Victoria Road Gateway.
- 8.6 As Widnes moves away from its industrial legacy, and encourages inward migration through increased employment opportunities and uplift in the character of this waterfront environment, there may be a requirement for increased, high quality residential provision. In this respect, an initial scoping of residential sites are proposed at sites 5A, 5B, 6A and 6B.
- 8.7 During this Phase sites 14 and 15 will come forward for mixed-use development incorporating local retail, leisure and key services within a new neighbourhood centre for West Bank, joining the existing, and new, residential communities within the area. This development will also incorporate the New Sankey Square located on the waterfront beside the Sankey Canal, which is to provide a high quality landscaped waterside public realm environment for social and recreational uses. Access junction and servicing arrangements will need to be agreed through liaison with the local highways authority.

Figure 8.2: Southern Widnes Phase 1 (2011-2016)

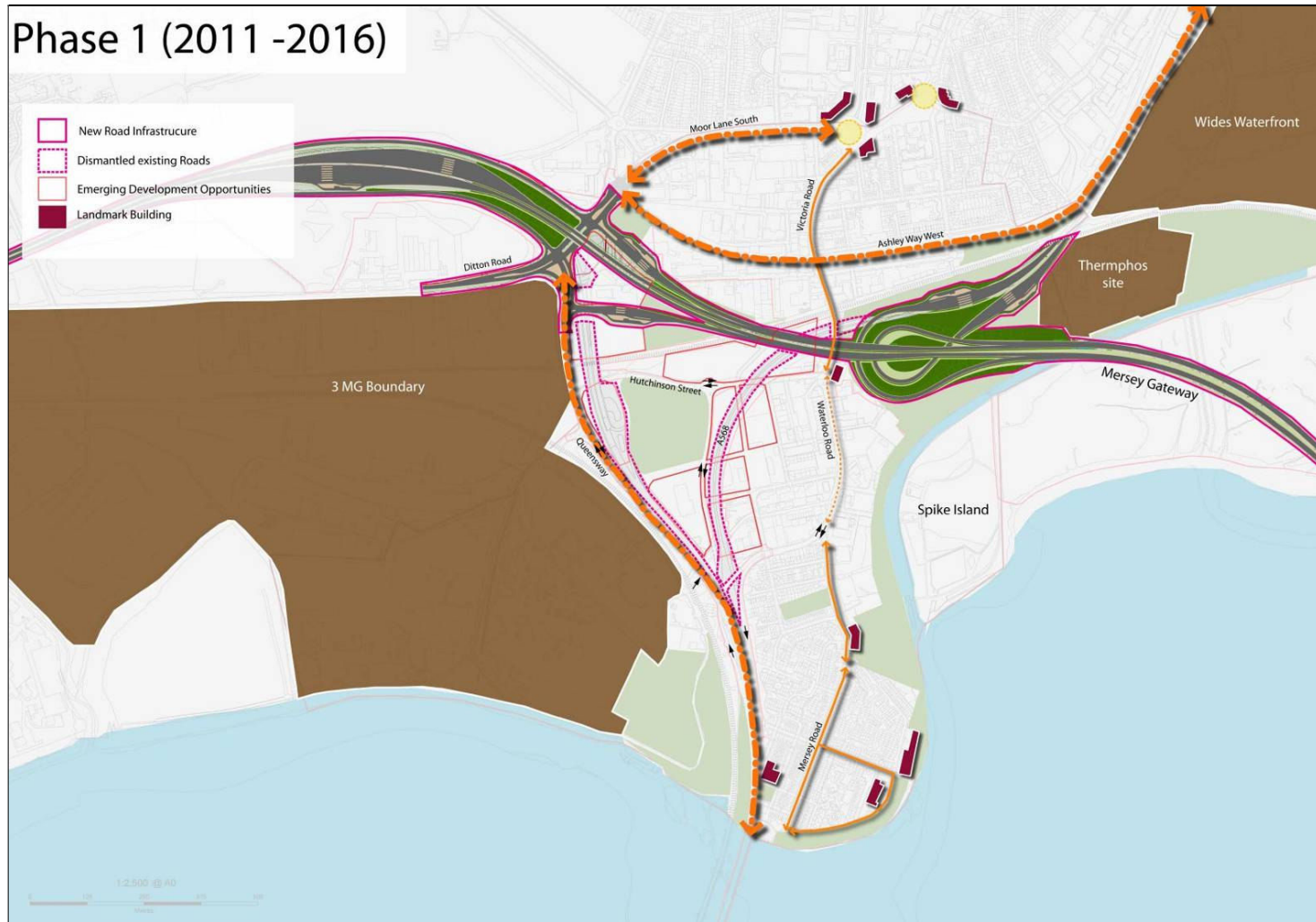
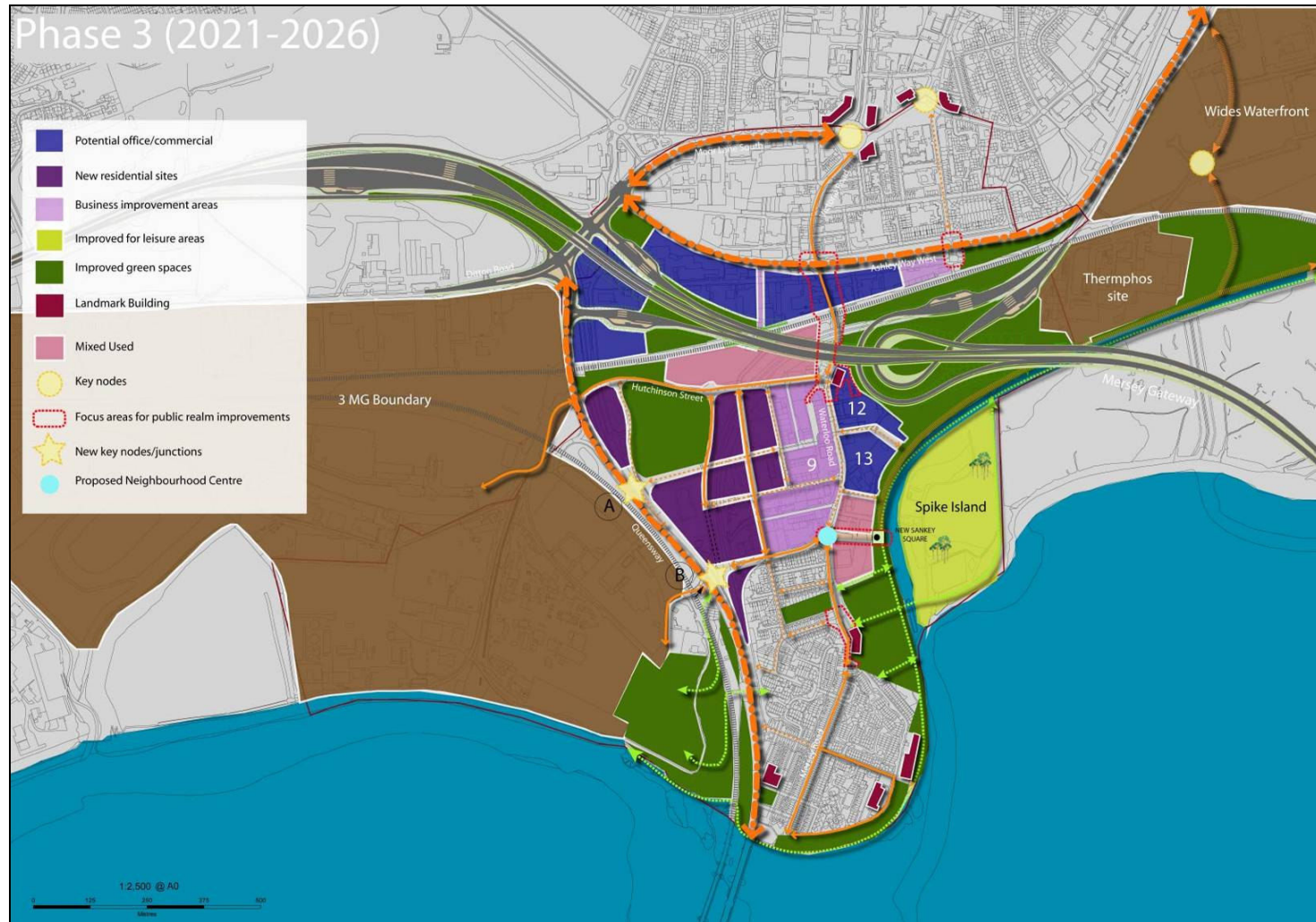


Figure 8.3: Southern Widnes Phase 2 (2016-2021)



Figure 8.4: Southern Widnes Phase 3: 2021-2026



- 8.8 In the latter part of Phase 2 a new waterside boulevard incorporating a canal-side vehicular, pedestrian and cycle link through to Widnes Waterfront is proposed leading from Sankey Square. The design characteristics of this boulevard are to strongly reflect the surrounding landscape character of this area to embrace the existing canal-side sense of place, views of greenspace located on Spike Island and across the Mersey Estuary to ensure this access route provides a distinctive recreational leisure facility in addition to a transport connection promoting sustainable modes of movement. This sense of place is to be reflected through usage of the following to a precedent standard:
- a design philosophy that embraces the surrounding landscape characteristics and prioritises sustainable transport modes;
 - appropriate hard surfacing;
 - selection of appropriate plant species;
 - street furniture, signage and lighting; and also
 - gateway features and public art.
- 8.9 New road infrastructure will also be introduced towards the latter part of Phase 2 to provide improved accessibility into Southern Widnes from the A533. This will involve the downgrading of the existing highway to a single-lane carriageway, and the introduction of two new at-grade junctions to enable access into opportunity sites 2, 3, 4, 7 and 11, and the existing business and residential areas (figure 8.3). The ambition for Sites 2 and 11 in urban design terms is to create a contemporary flagship quarter of high quality office and commercial development located at the gateway to Widnes and benefiting substantially from the strategic city-regional transport links offered by this position beside the Mersey Gateway.
- 8.10 Sites 2 and 11 would be accessed from the A533 Queensway through modification of the Mersey Gateway off-slip facilitating partial two-way access. This will be followed by the release of sites 1 and 8 for further phased development of the office and commercial quarter.
- 8.11 Sites 3, 4 and 7 will form a final phase of residential development and will flank the eastern carriageway of Queensway (A533).
- 8.12 It is important that any proposals for new residential development in the meantime are to be considered according to the constraints of land contamination, air and noise pollution, risk associated with nearby COMAH sites and flooding, and compatibility with existing or proposal uses. Hence, proposals would also be assessed against the appropriate UDP policies.

- 8.13 Phase 3 (figure 8.4) is proposed to take place from 2021 until 2026 and will form the final segment of development and infrastructure proposed through the SPD.
- 8.14 There is a need to upgrade the quality of local light industrial accommodation within West Bank to bolster local employment opportunities and provide strong support for SME businesses. Hence, Site 9 is to be designated a business improvement area, with investment targeted at raising the standard of accommodation within this area to meet the business requirements of companies at this time and going forward.
- 8.15 In addition, sites 12 and 13 will form a final phase of employment land provision, earmarked for commercial and office uses.

Development Control Matters

- 8.16 The determination of proposals within the Southern Widnes Action Area will be in accordance with the saved policies set out in the Halton UDP and the contents of this SPD. The contents of the SPD are summarised here in order to set out clearly what the Council will expect in terms of the type of development that will be permitted. This section is however by no means exhaustive. It is recommended that applicants hold pre-application discussions with Halton Borough Council prior to submission of any planning application.
- 8.17 The overall strategy for the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area starts with UDP Policy RG1, and is described in section 3 of this SPD.

General Requirements for all Development Proposals

- 8.18 Development proposals within the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area are required to:
- Comply with all appropriate UDP policies;
 - Identify any environmental constraint issues such as contamination, noise, air quality, flooding, landscaping, and visual impacts, and provide suitable improvements, solutions or mitigation measures;
 - Contribute to the identified highway and traffic management improvements, and cycle, pedestrian and bus links;
 - Meet appropriate car parking standards for parking, as set out in the UDP, RSS and the Council's SPD on transportation and accessibility;
 - Facilitate and improve access to public transport services, including cross-river;

- Facilitate appropriate public access to greenspace and movements through the area and cross-river by foot or bicycle;
- Provide landscaping that will make a positive contribution to improving the visual appearance of the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area;
- Adopt appropriate building design and layout in accordance with the requirements of this SPD and the Halton UDP, creating an attractive environment, and protecting existing environmental assets and mitigate against environmental constraint issues;
- Incorporate tree and woodland planting in accordance with the objectives of the Mersey Forest.
- Allow for the retention wherever possible of any existing trees of good quality, in accordance with the principles of British Standard 5837.

Employment Proposals

- 8.19 Proposals for new employment uses will normally be acceptable for B1 / B2 uses, particularly where this respects and serves a local catchment population.
- 8.20 It is also anticipated that the new neighbourhood centre should allow for provision for a new skills and training centre.
- 8.21 Proposals for redevelopment, development, alteration or extension to existing employment activity will be required to:
- Adhere to the overall vision and objectives for the Southern Widnes area and conform with design policies and environmental standards adopted by Halton council;
 - Incorporate the principles of manual for streets and secured by design into layout and design where appropriate;
 - Have regard to the council's design of new industrial and commercial development SPD and the north west best practice design guide; and
 - New commercial developments should seek to achieve a very good BREEAM rating and concurrently provide the opportunity for and encourage renewable energy generation through building design.

Residential Development

- 8.22 Proposals for new housing development within Southern Widnes will be required to:

- Increase the variety of housing available in Southern Widnes to increase choice – mixed tenure and type including the provision of additional affordable housing;
- Densities will be consistent with the objective of providing a mixed tenure and type but as a general principle will not be below 40 dwellings per hectare;
- Incorporate the principles of Home Zones, Secured by Design and Manual for Streets into layout and design;
- All new homes will be required to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes 3 and higher;
- Have regard to the Council's Design of New Residential Development SPD and the North West Best Practice Design Guide ;
- Provide greenspace provision within any residential proposals in accordance with UDP Policy H3 and the Council's Provision of Open Space SPD.

8.23 The release of individual sites for development will be in accordance with a scheme of works intended to ensure that development does not proceed ahead of the infrastructure works required and necessary to support it.

Transport Proposals

8.24 All development proposals will respect the street hierarchy proposed as part of this SPD. All development proposals will be required to enable safe and convenient pedestrian, cycle and bus routes throughout the area and beyond.

8.25 All proposals should provide car parking at suitable locations in accordance with Halton Council's adopted parking standards.

Retail Development

8.26 Proposals for new employment uses will normally be acceptable for A1, A3, A4 and a restricted proportion of A5 uses and only where they support improved and enhanced local services and where they provide for an improved visitor experience, particularly around the new neighbourhood centre.

Flood Risk

8.27 Applicants seeking planning permission should carry out a flood risk assessment on sites in excess of 1 hectare, and for those sites situated in flood zones 2 and 3 in accordance with the provisions of PPS25 *Development and Flood Risk*. Applications should refer to the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2007) to assess whether their site is location with

in area of flood-risk. Developers will need to consider any advice from the Environment Agency concerning flooding issues in the design of their development. Wherever possible, appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed which should include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to restrict run-off to existing rates or better. Surface water run-off rates from any greenfield sites should also be restricted to greenfield rates (including making allowances for climate change).

- 8.28 Table D.2 of PPS25 recognises residential development as more vulnerable to flood risk. Thus, in accordance with Table D.3 of PPS25, the applicant will need to demonstrate a positive exception test for any residential schemes. With regard to mixed use development proposals, a sequential approach should be made whereby only part of the site is located within flood zone 2 & 3, thus ensuring more vulnerable classes of development are steered away from areas of higher risk of flooding.

Contamination

- 8.29 The developers should however, carry out their own site investigations in accordance with Policy PR14 (Contaminated Land) of the Halton UDP before any planning application for development is determined.

Waste

- 8.30 Conforming to the adopted policies of Halton Borough Council, for all new development, Site Waste Management Plans are required to maximise the re-use and recycling of construction waste. As part of any scheme development, there should be provision included for recycling facilities.

Archaeology

- 8.31 An Archaeological Assessment should be undertaken and submitted with all planning applications affecting known or potential areas of archaeological interest. Where potential impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed and subject to the agreement of the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.
- 8.32 The completion of an archaeological assessment and, if appropriate, a programme of field evaluation prior to the determination of a planning application will be required to allow for any further archaeological mitigation to be established at any early stage. Further archaeological mitigation (excavation, watching brief, etc) may then be secured through planning condition.

The Council's Responsibilities

- 8.33 In order to achieve its vision for the regeneration of Southern Widnes, the Council will enter into negotiation with developers to secure the environmental and physical improvements described in this SPD through appropriate planning conditions and planning obligations where necessary.

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Further information relating to the purpose of the intended SPD:

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 4, or for further general planning information, visit the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website at www.communities.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact Communities and Local Government by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

To access a downloadable copy of 'By Design, Urban Design in the planning system: Towards Better Practice' and 'Safer Places', documents relating to urban renewal, urban design and creating sustainable communities, and general planning information visit the Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk. Manual for Streets can be purchased from the Department for Transport at a cost of £22.50, quoting ISBN 9780727735010, or downloaded from www.dft.gov.uk.

Further information on the Secured By Design initiative, including details relating to the standards required for a development to receive Secured By Design accreditation may be found at www.securedbydesign.com

For further information regarding any development which may affect a historic building or conservation area 'Building In Context' will be able to provide advice. It is available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.cabe.org.uk> or for a hard copy contact English Heritage at: Customer Services Department, PO Box 569, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 2YP, Tel: 0870 333 1181, Fax: 01793 414 926

Further information on the Halton UDP can be found online at www.halton.gov.uk or by phone on 0151 424 2061, email at forward.planning@halton.gov.uk or by post to Environmental and Regulatory Services, Environment Directorate, Halton Borough Council, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW.

You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Local information

For advice relating to submitting a planning application, for pre-application discussion or to purchase a copy of this SPD or any other SPD contact:

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental and Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0303 333 4300

Fax: 0151 471 7304

Email: forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further highways or transport information is required, please contact the:

Highways, Transportation and Logistics
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061

Fax: 0151 471 7521

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further access information is required, or information relating to building control please contact the;

Building Control Consultancy
Environment Directorate

Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0303 333 4300

Email: building.control@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

Sustainability Appraisal Report
SOUTHERN WIDNES SPD

Sustainability Appraisal Report

SOUTHERN WIDNES SPD

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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This report has been prepared by Waterman Energy, Environment & Design, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporation of our General Terms and Condition of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to us by agreement with the client.

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Non-TECHNICAL Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Mersey Gateway is a project to provide a new bridge, creating a second crossing over the River Mersey between the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. It will provide a means for regeneration by increasing accessibility between where people live, work and visit; and releasing land for development as a result of the removal of some of the infrastructure associated with the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. A Regeneration Strategy has been produced which focuses on the regeneration opportunities that the proposed second crossing of the Mersey Gateway will create and how those opportunities may be realised. There are five key 'Action Areas' on which the Regeneration Strategy focuses and one of these is Southern Widnes (formerly termed West Bank). A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Southern Widnes has been produced to guide the regeneration of Southern Widnes in accordance with the vision of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy.

The key objectives of the Southern Widnes SPD are:

Objective 1: Re branding Southern Widnes through the creation of high-quality gateway locations with excellent access to the regions principal conurbations and population. Inherent in this is the development of high quality, aspirational and affordable housing and services. For, to enable the labour supply to meet, and facilitate, further demand within the local economy, Southern Widnes provides a significant opportunity to encourage skilled workers to permanently reside within Halton;

Objective 2: Facilitating the development of resource efficient high-quality business accommodation, providing mixed-use leisure and recreational facilities, providing resource efficient and affordable housing and upgrading the standard of the public realm including access to high quality greenspace;

Objective 3: Enable local residents to share directly in the wider investment benefits of regeneration working with initiatives such as the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy (LCRES) to develop local skills and capacity, increase local employment opportunities and reduce worklessness in Southern Widnes. It is important that local employment opportunities must remain, and be further encouraged into the area.

Objective 4: To provide investment to support, and develop, training facilities for local sporting provision, incorporating flood lights and changing rooms;

Objective 5: To provide an additional access route, served by public transport through the Sustainable Transport Strategy in particular, but also serving new walking and cycling routes, into Southern Widnes to negate the existing bottleneck situation, improve east-west connectivity, upgrade links to Widnes Town Centre and the River Mersey and utilise the de linking of redundant expressways to unlock new development opportunities and reduce the severance and isolation experienced by local communities.

Objective 6: To improve safety (incorporating Secured by Design principles), and local physical amenities, by upgrading street lighting and the wider public realm within Southern Widnes and the links from this area to Widnes Town Centre; and

Objective 7: To create a new heart for Southern Widnes with the consolidation of local retail, services and improved education and health provision.

Waterman Energy, Environment & Design (WEED) was appointed to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Southern Widnes SPD in order to meet the requirements of planning legislation¹ and regulations². The combined SEA and SA process is

¹ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

subsequently referred to as SA only. The main purpose of SA is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects. Where significant negative effects were identified, recommendations were made as to how these could be avoided, offset or reduced. Recommendations were also made on how to enhance beneficial effects. A draft programme to monitor significant effects has also been prepared.

This document forms the Non Technical Summary of the SA Report. The SA has been undertaken on behalf of Halton Borough Council (HBC) by WEED.

THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL PROCESS

The assessment to date has comprised four stages as follows:

- Determining the key issues upon which the SA should focus and setting and agreeing sustainability objectives, a process known as 'Scoping';
- Appraisal of the objectives and options for Southern Widnes considered as part of the Regeneration Strategy;
- Appraisal of the Initial Draft SPD; and
- Appraisal of the Consultation Draft SPD, referred to as the 'SA Report' (this report).

SCOPING

The aim of the scoping stage is to determine the key environmental, social and economic issues arising in the SPD area and the borough as a whole and to devise the framework for assessing the plan.

After documenting the sustainability characteristics of the area, and identifying any trends (i.e. is the situation getting better or worse?), other planning documents and policies were reviewed to see how these would influence the SA and the SPD. From the outputs of these two initial stages, the key environmental, social and economic issues and opportunities that relate to the area, and on which the assessment should focus, were established. These issues are described below.

Key Sustainability Issues and Baseline

Key sustainability issues have been identified from the review of planning documentation, information on the existing sustainability characteristics of Southern Widnes and the Borough as a whole and following discussions with HBC. These are described below.

Economic

The Riverside ward, within which the Southern Widnes SPD area is located has a significantly lower economic activity rate compared to the averages for the North West and England. The proportion of working age people in Southern Widnes with 'higher end' skills such as a university degree is lower than the Borough, the region, the Greater Merseyside sub region and Great Britain.

There is a reliance on a narrow range of employment sectors such as the chemical industry. Other sectors such as the knowledge economy are not well represented. Weekly earnings within Southern Widnes are below the regional and national average.

The rate of new business development is slightly above the national average but the survival rate of new business is below the national average.

Social

Health standards in Halton Borough are amongst the worst in the country, with life expectancy in the Borough well below the national average.

Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high compared to the rest of the country. However, the actual overall crime rate has seen a decrease in 2007 and all areas of crime apart from burglary, criminal damage and other offences have seen a decrease.

There is increased demand for affordable housing as there have been significant house price increases across Halton over the last five years, although house prices are still well below the national average. The number of single person households is increasing and there is an increased demand for supported housing for the elderly.

Environmental

The chemical and tanning industries have left the Borough of Halton with a serious problem of contaminated and derelict land which can be an obstacle to regeneration. Despite intense efforts to deal with the huge legacy of dereliction and contamination, a great deal of such land remains. River quality in Halton is below the regional average and no rivers are classed as being of very good quality. However the quality of rivers such as the Mersey is improving.

Much of the Southern Widnes SPD area lies in an area of high flood risk although there is no significant history of flooding. The potential sources of flood risk in the SPD area are from surface water runoff, rivers and the sea.

There has been an increase in the total amount of municipal waste produced in the Borough although there has been a very slight increase in the amount of waste recovered and composted.

West Bank Promenade Conservation Area lies within the boundary of the SPD and there are three listed buildings, 1 of which is Grade II* listed, Church of St. Mary; and 2 are Grade II listed, the Wayside Pulpit to Church of St. Mary and the Former Transporter Bridge Power House. There is also a reasonable probability of intact archaeological deposits in some areas within the SPD boundary. The Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) is adjacent to the SPD boundary.

SA Objectives

Based on the key issues and the objectives developed during the production of the Core Strategy Scoping Report, eighteen SA Objectives were developed as shown below.

- 1) To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate;
- 2) To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment;
- 3) To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development;
- 4) To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business;
- 5) To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes);
- 6) To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment;
- 7) To improve health and reduce health inequalities;
- 8) To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime;
- 9) To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing;
- 10) To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities;
- 11) To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace;
- 12) To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities;
- 13) To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters;
- 14) To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity;
- 15) To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates;
- 16) To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources;
- 17) To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets; and
- 18) To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources.

Consultations on the Scope

Consultations on the key issues and SA objectives were undertaken in July 2007 with English Heritage, Natural England (formerly English Nature and the Countryside Agency), and the Environment Agency to confirm that they were in agreement with the findings of the initial stages, and to provide an opportunity to suggest changes to the assessment. Consultation with these bodies is a legal requirement however in addition, a wider group of local stakeholders were also included in the consultation exercise so that input could be provided on the approach to assessing the social and economic factors covered by the assessment, as well as the more local environmental issues.

INITIAL SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (JANUARY 2008 – MARCH 2008)

One of the requirements of SA is to consider alternative approaches to achieving the objectives of the plan, so that the effects of these alternatives can be assessed.

Three options for the Southern Widnes SPD Area were assessed against the agreed SA objectives. The purpose of this appraisal, known as an 'Initial Sustainability Appraisal', was to help to guide the Council on choosing their Preferred Option. Whilst each option had some positive and negative elements, Halton Borough Council was able to use the analysis together with public consultation and economic analysis to choose and refine the Preferred Option.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTIONS (OCTOBER 2008)

This stage of the SA involved predicting the environmental, social and economic effects that were likely to result from the implementation of the Preferred Option, and then evaluating the significance of the predicted effects. A sustainability appraisal was undertaken on the first draft of the SPD to identify whether the sustainability performance of the SPD could be improved and provide recommendations for improvement, where appropriate. These recommendations were incorporated into the Consultation Draft SPD which was re-assessed against the SA Framework. The results are summarised below.

Significant Positive Effects

Significant positive effects include:

Objective SA4 - there will be significant positive effects on the competitiveness and productivity of business through the provision of new business sites and improved accessibility;

Objective SA6 – the overall image of Southern Widnes will be improved and promoted through the redevelopment of the road system to improve accessibility, the provision of new business and leisure sites, the provision of new quality housing and the improvement and development of greenspaces and public realm;

Objective SA8 – New employment opportunities, improvements to the appearance of the streets, provision of a neighbourhood centre and use of Secured by Design should result in a reduction of crime and the fear of crime;

Objective SA10 – Promotion of walking and cycling and creation of new at-grade junctions onto the Silver Jubilee Bridge should result in improved access; and

Objective SA11 – public realm improvements and the development and improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes will enhance access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace.

Significant Negative Effects

No significant negative effects have been identified, however a slightly negative effect was identified for Objective SA13 because much of the Southern Widnes SPD area is within Flood Zone 3 where new development should not normally be encouraged, increasing the levels of run off and associated flood risk. However, there is no significant history of flooding and flood risk assessments and use of measures to minimise the risk of flooding are required by the SPD.

Significant Uncertainties

There are a number of cases where the effect of the plan is uncertain. Significant uncertainties include:

Objective SA2 – it is uncertain how the development of community facilities and new construction taking place will help to improve educational standards and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment. In addition, whilst some new educational facilities may be provided, new residential development could put pressure on existing schools and colleges;

Objective SA7 - the impact on health. The development of new amenity spaces and pedestrian and cycle routes will help to encourage active lifestyles but the development of residential areas next to existing industrial areas and a busy road could have a negative impact on health;

Objective SA18 - new developments will make efficient use of land by reusing brownfield sites but the construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.

Mitigation Measures

SA Guidance requires that measures should be considered to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects that have been identified during the assessment process.

Where significant negative effects and other less significant negative effects have been identified during the assessment process, mitigation measures have been proposed to prevent or reduce the severity of the effect. For example, requiring new developments to meet specific environmental standards such as BREEAM and/or Code for Sustainable Homes.

HOW THE ASSESSMENT HAS INFLUENCED THE PLAN

The process of undertaking sustainability appraisal on the emerging options for the Southern Widnes SPD is an interactive process which informs the option development process. This has resulted in:

- Revisions to the SPD objectives as a result of the initial SA stages;
- Guiding the selection and wording of the Preferred Option; and
- Recommending mitigation measures to include within the Preferred Option.

MONITORING PROPOSALS

The monitoring proposals will allow action to be taken to reduce and/or offset any significant effects on society, economy and the environment. Where possible the monitoring will make use of existing arrangements, such as those reported in the Halton Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report. The recommended monitoring includes:

- The amount of new employment development;
- Level of crime within the area;
- Affordable housing completions;
- Number of new buildings completed to BREEAM 'Very Good' or Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or above;
- Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle; and
- Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards.

NEXT STEPS

The SPD and Sustainability Appraisal will be made available to a wide audience of consultees including the general public to enable them to comment. The responses will be reviewed and changes made to the SPD, where considered appropriate. Should significant changes be made to the SPD, these will be subject to further Sustainability Appraisal. The SPD will then be formally adopted by Halton Borough Council.

The Final Sustainability Appraisal Report

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mersey Gateway is a project to provide a new bridge, creating a second crossing over the River Mersey between the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. It will provide a means for regeneration by increasing accessibility between where people live, work and visit; and releasing land for development as a result of the removal of some of the infrastructure associated with the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. A Regeneration Strategy has been produced which focuses on the regeneration opportunities that the proposed second crossing of the Mersey Gateway will create and how those opportunities may be realised. There are five key Action Areas on which the Regeneration Strategy focuses:

- Southern Widnes (formerly termed West Bank);
- Runcorn Old Town;
- Astmoor Industrial Estate and Wigg Island;
- Halton Lea; and
- Rocksavage and Clifton (Junction 12 of the M56).

The Regeneration Strategy reviewed the issues and options for future development within each of the key Action Areas and a Preferred Option for each area was selected based on community consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal and Economic Viability Analysis. The Regeneration Strategy does not contain policies but was adopted by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to guide future policy development. The Preferred Option for Southern Widnes and policies to guide the regeneration of this area have now been formalised in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Southern Widnes SPD has been prepared by GVA Grimley on behalf of Halton Borough Council (HBC).

Waterman Energy, Environment & Design (WEED) was appointed to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Southern Widnes SPD in order to meet the requirements of planning legislation³ and regulations⁴. The combined SEA and SA process is subsequently referred to as SA only. The main purpose of SA is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects. If significant negative effects are identified, recommendations are made as to how these can be avoided, offset or reduced. Recommendations are also made on how to enhance beneficial effects. A programme to monitor significant effects is also required. The SA of the SPD draws upon the SA undertaken of the Regeneration Strategy which included an assessment of the objectives and options for Southern Widnes. The draft SPD was then reviewed against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and advice and guidance was provided aid GVA Grimley and HBC to finalise the SPD for consultation.

This report provides a summary of the SA undertaken including the Scoping Stage, the Initial SA of the Southern Widnes Objectives and Options, the SA of the initial draft SPD and the SA of the Consultation Draft SPD.

2. THE SOUTHERN WIDNES SPD

The majority of the SPD boundary falls within the Southern Widnes Regeneration Action Area as identified within Halton Borough Council's UDP. It comprises a variety of land uses, including residential, commercial and industrial uses. Over the last 20 years industrial decline and under-investment has left South Widnes in economic decline. Southern Widnes was identified as a key area for regeneration arising from the Mersey Gateway within The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. This is because the Mersey Gateway Project would reduce the volume of traffic crossing the Silver Jubilee Bridge by directing through traffic over the new crossing resulting in a process known as 'delinking' (the physical process of removing unnecessary pieces of highway infrastructure). The delivery would free up the Silver Jubilee Bridge to provide a local link across the river between Widnes and Runcorn. The de-linking of redundant road infrastructure would also create new development opportunities and thereby the chance

³ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

to physically regenerate and improve a number of Halton's local centres and neighbourhoods. This includes a significant tract of land within Southern Widnes.

The purpose of the SPD is therefore to establish and identify potential development or improvement opportunities within Southern Widnes in order to help sustain the existing community and deliver regeneration benefits to the area. The SPD also seeks to ensure a suitable standard of development is achieved that will improve the visual and environmental quality of the area.

Three Priority Regeneration Objectives were developed as part of the Regeneration Strategy to provide a visionary, imaginative and a deliverable set of solutions to the wide-ranging economic, social, and environmental problems identified within Halton, in which the Mersey Gateway Project can facilitate.

Priority Regeneration Objective 1 – Image and Place-Making

- Significantly lift perceptions of Widnes and Runcorn to meet the visionary aspirations held by the Council, as embodied in the Mersey Gateway Project, and ensure any new development, attributable to the catalytic effect of the Bridge, makes a positive enhancement to the character of the locality in terms of design quality and resource use.
- Building on the strong local sense of community and place, deliver the considerable regeneration opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway, enhancing and promoting key assets in each of the localities (physical and community).

Priority Regeneration Objective 2 – Accessibility and Sustainable Movement

- Increasing the catchment area for labour, goods and markets, such that the Mersey Gateway opens up new opportunities for employment in the Liverpool City Region for Halton's residents and increases the ability to access markets and customers for Halton's businesses.
- Facilitate enhanced sustainable movements by pedestrians, cyclists and local vehicular travellers (particularly by public transport patronage) through the de-linking of unnecessary infrastructure, the down-grading and removal of unnecessary expressway infrastructure and improved access to the expressway / highway system where appropriate
- Build on the positive impacts for all user-groups attributable to the Mersey Gateway and maximise opportunities for further local connectivity and accessibility for existing communities in promoting ease of movement throughout the area and beyond, particularly by public transport modes but also through greater opportunities for walking and cycling linked to health benefits.

Priority Regeneration Objective 3 – Development and Economic Prosperity

- Significantly improve the commercial and residential accommodation in the area having particular regard to local needs, and providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient accommodation to meet contemporary and future market requirements and aspirations, through key redevelopment proposals attributable to the scheme.
- To bring back into use land for new development that is currently occupied by highways infrastructure deemed unnecessary following the completion of the Mersey Gateway, with a particular focus on bringing back into use contaminated land in Southern Widnes for new uses.
- Development should use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery of waste.

In addition to these Priority Regeneration Objectives, a number of direct key objectives have been prepared relating specifically to Southern Widnes. These have been prepared following extensive consultation with local residents and businesses and reflect the responses that were received during this process. The key objectives of the Southern Widnes SPD are:

Objective 1: Re branding Southern Widnes through the creation of high-quality gateway locations with excellent access to the region's principal conurbations and population. Inherent in this is the development of high quality, aspirational and affordable housing and services. For, to enable the labour

supply to meet and facilitate further demand within the local economy, Southern Widnes provides a significant opportunity to encourage skilled workers to permanently reside within Halton;

Objective 2: Facilitating the development of resource efficient high-quality business accommodation, providing mixed-use leisure and recreational facilities, providing resource efficient and affordable housing and upgrading the standard of the public realm including access to high quality greenspace;

Objective 3: Enable local residents to share directly in the wider investment benefits of regeneration working with initiatives such as the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy (LCRES) to develop local skills and capacity, increase local employment opportunities and reduce worklessness in Southern Widnes. It is important that local employment opportunities must remain and be further encouraged into the area.

Objective 4: To provide investment to support and develop training facilities for local sporting provision, incorporating flood lights and changing rooms;

Objective 5: To provide an additional access route, served by public transport through the Sustainable Transport Strategy in particular, but also serving new walking and cycling routes into Southern Widnes to negate the existing bottleneck situation, improve east-west connectivity, upgrade links to Widnes Town Centre and the River Mersey and utilise the de-linking of redundant expressways to unlock new development opportunities and reduce the severance and isolation experienced by local communities;

Objective 6: To improve safety (incorporating Secured by Design principles), and local physical amenities, by upgrading street lighting and the wider public realm within Southern Widnes and the links from this area to Widnes Town Centre; and

Objective 7: To create a new heart for Southern Widnes with the consolidation of local retail, services and improved education and health provision.

The SPD sets out the key principles and overarching development principles within Southern Widnes for physical investment and urban and neighbourhood renewal going forward.

3. THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL PROCESS

3.1 BACKGROUND

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) to be carried out on Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SAs help planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans through a structured assessment of the objectives and policies against key sustainability issues for the area.

Planning Policy Statement PPS 1: Creating Sustainable Communities⁵ sets out the Government's vision and policies and proposals for achieving sustainable development. It states that:

'A Sustainability Appraisal is intended to assess the impact of plan policies from an environmental, economic and social perspective. It is first and foremost a process. It is intended to test the performance of a plan against the objectives of sustainable development and thereby provide the basis for its improvement.'

In line with Government guidance the SA is also designed to meet the requirements of EU Directive 2001/04 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive or SEA Directive. The Directive applies to a wide

⁵ Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities, ODPM, 2004.

range of plans and programmes, including LDFs. SEA is a process to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision-makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided.

The objective of the SEA Directive is:

'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, with a view to promoting sustainable development'⁶.

3.2 THE APPROACH

SEA and SA are very closely related. SA aims to integrate sustainability issues into decision making by appraising the plan or strategy using environmental, social and economic objectives. SEA also aims to facilitate sustainable development but its emphasis is on integrating environmental considerations into decision making through a thorough analysis of environmental issues.

The approach adopted in this SA incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations and follows the stages of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (formerly the ODPM) guidance⁷, as set out below.

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

- A1:** Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives
- A2:** Collect baseline information
- A3:** Identify sustainability issues and problems
- A4:** Develop the SA Framework
- A5:** Consult on the scope of the SA

Stage B: Developing and Refining Options and Assessing Effects

- B1:** Test the SPD objectives against the SA Framework
- B2:** Develop the SPD options
- B3:** Predict the effects of the SPD
- B4:** Evaluate the effects of the SPD
- B5:** Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
- B6:** Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD

Stage C: Preparing the SA Report

- C1:** Prepare the SA Report

Stage D: Consult on the Preferred Options of the SPD and the SA Report

- D1:** Enable public participation on the Preferred Options of the SPD and the SA Report
- D2:** Appraise significant changes
- D3:** Make decisions and providing information

⁶ EC Directive 2001/42/EC

⁷ 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, department of Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM), 2005

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD**E1:** Finalise aims and methods for monitoring**E2:** Respond to adverse effects

This report represents Stage C of the above process and follows on from a Scoping Stage and an Initial SA which assessed a number of site allocation options and the draft SPD.

3.3 SEA SIGNPOSTING

The SEA Directive, as implemented by the Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, places certain requirements which must be addressed through the assessment and reporting process. These are the same for all SEA assessments, irrespective of whether or not they are incorporated into Sustainability Appraisal, as they are in this case.

The following table lists the requirements of the Directive, and provides sign-posting as to where in the Sustainability Appraisal Report they have been covered.

Table 3.1: Requirements of the SEA Directive

Requirements of the SEA Directive	Where covered in appraisal process
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex 1):	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5 and Appendix B
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5 and Appendix B
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43 EEC;	Section 5 and Appendix B
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 5 and Appendix A
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological, heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Section 7 and Appendix F
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 7
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical	Sections 6 and 7

Requirements of the SEA Directive	Where covered in appraisal process
deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	
i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Section 8
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Non Technical Summary
The report must include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2).	Ongoing throughout the appraisal process and report writing
Consultation:	Section 5 and Appendix C
Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4).	
Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2).	Consultation has been undertaken in the development of the SPD and will be undertaken on the draft plan before adoption
Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7)	N/A. Effects on other EU member states are not envisaged.
Provision of information on the decision:	This will be prepared at adoption.
When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art. 7 must be informed and the following made available to those informed:	
the plan or programme as adopted	
a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8 and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and	
the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9)	
Monitoring of the significant environmental of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art.10)	Recommended monitoring is set out in Section 8.
Quality Assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive	All the SA Reports are checked to ensure they are of a sufficient standard.

4. SA REPORT STRUCTURE

This SA Report has been structured as follows:

Section 5 provides details of the scoping stage of the SA. This includes the other relevant plans, programmes and strategies that have been taken into consideration as part of the assessment process; a summary baseline characterisation of the social, economic, and environmental information for Southern Widnes; a summary of the key sustainability issues based on the baseline research; and the Sustainability Appraisal Framework which provides the structure through which the assessment has taken place.

Section 6 provides details of the Initial SA including the review of the objectives and options for Southern Widnes against the SA objectives.

Section 7 presents a summary of the findings of the SA of the Preferred Option.

Section 8 suggests methods of monitoring the predicted significant effects and uncertainties.

Section 9 describes the next steps towards implementation of the SPD.

Appendices are contained within a separate document and include further detail on the baseline information, full Sustainability Appraisal Framework and appraisal undertaken.

A **Non Technical Summary (NTS)** has also been prepared to provide a summary, in non-technical language, of the principal findings of the SA.

5. SA SCOPING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first phase of the SA was a Scoping Report, which identified the key issues facing Southern Widnes (at the time, termed the West Bank) and set out 18 Sustainability Objectives against which the SPD would be assessed.

The objectives that were used to test whether the SPD contributes towards achieving sustainable development were taken from those developed during the production of the Core Strategy SA Scoping Report. These were amended, where applicable to ensure that they remained appropriate to the SPD. A summary of the findings of the scoping report are set out below and in Appendices A and B. Consultation responses are set out in Appendix C.

5.2 REVIEW OF RELEVANT STRATEGIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

A formal review of relevant policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) was carried out by the Council as part of the SA process for the Core Strategy. A further exercise was undertaken as part of the Regeneration Strategy and Southern Widnes (West Bank) SPD SA scoping exercise, to identify issues, visions and problems within the PPPs of relevance to the SPD. This process reconsidered the following documents which were reviewed as part of the Core Strategy SA Scoping Report:

- International PPPs;
- National PPPs;
- Regional PPPs; and
- Local PPPs.

The main PPPs of relevance to the Southern Widnes SPD is the Halton Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. However, a number of other documents contain sustainability objectives and targets and these have been incorporated into the SA Framework, where applicable. The list of PPPs reviewed is contained within Appendix A.

When considering this list, it is important to recognise that no list or review of relevant PPPs can ever be exhaustive and may be added to, as and when required.

5.3 BASELINE CHARACTERISATION

WEED and Halton Borough Council collected information about the current and likely future state of the environment, economy and society at the Scoping Stage to allow the effects of the SPD to be adequately predicted. The baseline data collected has been summarised in the SA Framework in Appendix B. A review of this data has been undertaken in preparing this report to ensure that it remains appropriate.

Trends in performance (i.e. whether something is getting better or worse) were identified where possible and indicator performance was also gauged in relation to wider geographical areas (e.g. regions) where comparable data was available. Key issues identified by the baseline data review are summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Economic, Social and Environmental Issues facing the Borough

Key Issues	Source
Economic	
Unemployment - The official claimant count unemployment rate in Halton halved between 1992 and 1998 and has halved again since. Unemployment rates have generally been some 40% to 50% higher than regional averages though the gap is now narrowing and is presently 15% to 20% higher. In December 2004 the average claimant count was 2.6% compared with the North West average of 2.2%.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Disparity in employment – There remain significant concentrations of unemployment in the 20-29 age band for both males and females. There are also concentrations of unemployment for males in the 30-39 age band and for females in the 17-19 band.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Access to Employment –76.2% of people aged 16-59/64 in Halton are economically active and in full time employment, whilst 23.8% are economically inactive and unemployed. Compared to 76.8% of people aged 16-59/64 in the North West who are economically active and in full time employment with 23.2% economically inactive and unemployed. In Great Britain as a whole 78.6% are economically active and 21.4% are economically inactive. The Riverside ward has a significantly lower economic activity rate (68.6%) compared to the averages for the North West and England.	Office of National Statistics, January 2007 – December 2007 Census 2001
The need to raise the levels of education & skills – The proportion of working age people with 'higher end' skills in Halton is lower than Great Britain, the region and the Greater Merseyside sub region. In 2006, 16.8% of people were qualified to at least NVQ level 4 (a university degree), compared to 26.6% in Great Britain, 24.8% in the North West and 21.3% in Greater Merseyside. Halton's figures have improved by 0.6% since 2005, however other comparator towns saw an average improvement of 3-4%. 22.5% of people in Halton also possessed either no qualifications, or were qualified to NVQ level 1 equivalent in 2006. This is compared to 22.25% in Great Britain, 20.64% regionally, and 20.49% in Greater Merseyside. Whilst this is a big improvement from the 2002-03 figure when 41.7% of the working age population in Halton possessed either no qualifications or were only qualified to NVQ level 1, other areas have improved even more leaving Halton in a worse rank in 2006 than it was in 2002. A high number of people aged 16 – 74 in the Riverside Ward possess no qualifications, in the 2001 Census the figure was 41%, compared to 35% for Halton and 32% for the North West. The percentage of people in the Riverside Ward who were qualified to at least NVQ level 4 was 7% compared to 11% for Halton and 17% for the North West.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008 Nomis 2001 The State of the
The need to develop the Knowledge Economy – Halton is one of the lowest ranking districts in the country (374 th out of 408) in terms of the proportion of knowledge workers	The State of the

Key Issues	Source
in the resident population. In 2003 it was 343 rd so there has been a relative decrease in the number of knowledge workers.	Borough Jan 2008
The need to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship – The level of entrepreneurship is slightly above average with a new business formation rate of 9.9% compared to the national average of 9.4%. The two year survival rate of new business has declined to a level of 79% down from 81.2% in 2000-2002 and compares unfavourably with other comparators including the Great Britain average of 82.1%.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008
<p>Reliance on a narrow economic base and low wage economy – With the exception of chemicals, most local high value added wealth-creating sectors are under-represented within the local economy. Local specialisation is predominantly based within sectors that generate below (local) average GDP per employee, and lower value-added sectors account for close to 60% of estimated GDP.</p> <p>The median gross weekly earnings (full time for resident workers) in 2007 was £427 per week for residents of Halton, compared with £430 for the North West, and £460 for the UK.</p>	<p>'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008</p> <p>Nomis 2007</p>
The need to improve the Economy – Halton's economy is relatively small by national standards (the economic scale score of 83.5 is below the national average which is benchmarked to an index score of 100), with low shares of Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008
The need to revitalise the Town Centres – Rental yields are an indicator of investor confidence in a centre (the lower the confidence, the higher the perceived investment risk and the higher the yield sought) and for Widnes the yield has remained static since 1997 at 8.5%. This is slightly higher than may be expected for a centre of this size and importance (compared with 6-7% in similar centres).	Widnes Town Centre SPD
The image of the Borough – In 2003 the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. It discovered that there is limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas, in some instances, almost complete lack of awareness of Halton and what it has to offer. There is a tendency not to promote Halton's successes, and too much emphasis on the negative rather than the positive.	<p>'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008</p>
Social	
<p>The need to improve health & life expectancy – statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country, with life expectancy in the Borough well below the national average. Women in Halton can expect to live an average of 78.4 years and men to live an average of 74.3 years. This compares to a life expectancy of 80.3 years for woman and 75.75 years for men for the North West.</p> <p>Halton remains relatively unhealthy, ranked 383rd out of 408 districts in the country, compared to 384th three years ago.</p> <p>The percentage of resident population in Riverside who stated that their general health was good was 64%, compared to 67% in Halton overall; % who stated health was fairly good in Riverside was 23%, compared to 22% in Halton; and 13% of people in Riverside stated their health was not good, compared to 12% in Halton overall.</p>	<p>North West Public Health Observatory, 2008.</p> <p>The State of the Borough Jan 2008</p> <p>2001 Census</p>
Long-term ill – 41% of Halton's households and 44% of Riverside ward's households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness, in comparison to 38.4% of households in the North West and 34.1% in England.	2001 Census
Ageing residents & the need to grow the health-care sector - The 2001 Census shows that 18% of Halton's population were aged 60 or over. The Department of Health suggests that number of very elderly people will rise over the next thirty years and this will increase demands on the NHS and social care providers. Therefore, the	2001 Census Department of Health

Key Issues	Source
effectiveness and efficiency of services must be maximised, and the need for services must be minimised by reducing morbidity and disability in later life.	
<p>Perception of crime levels and fear of crime – crime / community safety was the top concern for the public, mentioned by four out of five survey respondents as one of the three biggest problems for Halton.</p> <p>Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high; By 2006-07, the total crime score had risen from 103.6 to 114.0 a figure just below the regional average, but 14% above that for England and Wales. In 2002-07 Halton's rank was 79th out of 376 in terms of total offences per 1000 population. This is compared to 140th for 2003-04.</p> <p>The actual overall crime rate has seen a 1% decrease in 2007 and all areas of crime apart from burglary, criminal damage and other offences have seen a decrease.</p>	<p>'Quality of Life Survey' of 1999</p> <p>The State of the Borough Jan 2008</p> <p>Cheshire Police, 2007</p>
<p>Increased demand for affordable housing – There has been significant house price increases across Halton over the last 5 years but they are still below the average house prices. The average house price in Halton is £116,000 compared to an average house price of £174,000 in England and Wales.</p>	Land Registry, House Price Index Report, August 2008
<p>Providing an appropriate and balanced housing supply – The average household size has fallen from 2.8 in 1991 to 2.44 in 2001, and the proportion of single person households has increased from 22.7% to 27% over the same period.</p> <p>The over 75-year-old group has increased by 17%, which will affect the demand for supported housing provision.</p>	Housing Strategy 2005/06 to 2007/08
<p>Improve access to Services in Widnes – Halton is ranked 138th out of 408 districts in Great Britain, for accessibility and connectivity, down slightly from its 2002 rank of 120th.</p> <p>Halton has an overall connectivity score of 60.4 (indexed against Great Britain), slightly below the regional figure of 66.7, and below the national benchmark of 100.</p> <p>The quality and distribution of libraries, One Stop Shops, Post Offices, employment centres and other community resources are an important factor in the quality of life of residents.</p>	<p>State of the Borough, 2008.</p> <p>A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton, 2006-2011, Halton Borough Council 2006.</p>
<p>Improve access to Services to those who do not own cars – 29% of all households in Halton do not have access to a car or van. However, there are striking differences between wards with 45% of households in Castlefields; 38% in Riverside; 37% in Halton Lea; 36% in Mersey; and only 6% of households in Beechwood, not having access to a vehicle.</p>	2001 Census
<p>Amount, location and access to Recreational Space – no ward within Halton currently meets the minimum standard of 0.3 hectares of equipped play facilities per 1,000 population, and very few have sufficient areas of formal open space. The Victoria Promenade Park, is situated within the Southern Widnes SPD boundary, providing recreational space within Southern Widnes. There is also a large area of green space, known as the Riverside Park, alongside the south eastern boundary of the SPD Area.</p>	PMP Open Space study.
<p>Population - The population in Riverside Ward in 2001 was 4,814 which represented 4% of the total population of the Borough and was ranked 16 out of 21 wards in Halton in terms of population size.</p>	2001 Census
<p>Deprivation – In the 2007 IMD Halton was rated as one of the most deprived districts in England, but its ranking has improved from 21st in 2004 to 30th in 2007 (out of 354 districts in England). There is a high amount of inequality within the district. Riverside ward is within the most deprived quintile nationally.</p>	<p>2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)</p> <p>State of the Borough Jan 2008</p>

Key Issues	Source
Environmental	
Quality of the Natural Environment – the different elements of the natural environment have been benchmarked, including indicators of weather, tranquillity and natural beauty. Halton scores 72 as an index where the English average is 100, ranking it 249 th out of 354 districts in England for the quality of its natural environment.	State of the Borough Jan 2008
Conserving biodiversity, habitats and species –There are 2 habitats and 7 species that are of particular interest within Halton these are: Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Bluebell, Purple Hairstreak Butterfly, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song thrush and Reed bunting. However, Southern Widnes is not designated for its nature conservation interest and there is no reedbed, bluebell, Purple Hairstreak Butterfly or Great Crested New recorded in close proximity to the SPD boundary.	Halton Biodiversity Action Plan, 2003
Ecological Designations - The Mersey Estuary SPA, Ramsar Site and SSSI is adjacent to the SPD boundary. An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy proposals.	English Nature (now Natural England), April 2005
Waste Management –Halton Borough Council deals with about 65,000 tonnes (2008) of 'household' waste per year (including the waste which is recycled). All of this waste goes to make up the total 'municipal' waste in Halton. A kerbside recycling collection scheme is run by the Borough for paper and green waste. A recent kerbside pilot programme for a fortnightly collection of mixed recyclables has been introduced to approximately 6,000 properties in the Borough. Recycling and composting rates have risen from 16% in 2002/03 to 25% in 2006/07. The rate of waste growth has also slowed down and municipal solid waste is projected to increase at +1.25% pa, declining to +1%pa from 2010.	Halton's Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2008 - 2020
Transport congestion & pollution – The major and overriding congestion problem within the Borough is largely restricted to the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which performs both a local function, linking Widnes and Runcorn, and a strategic role for the region. Flows on the bridge regularly reach 90,000 vehicles per day, exceeding its theoretical capacity by 50%.	Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2), March 2006
Air Quality – A 12-month nitrogen dioxide roadside survey was completed in September 2004. No exceedences were found within the boundaries of the Regeneration Strategy. There are no AQMAs within the Borough.	Provisional LTP2
Protecting cultural & built heritage – West Bank Promenade Conservation Area lies within the boundary of the SPD and there are three listed buildings, 1 of which is Grade II* listed, Church of St. Mary; and 2 are Grade II listed, the Wayside Pulpit to Church of St. Mary and the Former Transporter Bridge Power House. There is a reasonable probability of intact archaeological deposits in some areas within the SPD boundary.	English Heritage (2005)
Carbon Emissions - The North West emitted 16.6 million tonnes carbon equivalent of carbon dioxide in 2005, the second highest amount of the regions behind the South East. This equated to 2.5 tonnes per resident. Within the sub-region, the highest per person emissions are in Halton, which reflects the presence of chemical industries relative to a low population in the area	Merseyside Economic Review, 2007
Ensuring the most effective use of land – Of the total land area within the North West region, 3.5% is classified as derelict land or buildings, compared to an English average of 1.7%. In 2003/4, just over a quarter (29.5%) of new dwellings constructed in the North West in schemes of 10 dwellings or more occurred in low-density schemes (i.e. less than 30 dwellings per hectare).	NLUD 2005

Key Issues	Source
<p>Water resources – Key issues relate to protection of water quality. The principal river in Halton Borough is the River Mersey and this forms the southern boundary to the Southern Widnes SPD Area. The St Helen's Canal also lies within the Southern Widnes SPD boundary.</p> <p>In 2006 no rivers in Halton were rated as having a very good biological or chemical quality.</p> <p>The northwest contains a third of the poorest quality rivers in England and Wales. However, over the past 20 years, the water quality of the River Mersey has improved significantly following changes in legislation and investment by industry.</p>	<p>Environment Agency, 2006</p> <p>Environment Agency 2008</p>
<p>Flood Risk - The area within the SPD has the potential to be at risk of flooding or have the potential to increase flood risk elsewhere. The majority of the area within the SPD including Southern Widnes and Widnes Waterfront are in flood risk zones 3b, 3a and 2. All other areas are in flood risk zone 1.</p>	<p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Version1, Halton Borough Council, 2007</p>
<p>Industrial legacy - Dereliction and contamination - Despite reclaiming over 182 hectares of derelict land within the administration boundary of Halton Borough Council since 1974, the remaining derelict sites are often the more difficult and more expensive to bring back into beneficial use.</p> <p>The greatest amount of Previously Developed Land (PDL) is within the wards of Ditton, Halton View, Mersey and Riverside. The Riverside ward contains the greatest amount of PDL with a large part of it being categorised as derelict land and buildings- land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment.</p> <p>Between 1994 and 1998, over 180ha of derelict land were reclaimed but over 200ha – more than 3% of the Borough land surface – remained. However, there has been an increase in the amount of development on PDL with 88% of new and converted dwellings on PDL in 2006/07</p> <p>COMAH – Halton has a number Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites. These are sites where accidents could result in offsite loss of life or damage to the environment (usually by release of toxic chemicals or explosions). These sites are sources of local employment but the storage and use of chemicals can have a blighting effect on certain kinds of development in the surrounding areas. There are no top tier COMAH sites within the Regeneration Strategy although there are COMAH sites immediately adjacent to them.</p>	<p>NLUD 2005</p> <p>Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</p> <p>NLUD 2005</p>

5.3.1 Difficulties in collecting data and limitations of the data

Ideally the baseline information should relate to 2008. Unfortunately, due to the time it takes to collate data, this has not been possible in many cases. As far as possible the most up-to-date information has been used for each set of data provided.

The information tables also contain some omissions because, in some cases, it has not been possible to establish the most appropriate targets, figures or sources. Some difficulties in collecting data have also been associated with the reliance on external bodies. For example, where external bodies have collected data for their own purposes, in the future the data may not be available, or not available in the same format, in order to make reliable comparisons.

It should be noted that the baseline information represents a 'work in progress' in the sense that it will be added to / amended as new indicators / sources of baseline information come to the attention of WEED or HBC.

5.4 THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

The following section presents the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF) against which the policy options taken from the SPD have been assessed. In accordance with Halton Borough Council's intentions, the objectives, targets and indicators that form the SAF within this document are broadly consistent with the SAF developed for the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. However, the SAF has been slightly refined to ensure that it is applicable to the SPD.

The objectives of the SAF have been derived from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive topics and SA themes, including: Biodiversity, Fauna and flora; Population and human health; Water and soil; Air; Climatic factors; Cultural heritage and landscape; Social inclusiveness; and Economic development. Documents such as the Community Strategy, the sub-regionally agreed Merseyside objectives and the regional sustainability framework – 'Action for Sustainability' have also influenced the content of the SAF objectives, indicators and targets.

It should be noted that the SAF objectives are distinct from objectives of the SPD, though they may in some cases overlap. The SAF objectives focus on outcomes (or ends), not on how the outcomes will be achieved (inputs or means).

As the SAF evolves there may be situations that require the framework to be reviewed. These situations could include:

- a) new baseline information emerging that better reflects the current objectives in the sustainability framework;
- b) changes to the objectives in the sustainability framework; and
- c) direction from a consultation body that information within the framework needs amending, such as through consultation on Scoping Reports.

The SAF incorporates changes made as a result of consultation on the Scoping Report (see Section 5.5 below). The full SAF is presented in Appendix B.

Table 5.2: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Southern Widnes SPD

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
Economic		
To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population in employment and unemployment • Job Density
To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people? • Will it provide local employment opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent • % of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4
To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of VAT registered businesses • Percentage of business registrations and de-registrations
To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Value Added (GVA) per head
To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide an improvement to one or more of the town centres? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall within the town centre • Vacancy rates within the town centre

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage inward investment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects).
Social		
To improve health and reduce health inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly? Will it support healthy lifestyles? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years of healthy life expectancy Number of people who have a long-term illness
To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage crime-sensitive design? Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime? Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded crimes per 1,000 population Number of people reporting fear of crime
To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide for affordable housing for local people? Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout? Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of different housing types and tenures
To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve transport provision and accessibility? Will it provide for local retail needs? Will it improve public access to services and amenities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre.
To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live? Will it improve access to natural greenspace? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and area of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) Number of Green Flag Parks Amount of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards
To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Index of Deprivation Average household income
Environmental		
To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the quality of controlled waters? Will it ensure that the area within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase? Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality (chemical & biological) classification of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters and percentage lengths in different classes New development with sustainable drainage systems installed Number if planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on with flood defence grounds or water quality

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites and habitats of nature conservation value? Will it protect or enhance statutory protected species? Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats? Will it protect or enhance BAP species? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites <p>Condition of SSSIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010. (Public Service Agreement (PSA) target) Number and area of Local Wildlife Sites Extent and condition of saltmarsh Population of Redshank pairs Population of skylark breeding pairs Population of Song Thrush pairs Population of reed bunting breeding pairs
To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal? Total annual amount of municipal waste generated and % recycled or composted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level and % of household waste recycled
To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it minimise the need to travel? Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport? Will it improve air quality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs
To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance? Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas Number of Conservation Areas covered by an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal Number of buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments 'at risk'.
To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings? Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy? Will it use water efficiently and with care? Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of housing built on previously developed land per (PDL) year Proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources

5.5 CONSULTATION ON THE SA SCOPING REPORT

The SA Scoping Report was issued for a five week consultation period in July 2007. In accordance with the SEA Regulations the following statutory consultee bodies were consulted:

- Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency and English Nature)
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency

In addition, and in accordance with PPS12⁸ and Government guidance, the following bodies were also consulted:

- North West Development Agency
- North West Regional Assembly
- Government Office for the North West
- The Merseyside Policy Unit
- Cheshire County Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Vale Royal Borough Council
- The Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council
- St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Halton Borough Council internal officers and members
- The Primary Care Trust
- The Learning and Skills Council

The following bodies responded to HBC as part of the scoping exercise:

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- North West Regional Assembly
- Halton Borough Council
- Government Office for the North West
- Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service

A summary of the consultation responses is set out in Appendix C and comments directly relating to the objectives or indicators are summarised below.

- Indicators chosen against Objective SA14 of the SAF only covered sites and not species. This was noted and indicators relating to species have now been included in the SAF;
- The Objectives contained in the SAF were found to be the original objectives from the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal consultation from March 2006, rather than the amended Objectives incorporating comments from the consultation and included in the Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006. This was acknowledged and the SAF has been updated to reflect the SAF included in the Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006;
- It was recommended that the criteria for Objective SA14 should be split to address both species and habitats, and a distinction should be made between statutory protected sites and species, and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species. This was noted and specific criteria / indicators have been included to address both species and habitats; and
- It was suggested that an indicator measuring 'number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality' is

⁸ Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, 2004.

included as an indicator linked to Objective SA13 of the SA Framework. The indicator suggested has been added to Objective SA13.

6. THE INITIAL SA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

An Initial SA was undertaken of the objectives and options set out for the Southern Widnes (West Bank) Action Area within the Regeneration Strategy to inform the development of the Preferred Option. The Objectives of the SPD were reviewed as part of the Initial SA to ensure that they were compatible with the SA Objectives and recommendations were made for improvement, where appropriate. The Options were also reviewed against the SA Framework and recommendations made for improvement, where appropriate.

6.2 THE INITIAL SA OF OBJECTIVES

The Priority Objectives of the Regeneration Strategy and Objectives for the Southern Widnes (West Bank) Action Area were mapped against the SAF Objectives to determine their compatibility. The majority of the SPD Objectives were seen to be compatible or have no link with the sustainability Objectives. None of the Objectives were incompatible, however there were a number of cases where the outcome of the SA Objective will be dependent on how the particular Priority Regeneration Strategy/Southern Widnes Objective is implemented. In addition, a number of the SA Objectives were not covered at all by the Priority Regeneration Strategy/Southern Widnes Objectives. Whilst it is not necessary to ensure that every SA Objective is covered as a wider regeneration benefit is sought, it was recommended that additional Objectives be included. Recommendations that were made to improve the Priority Regeneration Strategy/Southern Widnes Objectives to ensure compatibility with the SA Objectives are set out below.

Table 7.1: Initial SA of the Objectives

Changes to objectives recommended in the Initial SA Report	Change made in SPD Consultation Draft?
Regeneration Strategy Objective 2: include a reference to sustainable travel. This will help to meet SA Objectives 7 and 16 to improve health (through providing greater opportunities for cycling and walking) and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes.	✓
Regeneration Strategy Objective 3: could be re-worded as 'Development – Improve residential, commercial and industrial accommodation to provide <i>good quality, affordable and resource efficient</i> accommodation to meet contemporary and future market requirements and aspirations.' This will help to meet SA Objectives 9, 12 and 18.	✓
Recommended New Objective: ' <i>Development should use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery of waste</i> '.	✓ (Included within objective 3)
Southern Widnes (West Bank) Objective 1: reword to say '...development of <i>both</i> high quality aspirational (waterside) <i>and affordable</i> housing and services. This will help to meet SA Objectives 9, 12 and 18.	✓

Changes to objectives recommended in the Initial SA Report	Change made in SPD Consultation Draft?
Southern Widnes (West Bank) Objective 2: could be re-worded as 'Facilitating the development of <i>resource efficient</i> high-quality business accommodation, providing mixed-use leisure and recreational facilities, <i>providing resource efficient and affordable housing</i> and upgrading the standard of the public realm <i>including access to high quality greenspace.</i> ' This will help to meet SA Objectives 9, 11, 12 and 18.	✓
Southern Widnes (West Bank) Objective 5: could make reference to the development of sustainable transport options. This would help to meet SA Objective 7 to improve health (through providing greater opportunities for cycling and walking). Reference could also be made to designing access routes and developments according to Secured by Design principles. This would help to meet SA Objective 8.	✓

6.3 INITIAL SA OF THE OPTIONS

The Options for Southern Widnes were appraised against the SA Framework (Appendix B). In terms of the overall appraisal of the Options, the effects on the economy were generally assessed as likely to be beneficial and the effects on the social objectives were beneficial or unclear. However, the effect on a number of the environmental objectives was found to be either negative or uncertain due to the environmental effects inherent in redevelopment or a lack of information. It was recommended that the Preferred Option include targets for affordable homes provision, design standards eg BREEAM/Code for Sustainable Homes, waste minimisation and Secured by Design, require an assessment of the effects on the built environment, including archaeology and include reference to healthcare and education provision and biodiversity improvements. Specific findings are presented below and the appraisal against the full SA Framework is presented in Appendix D.

- All three Options should help to improve and promote the overall image of the Borough through the development of a new Waterside Boulevard, increased greenspace, new employment and residential sites;
- Option 3 performs the best in terms of economy as it will create the greatest amount of office/commercial sites with the greatest amount of jobs;
- Option 3 would provide new residential areas in a desirable location next to the waterfront, however this means houses are more likely to be aspirational impacting on their affordability. In Options 1 and 2 residential areas would be located closer to main roads which could result in associated noise and air pollution;
- Option 3 performs the worst in terms of waste generation and resource use due to higher levels of demolition and construction. All the Options would involve some demolition and construction which will have a negative impact and it was recommended that the Preferred Option should consider how potential impacts could be mitigated. For example, by requiring waste re-use and recycling during construction; and
- Much of Southern Widnes is located within Flood Zone 3 therefore conflicting with SA Objective 13 which aims to ensure that the area within Flood Zones 2 and 3 doesn't increase. Development in this area should ensure that flood risk is considered and that measures are incorporated to ensure that the levels of run off do not exceed existing levels.

6.4 CONSULTATION AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED OPTION

As identified above, no one specific Option out of the three proposed Options could be described as significantly more or less sustainable. Rather a number of positive and negative results against different sustainability Objectives were identified for each Option. GVA Grimley and Halton Borough Council therefore used the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, together with the findings of public consultation,

stakeholder dialogue and economic viability analysis to choose and refine the Preferred Option. The Preferred Option chosen was Option 2.

7. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This stage of the SA involves predicting the environmental, social and economic effects that are likely to result from the implementation of the Preferred Option, and then evaluating the significance of the predicted effects.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

7.2.1 Testing the Plan Objectives

The Priority Regeneration Strategy Objectives and Southern Widnes (West Bank) Action Area Objectives that had been revised following the Initial SA Stage, and which now form the SPD Objectives, were retested against the Sustainability Objectives to determine their compatibility. The results are shown in Appendix E. This shows that the majority of the SPD Objectives are either compatible or have no obvious relation with the Sustainability Objectives. There are no conflicts between the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and the Objectives of the SPD. A number of the SPD Objectives through being revised have improved in compatibility with the Sustainability Objectives. However there are still a number of question marks where it is unclear how the Objectives of the SPD will impact on the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives, as there is not enough information to assess the impact. For example, whilst the SPD will lead to the developing and enhancing of a number of greenspaces there is no specific information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity in the development of greenspaces and therefore the effect on Sustainability Objective SA14 which aims to protect, enhance and manage diversity is uncertain. ,

7.2.2 Testing the Initial draft SPD Preferred Option

The assessment was carried out by assessing the Preferred Option against the SA Objectives. A number of recommendations were made to improve the draft SPD comprising:

- SuDS to be incorporated into new developments where appropriate to restrict run off to existing rates or better;
- A requirement to undertake an archaeological assessment where necessary; and
- A requirement for commercial developments to achieve a BREEAM rating of Very Good and encourage renewable energy generation (a requirement to achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 was already included in the draft SPD).

All of the above recommendations have been incorporated into the consultation draft SPD.

7.2.3 Testing the Consultation Draft SPD Preferred Option

Following amendments to the Initial Draft SPD as a result of internal consultation within Halton Borough Council and the SA, the Consultation Draft was retested against the SA Framework. The assessment table is included in full in Appendix F with Section 7.3 below summarising the significant positive and negative effects, as well as where the effects are uncertain. The assessment table in Appendix F provide commentary on the scale and timing of the effect with a brief justification for the assessment. The assessment considers potential cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects of the policies within the plan as a whole as this was considered more beneficial than assessing each individual policy in isolation. The assessment was undertaken using professional judgement and by comparing the potential effects to the baseline situation.

Based on the assessment tables, the performance of the policies against the SA sub-objectives has been described, as presented in Section 7.3 below.

7.3 SUMMARY OF THE APPRAISAL

Significant Positive Effects

The provision of two new road junctions at grade onto the A533 leading across the Silver Jubilee Bridge will help to improve accessibility. This will have a significant positive effect on the competitiveness and productivity of businesses (Objective SA4) as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers and there will be greater access to basic goods, services and amenities for local residents (Objective SA10).

The overall image of the Borough will be improved and promoted (Objective SA6) through the development of a new Waterside Boulevard, increased greenspace, and new employment and residential sites. This will also have a significant positive effect on objective SA11 to ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace. The provision of the new road junctions will promote the area as a place to access rather than just bypass.

The regeneration of the area together with the requirement to incorporate Secured by Design principles and provision for a neighbourhood centre should help to reduce crime and the fear of crime (SA8).

Significant Negative Effects

No significant negative effects have been identified. However, a minor negative effect was noted against SA13 because some of the new residential sites would be in Flood Zone 3 where new development should not normally be encouraged. However, there is no history of flooding in this area and the SPD requires a flood risk assessment and mitigation to be implemented, where appropriate.

Uncertainties

A new neighbourhood centre is proposed which is intended to provide access to community uses that will include education and training facilities. Vocational training and skills could also be developed by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges. However, the nature of these facilities is unknown and new residential development could put also pressure on existing educational facilities (Objective SA2).

The provision of valuable amenity space including the New Sankey Square Neighbourhood Centre and new pedestrian and cycle routes will help to encourage active and healthy lifestyles (Objective SA7). However there could be potential negative impacts on health due to a large amount of the residential area being adjacent to a large industrial site and the A533 which although downgraded will still be a busy road.

The use of renewable energy is encouraged to minimise resource use but no specific targets have been set. The implementation of these elements of the SPD will therefore determine the nature of the effect.

7.4 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The preparation of the Scoping Report involved a review of baseline information, which has been updated at other stages in the SA process. The baseline review identified some omissions because, in some cases, it has not been possible to establish the most appropriate targets, figures or sources. There have also been some difficulties in collecting data due to the reliance on external bodies to collect it.

The assessment assumes that the General Development Principles will be implemented and effective.

8. MONITORING PROPOSALS

The SEA Directive explicitly requires monitoring of the significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the SPD. A monitoring system is being designed which will help to fulfil the following requirements:

- To provide baseline data for the next SA and to provide a picture of how the environment / sustainability criteria of the Southern Widnes SPD Area is evolving;
- To monitor the significant effects or uncertainties of the SPD; and

- To ensure that action can be taken to reduce / offset the significant effects of the SPD.

Monitoring already plays a large role in the performance management of Halton Borough Council, and monitoring is being undertaken for the Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs), which have been introduced to track the performance of the Local Development Scheme and associated documents. There is also considerable monitoring activity being carried out for other plans and programmes (e.g. the Local Transport Plan) and by bodies such as the Environment Agency.

Where relevant, use will be made of these existing monitoring processes for the monitoring proposed as part of this SA to avoid duplication of effort.




The monitoring measures proposed in this section relate to the significant positive and negative effects that have been predicted to result from implementation of the SPD, as well as any areas where there was significant uncertainty in the prediction.

The significant effects of the SPD will be monitored on an annual basis through the AMR unless otherwise stated. However, it is noted that the monitoring requirements may change as a result of changes to the SPD following consultation or due to other external influences on the baseline situation (the AMR will be revised on a yearly basis).

In light of the changes that may arise prior to plan adoption, the monitoring proposals presented below should therefore be viewed as provisional.

Table 10.1 sets out the indicators that are proposed to monitor the significant effects and uncertainties that have been predicted to arise on the implementation of the SPD.

The following key is used to identify the type of effect to be monitored.

	Significant Positive Effect
	Negative Effect
	Uncertain Effect

Southern Widnes Spd Sustainability Appraisal Report

Table 9.1: Monitoring Proposals to Assess Significant Effects and Major Uncertainties

Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁹
<i>SA2 – To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment</i>				
The preferred option will include community facilities which could provide access to vocational training, education and skills for young people. The preferred option could also develop vocational training and skills by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges.	?	% of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent % of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4	Yes	Contextual and SA
			Yes	SA
The new residential development could put some pressure on existing education services.	?	School class sizes/capacity	No	
<i>SA4 – To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business</i>				
The preferred option will redevelop and provide a number of new sites for business development. This will include the provision of high quality office and light industrial units.	✓✓	Amount of completed office, retail and leisure development	Yes	Core
		Amount of floor space developed for employment by type in employment or regeneration areas	Yes	Core
		GVA per head	Yes	Contextual
<i>SA6 – To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment</i>				
The preferred option will encourage inward investment through the provision of a greater range of land uses and employment opportunities.	✓✓	Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development	Yes	Core

⁹ The type of indicator has been identified based on the criteria given in the Annual Monitoring Report.

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Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁹
The landscaping and improvement of the public realm will help to enhance the image of the area.		Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects)	No	
		Visitor numbers to Halton	No	
SA7 – To improve health and reduce health inequalities				
The preferred option will provide green areas and cycling and pedestrian routes which will encourage active lifestyles. However there could be potential negative impacts due to a large amount of the residential area being adjacent to a large industrial site and busy road.	?	Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs	Yes	SA
		Years of life expectancy	Yes	National
SA8 - To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime				
Regeneration of the area should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. The provision of a neighbourhood centre could provide activities, particularly for young people who might otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour. The SPD requires reference to be made to Secured by Design in the development of new housing.	✓✓	Recorded crimes per 1,000 population	Yes	National
		Number of people reporting fear of crime	No	
SA9 – To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing				
The preferred option will provide new housing developments which will improve the variety and supply of housing in the area.	✓✓	Affordable housing completions	Yes	Core
		Housing type and tenure	Yes	SA
		Number of new houses achieving the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or above	No	
SA10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities				

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Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁹
The preferred option will alter the layout of the existing road system so access to Widnes is simplified. Pedestrian and cycle routes will also be created.	✓✓	Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP, a hospital, a primary school, secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre(s)	Yes	Core
		Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle	Yes	National
<i>SA11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</i>				
The preferred option will see the improvement of large areas of green space.	✓✓	Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards	Yes	Core
<i>SA13 To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters</i>				
There are no significant negative effects however much of Southern Widnes is in Flood Zone 3 so there may be a minor negative effect. Therefore it is advisable to monitor the risk of flooding.	✗	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality	Yes	Core
<i>SA18 To use land, energy and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources</i>				
The preferred option will make efficient use of land by using brownfield sites. However new construction will increase energy and resource use.	?	Number of new buildings completed to BREEAM 'Very Good' or Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or above	No	
		Renewable energy capacity installed by type	Yes	Core

9. CONSULTATION ON THE SA REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

The consultation draft SPD and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal report will be issued for public consultation in February/March 2009. Comments made on the SPD will be reviewed and where necessary, amendments will be made to the SPD. Any significant changes will be subject to further Sustainability Appraisal. The SPD will then be finalised and adopted by the Council. An Adoption Statement will be prepared to summarise the SA process and provide final monitoring proposals for the SPD.

Southern Widnes SPD
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT
APPENDICES

Southern Widnes SPD

**SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL REPORT
APPENDICES**

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This report has been prepared by Waterman Energy, Environment & Design, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporation of our General Terms and Condition of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to us by agreement with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at its own risk.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

Appendix B: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Appendix C: Consultation Responses on the SA Scoping Report

Appendix D: Testing the Options

Appendix E: Testing the Revised Plan Objectives

Appendix F: Testing the Preferred Option

APPENDIX A – REVIEW OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The following Plans, Policies and Programmes have been reviewed as part of this Sustainability Appraisal. Applicable targets have been selected and incorporated into the SA Framework in Appendix B.

International PPPs

- Johannesburg Declaration
- Kyoto Protocol
- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)
- EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan
- Habitats Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Birds Directive
- Air Quality Directive
- Waste Framework Directive
- Directive to Promote Electricity from Renewable Energy
- Aarhus Convention

National PPPs

- Securing the Future - UK Government sustainable development strategy
- Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation
- Energy White Paper: Our Energy Future
- Urban White Paper
- The Future of Transport: a network for 2030. White Paper
- The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Working together for clean air (DETR, 2000)
- Water Resources for the Future – A Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2001)
- Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 2006
- Biodiversity Duty
- UK BAP
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 – Creating Sustainable Communities
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) Climate Change- Supplement to PPS 1 document on Climate Change
- Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 2 – Green Belt
- PPS 3 – Housing
- PPG 4 – Industrial, commercial development and small firms
- PPS 6 – Planning for Town Centres
- PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks
- PPG 13 – Transport
- PPG 14 – Development on Unstable Land
- PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG 16 – Archaeology and Planning
- PPG 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPG 20 – Coastal Planning
- PPG 21 – Tourism
- PPS 22 – Renewable Energy
- PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control
- PPG 24 – Planning and Noise
- PPS 25 – Development and Flood Risk
- UK Climate Change Programme
- A Space for Nature (Natural England)

Regional PPPs

- North West of England Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021.
- Regional Economic Strategy
- The Cultural Strategy for England's North West 2001

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- Advancing Sustainable Energy – A Sustainable Energy Strategy for the North West
- North West Regional Freight Strategy
- Regional Waste Strategy for the North West – September 2004
- Regional Housing Strategy for the North West
- Investment for Health A Plan For North West England 2003
- Action for Sustainability
- Rising to the Challenge: A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest
- North West Best Practice Design Guide (2006)
- Draft Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West (2006)
-

Local PPPs

- Halton Unitary Development Plan
- Core Strategy- Issues and Options Consultation Document 1
- Corporate Plan for Halton Borough Council
- Community Strategy, 2006-2011
- Local Transport Plan (LTP2)
- Halton Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2007
- Housing Strategy
- Halton's Natural Assets Strategy
- 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- Sports Strategy 2006 - 2009
- Safer Halton Partnership
- Strategy 2005-2008
- Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Waterside Development Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- LA 21 Strategy Action Plan for Halton

APPENDIX B SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Economic	1. To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	Social inclusiveness Economic development	Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs?	Population in employment and unemployment	To bring employment and unemployment rates in line with England and Wales rate by 2021.	<p>By 2001, Halton borough was ranked as the 18th most deprived English local authority area overall, with complex problems of poverty and social exclusion. Eight of Halton's 21 wards rank in the lowest 10% for employment, and unemployment among under-25s was the second highest in England. Nevertheless, in recent years the borough has shown some of the strongest improvements in the region in this area and economic activity rates in Halton are now similar to the rest of the North West but slightly lower than Great Britain as a whole.</p> <p>68.6% of people aged 16-74 in Riverside are economically active and in full time employment, whilst 31.4% are economically inactive (<i>Source: Office of National Statistics, April 2001</i>). This compares to 76.2% of people aged 16-59/64 in Halton are economically active and in full time employment, whilst 23.8% are economically inactive and unemployed. In the North West 76.8% of people aged 16-59/64 are economically active and in full time employment with 23.2% economically inactive and unemployed. In Great Britain as a whole 78.6% are economically active and 21.4% are economically inactive (<i>Source: Office of National Statistics, January 2007 – December 2007</i>)</p>
				Job Density	To bring Halton's job density in line with England and Wales densities by 2016.	<p>The 2003 job density (the ratio between total jobs to working age people), in Halton (0.76) is lower than the regional (0.81) and national average (0.83).</p> <p>The 2005 job density in Halton (0.80) is the same as the regional figure but still lower than the national (0.84) average (<i>Source: Nomis, 2005</i>)</p>
	2. To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	Social inclusiveness Economic development	<p>Will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people?</p> <p>Will it provide local</p>	% of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent	Increase proportions achieving five or more GCSE's at Grades A*-C to 60% by 2010. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	<p>The proportion of students achieving GCSE's at grades A-C in Halton is as follows:</p> <p>2005 - 49.2% (does not have to include Maths and English) 2006 - 52.6% (does not have to include Maths and English) 2006 - 33.3% (including Maths and English)</p> <p>(<i>Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families</i>)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Economic			employment opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses?	% of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4	<p>Increase the % of adults qualified to Level 3 to 70% by 2010.</p> <p>Reduce the number of adults with no qualifications to 10% by 2010.</p> <p>(Community Strategy, 2006-2011)</p>	<p>Educational achievement in the Riverside Ward is lower than Halton, the Region and UK as a whole.</p> <p>NVQ2: Riverside Ward– 20.7%</p> <p>NVQ3: Riverside Ward–5.9%</p> <p>NVQ4: Riverside Ward– 6.8%</p> <p>No qualifications: Riverside Ward– 40.6%</p> <p>(Source: 2001 Census)</p> <p>No Qualifications: Halton – 22.5%, GB –22.25%, NW – 20.64%, Greater Merseyside – 20.49%</p> <p>NVQ4 and above: Halton – 16.8%, GB – 26.6%, NW - 24.8%, Greater Merseyside – 21.3%.</p> <p>(Source: State of the Borough 2008, Halton Borough Council)</p>
	3. To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	Economic development	Will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses?	Total number of VAT registered businesses	<p>To increase the number of VAT registered businesses by 15% by 2010.</p> <p>(Community Strategy, 2006-2011)</p>	<p>Traditionally, employment in Halton was concentrated within a small number of large, mostly manufacturing, companies. Like many other parts of the North of England with a similar historical dependence on the manufacturing sector, Halton has typically suffered from low rates of business starts ups and low business densities. However, VAT registered businesses have been increasing year on year as follows:</p> <p>2,185 (2004)</p> <p>2,305 (2005)</p> <p>2,415 (2006)</p> <p>(Source: Nomis)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
				Percentage of business registrations and de-registrations	To increase the % of VAT registrations whilst decreasing the % of de-registrations	<p>% of VAT Registrations:</p> <p>2004 - 10.8 % VAT registrations and 9.8% de-registrations <i>(Source: InterDepartmental Business Register (IDBR), Nomis, 2004)</i></p> <p>2005 - 10.8 % VAT registrations and 7.4% de-registrations</p> <p>2006 - 9.7% VAT registrations and 7.5% de-registrations.</p> <p>The figure for the North West is 9.6% VAT registrations and 7.3% deregistrations. In Great Britain the figure is 9.4% VAT registrations and 7.4% de-registrations.</p> <p><i>(Source: DTI Small Business Service – VAT registrations/deregistrations by industry, Nomis 2006)</i></p>
	4. To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	Economic development	Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	Gross Value Added (GVA) per head	Sustain levels of GVA at above the regional norm. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	<p>GVA per head for Halton and Warrington was £19,766. This compares to a GVA per head for Merseyside of £12,488.</p> <p>Gross weekly pay full-time in Halton is £427 compared to £430 in the North West and £460 in Great Britain.</p> <p><i>(Source: Merseyside Economic Review, 2007)</i></p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Economic	5. To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes)	Economic development	Will it provide an improvement to one or more of the town centres?	Footfall within the town centre	Increase footfall through each town centre by 25% by 2010. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	There are 3 town centres in Halton: Halton Lea, Widnes and Runcorn Old Town. Widnes is the largest of the three with 350 units. Rental yields are an indicator of investor confidence in a centre (the lower the confidence the higher the perceived investment risk and the higher the yield) and for Widnes the yield has remained static since 1997 at 8.5% (<i>Shopping Centre yield at 01/07/05, Valuation office Agency</i>). This is slightly higher than may be expected for a centre of this size and importance. Average weekly footfall within Halton Lea of 292,605 Average monthly footfall for Widnes 595,747 (July – Nov 2005) Average monthly footfall for Runcorn Old Town 187,207 (July – Nov 2005) (Source: Halton Lea – Brandspace, Runcorn and Widnes – Halton Borough Council Footfall Counters)
				Vacancy rates within the town centre	Decrease vacancy levels year on year.	The % of vacant units in Halton Lea and Widnes has increased whilst the % in Runcorn Old Town has decreased since 1995. Number of vacant units in 2005: Halton Lea – 35 Widnes – 4 Runcorn Old Town – 41 (Source: Town Centre Survey 2005, Halton Borough Council)
	6. To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment	Economic development	Will it encourage inward investment?	Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects).	To increase the number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions.	In 2003 the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. It discovered that there is limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas, in some instances, almost complete lack of awareness of Halton and what it has to offer (Source: <i>Halton Gateway to Prosperity 2005-2008</i>). Investment enquiries 2004/5: 317 enquiries 42 conversions (Source: Economic Development, Halton Borough Council)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Social	7. To improve health and reduce health inequalities	Population and human health, Social inclusiveness	<p>Will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly?</p> <p>Will it support healthy lifestyles?</p>	Years of healthy life expectancy	<p>Narrow the gap between life expectancy, in Halton and the national average by at least 10% by 2010.</p> <p>(Community Strategy, 2006-2010)</p>	<p>Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country with low standards of life expectancy. Although life expectancy rates have been improving, these have not kept pace with other local authorities.</p> <p>Halton: Males – 74.3 years; Females – 78.4 years</p> <p>North West: Males – 75.7 years; Females – 80.3 years</p> <p>UK: Males – 76 years; females – 81 years</p> <p>(Source: North West Public Health Observatory, 2008)</p>
				Number of people who have a long-term illness	<p>To reduce the % of residents with a long-term illness to within 1.5% of the England & Wales % by the 2001 Census.</p>	<p>23.5% of residents in Riverside considered themselves to have a limiting long-term illness compared to 21.5% of residents in Halton and 18.2% for England and Wales as a whole (Source: 2001 Census)</p> <p>41% of Halton's households and 44% of Riverside ward's households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness, in comparison to 38.4% of households in the North West and 34.1% in England (Source: 2001 Census)</p>
Social	8. To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	Social inclusiveness	<p>Will it encourage crime-sensitive design?</p> <p>Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime?</p> <p>Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour?</p>	Recorded crimes per 1,000 population	To reduce number of offences per 1,000 pop.	<p>Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high: By 2006-07, the total crime score in Halton had risen from 103.6 to 114.0 a figure just below the regional average, but 14% above that for England and Wales. In 2006-07 Halton's rank was 79th out of 376 in terms of total offences per 1000 population. This is compared to 140th for 2003-04 ie a worsening of crime levels (Source: The State of the Borough, 2008).</p>
				Number of people reporting fear of crime	<p>Reduce levels of expressed fear of crime and anti-social behaviour by 25% by 2010.</p> <p>(Community Strategy, 2006-2011)</p>	<p>16.4% of people in Halton thought reducing crime would improve their local area.</p> <p>Just under three tenths (29.2%) of residents stated that they feel 'fairly unsafe' (17.3%) or 'very unsafe' (11.9%) when they are outside in their local area after dark. (Source: Halton Strategic Partnership Consulting the Communities of Halton 2005, March 2005)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Social	9. To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	Social inclusiveness	<p>Will it provide for affordable housing for local people?</p> <p>Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout?</p> <p>Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing?</p>	Proportion of different housing types and tenures	To meet the requirements set out in the most up-to-date Housing Needs Survey.	<p>The Riverside Ward has a very low percentage of detached housing and flats as seen across the borough as a whole. Social housing is also relatively high, again similar to the borough as a whole. Housing Type 2001 for the Riverside ward:</p> <p>Detached 13.7%</p> <p>Semi detached 23.6%</p> <p>Terraced 49.6%</p> <p>Other (flats etc.) 13.1%</p> <p>Housing Tenure 2004 for the Riverside ward:</p> <p>Private 62.9%</p> <p>Council 31.9%</p> <p>Housing Association 5.2%</p> <p><i>(Source: Census 2001)</i></p> <p>The average house price in Halton is £116,000 compared to an average price of £174,000 in England and Wales. <i>(Source: Land Registry, House Price Index Halton, February 2008)</i>. In the period 2003/4, there were 257 people accepted as being homeless and in priority need, equivalent to 5.3 homeless people per 1000 households in Halton. In comparison there were 6.4 homeless people per 1000 households in the North West and 6.6 homeless people per 1000 households in England <i>(Source: statutory Homelessness, ODPM)</i>.</p> <p>The population level within the borough is shown to have fallen since a peak in 1989 until 2003 when positive figures have been achieved. Population is therefore predicted to grow until around 2022 <i>(Source: Nomisweb, 2007)</i>. This should drive future housing provision.</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
	10. To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	Social inclusiveness	<p>Will it improve transport provision and accessibility?</p> <p>Will it provide for local retail needs?</p> <p>Will it improve public access to services and amenities?</p>	Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre.	To ensure that all new housing development is within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a town centre.	<p>Halton is ranked 138th out of 408 districts in Great Britain for accessibility and connectivity, down slightly from its 2002 rank of 120th (<i>State of the Borough 2008</i>). % of housing completions 2004/5 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 100% Hospital (Halton) – 48% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 100% Employment – 100% Town centre – 100% (Source: <i>Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005</i>)</p> <p>% of housing completions 2005/6 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 100% Hospital (Halton) – 21% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 92% Employment – 100% Town centre – 93% (Source: <i>Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006</i>)</p> <p>% of housing completions 2006/7 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 99% Hospital (Halton) – 89% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 99% Employment – 100% Town centre – 99% (Source: <i>Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
	11. To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	Social inclusiveness Biodiversity, fauna and flora, Cultural heritage and landscape	Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live?	Number and area of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	Ensure no loss of LNR (number or area).	Research carried out by Natural England shows that for every 1000 population, 1ha of Local Nature Reserve should be available. Using the estimated population at 2004, there is 1ha of LNR per 837 population within Halton. There are no LNRs within or adjacent to the SPD boundary (<i>Source: Halton Borough Council, 2004</i>).
			Will it improve access to natural greenspace?	Number of Green Flag Parks	To maintain and if possible increase the number of Green Flag Parks.	The green flag award scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales. 9 parks in Halton have Green Flag Awards. There is 1 Green Flag Park within the boundary of the SPD (Victoria Promenade). (<i>Source: the Civic Trust – Green Flag Awards, 2005</i>)
				Amount of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards	No loss in area	Overall the borough is well provided for in Natural & Semi Natural open space but there is a deficiency in all other types of open space within the borough. There is an overall surplus of outdoor sports facilities within the borough, but this is only due to a large supply in central Widnes. The other areas within the borough are all experiencing a shortfall in outdoor sports facilities. Open space types and areas within Halton: -Parks and Gardens 134.4 ha -Natural and semi natural greenspace 604.37 ha -Green Corridors 182.02 ha -Amenity Green Space 115.624 ha -Facilities for Young people and children 7.93 ha -Outdoor sports facilities 398.51 ha -Allotments and community gardens 8.86 ha -Cemeteries and churchyards 23.35 ha (<i>Source: Halton Borough Council, Survey of Open Space, 2005</i>)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Social	12. To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	Social inclusiveness	Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected?	Index of Deprivation	For Halton and the riverside ward to become less deprived and for Halton to move outside the 40 most deprived districts in England by 2010 (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	The Riverside ward is ranked 4 th out of 21 wards within Halton, where rank 1 is the most deprived. In 2004, Halton was ranked 21 st , out of 354, in the average of ward scores where rank 1 is the most deprived (<i>Source: Indices of Deprivation 2004</i>). It is now ranked 30 th out of 354 (<i>Source: State of the Borough, 2008</i>).
				Average household income	To increase average household income in Halton to 90%+ of the national average by 2010. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	The average household income in Halton is £27,898 which is 89.4% of the UK average (UK average salary is £31,200) (<i>Source: Merseyside Economic Review, 2006</i>)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Environmental	13. To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	Water and soil	Will it improve the quality of controlled waters?	Water quality (chemical & biological) classification of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters and percentage lengths in different classes	To increase the % of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters that classified as either good or fair year on year.	<p>Information from the Environment Agency's web-site indicates that the majority of the Southern Widnes Area is located in a groundwater Source Protection Zone III. This is the complete catchment area of a groundwater drinking water supply borehole within which some activities are controlled.</p> <p>The principal river in Halton Borough is the River Mersey and this forms the southern boundary to the Southern Widnes SPD. Biological water quality within Halton is generally poor and chemical quality fair.</p> <p>Halton: Biology 2004 Good – 0% Fair – 13.18% Poor – 79.39% Bad – 7.4% Chemistry 2004 Good – 11.0% Fair – 60.43% Poor – 20.55% Bad – 8.02%</p> <p><i>(Source: Environment Agency from Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007)</i></p>
			Will it ensure that the area within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase?	New development with sustainable drainage systems installed	To ensure Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 do not increase.	A large area of Widnes waterfront and Southern Widnes is in flood risk zone 3; part of the same area is also in flood risk zone 2. Most other areas will fall into zone 1. However, there is no history of flooding in this area. Bowers Brook which runs through the area is culverted <i>(Source: Halton Borough Council, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, October 2007).</i>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Environmental			Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding?	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on with flood defence grounds or water quality	To decrease the number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice	There have been 7 planning applications objected to by the Environment Agency on Flood Risk Grounds between 1/4/06 and 31/3/07 (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>)
	14. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	Biodiversity, Fauna & Flora	<p>Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites and habitats of nature conservation value?</p> <p>Will it protect or enhance statutory protected species?</p> <p>Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats?</p> <p>Will it protect or enhance BAP species?</p> <p>NB: the Halton BAP reedbed habitat is not located in close proximity to the Southern Widnes SPD boundary.</p> <p>The Halton BAP Species comprising</p>	Number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites	To maintain the number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites	<p>The Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Ramsar Site, which is located to the southwest of the Southern Widnes SPD boundary, immediately to the west of the Silver Jubilee Bridge, is a wetland of international importance. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large and internationally important populations of waterfowl. During the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain. Species of international importance include the Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> and Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>.</p> <p>The Mersey Estuary is also designated as a site of national importance (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). It occupies an area of 1035ha of which 917.7ha is also designated as the Ramsar Site (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council 2007</i>).</p> <p>It should be noted that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be undertaken as part of the Mersey Gateway proposals. A HRA is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan on the Mersey Estuary RAMSAR and Special Protection Area (SPA).</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
			Bluebells, Purple Hairstreak and Great Crested Newts are not known to be present within close proximity to the Southern Widnes SPD boundary. These indicators have therefore been removed.	Condition of SSSIs 95% of SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010. (Public Service Agreement (PSA) target)	All SSSIs in 100% favourable condition	Mersey Estuary SSSI - 99.95% favourable, 0.05% unfavourable recovering (Various 08/02- 03/04) (<i>Source: Natural England</i>)
				Number and area of Local Wildlife Sites	Maintain number and area of Local Wildlife Sites	Within Halton there are 61 Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as SINC)s with an area of 742.65ha. None are located within the Runcorn Old Town SPD area (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>).
				Extent and condition of saltmarsh	Maintain, in a favourable condition, the current extent of Saltmarsh in Halton.	166 hectares occur in Halton, with the main sites at Hale Marsh (72 ha), Astmoor (51 ha) and Widnes Warth (45ha) (<i>Source: Halton BAP, 2003</i>)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
				Population of Redshank pairs	<p>Increase the population of Redshank pairs by 20% and wintering numbers by 20% by 2015. To be based on an increase of survey data over the period 2002 -2010. Survey data to include over wintering numbers as well as breeding numbers on saltmarsh and surrounding farmland.</p> <p>Promote sympathetic management of saltmarsh in targeted areas, in particular as part of the New Mersey Crossing Proposal.</p>	<p>Information of breeding population is patchy. Halton probably has sub-optimal breeding sites on saltmarsh at present. Wintering numbers are as important as breeding numbers. Adjacent farmland is an important winter factor (<i>Source: Halton BAP, 2003</i>)</p>
				Population of skylark breeding pairs	<p>Increase the population of skylark breeding pairs by 20% by 2015, based on an increase of survey data over the period 2002 - 2010.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 20 breeding pairs on Halton Moss (1999) • Breeding pairs at Upton Rocks, Widnes • Singing males on land designated for industry, Widnes • Singing males on farmland, saltmarsh and post industrial habitats • Wintering populations are as important as breeding populations (<i>Source: Halton BAP, 2003</i>)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
				Population of Song Thrush pairs	Increase the population of Song Thrush pairs by 20% by 2015, based on an increase of survey data over the period 2002 - 2010.	Anecdotal evidence only suggests a large decline in Halton, with gardens and parkland as possibly crucial local habitats. <i>(Source: Halton BAP, 2003)</i>
				Population of reed bunting breeding pairs	Increase the population of reed bunting breeding pairs by 20% by 2015, based on an increase of survey data over the period 2002 - 2010.	Reed Buntings continue to breed in Halton in and around reedbeds and adjacent habitats. Information of breeding populations is patchy. The Upper Mersey Estuary and River Weaver appear to have suitable habitats. <i>(Source: Halton BAP, 2003)</i>
	15. To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	Water and soil	Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal?	Level and % of household waste recycled	Waste Strategy 2000 set national recycling targets: To recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010, and 33% of household waste by 2015.	During 2004/05, 8885.57 tonnes (13.65%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005)</i> During 2005/06, 8,929.48 tonnes (13.66%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006)</i> During 2006/07, 9,684.85 tonnes (14.57%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007)</i>
Total annual amount of municipal waste generated and				Ensure 30% of waste is recycled or composted by 2010. <i>(Community Strategy, 2006-2011)</i>	Total municipal waste (04/05) – 65,083 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 8,885 (14%) Total municipal waste composted – 5,957 (9%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 50,240 (77%) <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005)</i>	

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Environmental				% recycled or composted.		<p>Total municipal waste (05/06) – 65,377 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 8,929 (14%) Total municipal waste composted – 6,318 (10%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 50,132 (77%) (Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006)</p> <p>Total municipal waste (06/07) – 66,453 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 9,685 (14.6%) Total municipal waste composted – 6,931 (10.4%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 49,837 (75%) (Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
	<p>16. To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources</p>	<p>Air, Human Health, Climatic factors</p>	<p>Will it minimise the need to travel? Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport? Will it improve air quality?</p>	<p>Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs</p>	<p>To maintain 0 AQMAs</p>	<p>The poor circulation and lack of permeability, which afflicts the area today, can be traced back to successive infrastructure projects, aimed at improving the wider transport network. Undoubtedly, these have enhanced the wider network and opened up specific sites but these improvements have often been at the expense of local permeability.</p> <p>Links across the Mersey (at this location) are restricted to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which runs between Runcorn and Widnes South predominantly serving the wider transport network. Local links are frustrated by the congestion and speed of traffic running across the bridge resulting in poor inter-town connectivity.</p> <p>Victoria Road forms a further division, running north to south, through the centre of the area. As a gateway to Widnes south (the junction of Ashley Way West and Victoria Road), it is unfortunately restricted and narrow in character. The feeling of separation between the town centre and Widnes South is further accentuated by Ashley Way West itself, which as a main vehicular thoroughfare presents a number of challenges for pedestrians and local traffic wishing to cross it. The A562 (Ashley Way) forms the northern boundary of the Widnes South area.</p> <p>The freight line off the West Coast Main Line railway line runs parallel to the south reinforcing the divisions, which exist between Widnes town centre and Widnes South. The railway also passes over Victoria Road next to an overhead road bridge of the A568 Widnes Eastern Relief Road, which heads north through the area before turning eastwards at the railway forming yet another boundary along Victoria Road.</p> <p>The location is dominated by vehicles and road infrastructure creating an environment, where pedestrians are only likely to use the route out of necessity (most likely preferring to use the route within day light hours). The current layout means that pedestrians are less likely to feel safe or comfortable walking along Victoria Road and this creates an 'obstacle' impeding free movement between Southern Widnes and the town centre.</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Environmental				Travel to work by mode	To reduce the number of people travelling to work by car or van by 10% by 2011 and by 20% by 2021.	<p>According to the local census 29% of households in Halton do not own a car or van although there are striking differences between wards with 38% Riverside households not having a car.</p> <p>The percentage of people in Riverside aged 16 - 74 in employment who usually:</p> <p>Work at or from home – 5.08%</p> <p>Travel to work by:</p> <p>Underground, metro, light rail, Tram or Train – 0.61%</p> <p>Bus, mini bus or coach – 7.18%</p> <p>Motorcycle, scooter or moped – 1.49%</p> <p>Driving a car or a van – 58.23%</p> <p>Passenger in a car or van – 10.44%</p> <p>Taxi – 0.99%</p> <p>Bicycle – 2.49%</p> <p>On foot – 13.04%</p> <p>Other – 0.44%</p> <p><i>(Source: 2001 Census)</i></p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
Environmental	17. To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast	Cultural heritage and landscape	<p>Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance?</p> <p>Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage?</p>	Number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas	To maintain the number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas	<p>Halton has 122 Listed Buildings 2 of which are Grade I listed, 17 are Grade II* listed and the remaining are Grade II listed. There are 3 Listed Buildings within close the SPD boundary, 1 of which is Grade II* listed (the Church of St Mary) and 2 are Grade II listed (The Wayside Pulpit to the Church of St Mary and the Former Transporter Bridge Power House).</p> <p>Halton has 10 Conservation Areas and the total area is 92. 78ha. There is 1 Conservation Area within the SPD boundary, West Bank Promenade, covering an area of approximately 2.1ha.</p> <p><i>(Source: English Heritage and Halton Borough Council)</i></p> <p>The River Mersey and Estuary will have formed a rich resource for food, transport, as a barrier crossing point and a source of energy. Consequently, it is likely to have attracted human activity during all historic periods. Buried boats, wharves and other riverine archaeological features are therefore anticipated adjacent to the River Mersey.</p>
				Number of Conservation Areas covered by an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal	To increase the number of Conservation Areas covered by an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal	<p>Currently there are 0 Conservation Areas covered by an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal</p> <p><i>(Source: Halton Borough Council)</i></p>
				Number of buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments 'at risk'.	To reduce the number of buildings 'at risk' to 0 by 2016.	<p>There are 2 buildings 'at risk' in Halton these are Daresbury Hall which is Grade II* Listed and the Undercroft of West Range at Norton Priory which is a scheduled monument. However, neither of these are within the SPD boundary.</p> <p><i>(Source: English Heritage, Buildings 'at risk' Register, 2007)</i></p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	SPD: Baseline Data
	18. To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	Water and soil, Climatic factors	Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings?	Proportion of housing built on previously developed land per (PDL) year	PPG3 set a target of 60% of dwellings on PDL by 2008.	<p>Historic contamination from past chemical works and landfills in the area is recognised as a potential issue for development. Between 1994 and 1998, over 180ha of derelict land were reclaimed but over 200ha – more than 3% of the borough land surface remain. The Riverside ward contains the greatest amount of PDL (59.98ha) of any ward in the borough, with a majority falling into NLID category C (17.56ha) – derelict land and buildings – land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment.</p> <p>28.12 % of new and converted dwellings were constructed on PDL in Widnes in 2005/06 (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006</i>).</p> <p>In addition to contamination, Halton has a number of other obstacles to new development including a number of Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites.</p>
			Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy?			

APPENDIX C – CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO THE SA SCOPING REPORT

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Judith Nelson English Heritage	By post 14/08/07	On page 20 the West Bank Promenade conservation area is described as falling within the SPD area, however from examining Figure 3 and comparing it to the CA boundary I believe it falls outside the SPD area to the south.	The boundaries will be confirmed at the preferred options stage.
		Figure 2 and 3 are somewhat confusing with their description of areas and delineation of boundaries.	The boundaries will be confirmed at the preferred options stage.
		It is not clear what historic environment baseline information has been collect for SPD area and what are the historic environment/ cultural heritage issues for the area. Are there locally important heritage assets in addition to those described in Paragraph 7.8?	This comment is acknowledged. However, it is felt that the information relating to the SPD area is clear and there is sufficient information.
		Whilst Objective 17 is supported it is not clear how applicable or appropriate the indicator and targets are to the document subject to appraisal/assessment. For example are listed buildings at risk a relevant indicator for the documents to be appraised. It may be more appropriate in terms of a regeneration strategy to look at the re-use/enhancement of buildings and areas of historic or architectural interest.	The suggested objective and sub-objectives have not been added as it is felt that the current objectives are sufficient. Additionally, indicators are limited to those monitored by HBC.
Janet Belfield Natural England	By email 15/08/07	<u>Habitats Regulations Assessment</u> Amendments are being made to the Habitats Regulations to reflect recent clarification of the status of land-use plans as 'plans or projects' under Article 6(3) & 4 of the Habitats Directive. In general terms, this means that if a land-use plan is likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination, on one or more European sites (SACs, SPAs) it must be subject to an 'appropriate assessment'.	Comment acknowledged. An appropriate assessment is being undertaken.
		<u>Biodiversity Duty</u> Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity, and has an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities. From 1 October 2006, all local authorities and other public authorities in England and Wales have a Duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.	Comment acknowledged.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England <i>Continued...</i>		<p><u>Review of Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes</u></p> <p>We thank you for acknowledging Natural England's formation from its founding bodies of Countryside Agency and English Nature (section 9.1). Although in 9.3 you have referred to English Nature as now English Heritage which should be amended to 'now Natural England'.</p>	This error has been corrected.
		<p>We acknowledge and welcome inclusion of Habitats Directive and Birds Directive: PPS1, PPS9, PPG17, PPG20 and PPS22; and Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan. We suggest that you consider inclusion of the following documents within the list of relevant plans/policies and programmes in the scoping report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 2006 • Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. • Other relevant Biodiversity Action Plans. • Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty. (Defra, 2007) • Rising to the Challenge: A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest (NWDA, 2006) • Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning – Incorporating the natural, built and historic environment, and rural issues in plans and strategies (2005). Countryside Agency/English Nature/Environment Agency. • Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities. (English Nature now Natural England) 	These documents have been included within the plans, policies and programmes section, with the exception of Planning Policy Statement 7, Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty and Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning as they are not considered applicable to the SA of the Regeneration Strategy.
		<p>National and Regional State of the Countryside Reports may help and are available via links on-line at www.naturalengland.org.uk. The State of the Countryside Reports provides facts and trends about the social, economic and environmental issues encountered in England's countryside. They present evidence against 20 key indicator themes, which include a number on environment and recreation.</p>	Comment acknowledged, no change required.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England <i>Continued...</i>	By email 15/08/07	Countryside Quality Counts (CQC) may also be useful; the CQC project has developed an indicator of change in countryside quality based on landscape character, in response to the 2000 Rural White Paper call for monitoring of changes in the countryside. Information on CQC is available via www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk .	Comment acknowledged, no change required.
		We welcome section 2 of Appendix 2 that sets out the relevant biodiversity data for the borough. We welcome the inclusion of the landscape character data in paragraph 2.1 but perhaps this ought to be in the landscape section, section 7, although some of its content is clearly relevant to biodiversity.	Change made as recommended.
		We would welcome expansion of the supporting text to specifically mention the hierarchy of nature conservation sites, international, national, local, etc and particular reference made to the Mersey Estuary SPA and the reasons for its designation. Data should not be limited to the borough boundary as designated sites outside Halton can be just as important, and can be affected by plans, policies, strategies and development within Halton.	Additional information has been included in Section 2 to address these comments.
		We thank you for reference to our research (former English Nature) in relation to Local Nature Reserves. We also consider that our publication 'Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities' may also be helpful in the provision of green space in relation to residential development.	This document has been reviewed and included with the plans, policies and programmes section.
		Indicators chosen in table 2.3 and 2.4 only cover sites and not species. We would welcome the inclusion of indicators for species here too.	Indicators relating to species have been included within the SAF.
		Section 4, Appendix 2 covers contaminated and derelict sites. Such sites can hold value for biodiversity and we would welcome recognition of that here, along with criteria, indicators and targets.	With the addition of indicators for specific species, it is felt that there are now sufficient criteria, indicators and targets relating to biodiversity.
		Within the 'Water' subsection we would welcome reference to the relationship between Halton and the Mersey Estuary SPA.	Text has been included to show the relationship between Halton and the Mersey Estuary SPA.
		Section 7, Appendix 2 covers cultural heritage and landscape. It firstly mentions green spaces and in particular green flag parks and the indicators are repeated in both this section and section 2. Section 2 contains no supporting text about green flag parks and it may be appropriate to remove the 'parks' indicators from section 2.	The indicator relating to green flag parks has been removed from Section 2.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England	By email 15/08/07	We would appreciate inclusion of an indicator for accessible natural greenspace based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. These standards could also provide a target for greenspace provision.	It is felt that the indicator with regards to green flag parks is sufficient. The targets for greenspace provision based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards are not monitored and have therefore currently been discounted.
		This section ought to include the landscape data from section 2 as mentioned above. Figure 2.1 includes landscape designations in the key but at the printed scale it is not clear if there are any designated sites shown. If there are they ought to be referred to in this section and appropriate indicators and targets chosen to support them.	This comment is acknowledged and the change has been made.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		<p><u>Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework</u></p> <p>We acknowledge and welcome inclusion of a range of objectives and criteria that relate to our environmental interests, and in particular 11, 14 and 17. We note that the objectives contained in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework are the original objectives from the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal consultation from March 2006, rather than the amended objectives incorporating comments from the consultation and included in the Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006 and our most recent consultation replies. We therefore recommend that the most up-to-date objectives are used in this report incorporating changes as appropriate.</p> <p>* Objective 11 – include an indicator for accessible natural greenspace based on Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. These standards could also provide a target for greenspace provision.</p> <p>** Objective 14 – the criteria for this objective should be split to address both species and habitats, and a distinction should be made between statutory protected sites and species, and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species. An additional criterion should be included making reference to the biodiversity value of brownfield sites. Indicators should follow this format with reference to statutory and non-statutory sites and Biodiversity Action Plans for both habitats and species, with accompanying targets as appropriate.</p>	<p>The SAF has been updated to reflect the SAF included in the Core Strategy Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006.</p> <p>It is felt that the indicator with regards to green flag parks is sufficient. In addition, the targets for greenspace provision based on Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards are not monitored and have therefore been discounted.</p> <p>Specific criteria / indicators have been included to address both species and habitats.</p> <p>It was not felt appropriate to include an additional criterion with regard to the biodiversity value of brownfield sites as this is not monitored.</p>

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Emma Williams Environment Agency	By email 16/08/07	<p><u>Appendix 1: Assessment of Plans Policies and Programmes.</u></p> <p>In general the content and associated summary of the documents within Appendix 1 appears to be thorough and include the key policies and programmes which are required to ensure sustainable development is achieved in any regeneration.</p> <p>We would note that the Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Halton provides an important detailed and robust assessment of the extent and nature of risk from flooding in Halton and considers the implications on spatial planning. One of the main objectives of this SFRA is "To inform policy formulation and the Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging LDF concerning land use in flood risk areas" Given that some of the area included within the boundary of this SPD is located within the flood zone the Draft SFRA should be included as one of the key documents which will have implications for the regeneration strategy and SPD.</p>	This document has been included within the plans, policies and programmes section.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		<p><u>Appendix 2: Baseline data</u></p> <p>On page 90 paragraph 2.4, we would suggest including the RAMSAR/SPA designations.</p> <p>We welcome the consideration of water issues as highlighted through the Water Framework Directive. The Environment Agency holds a significant amount of information in relation to water quality and we would advise you to consider the SEA table included with this letter which provides suggested indicators and sources of information in the identification of baseline data and in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.</p> <p>In relation to the challenges of climate change, the Environment Agency in partnership with a range of other bodies have published a SEA Climate change guide which provides advice on how climate change can be considered when assessing the sustainability of LDF documents and formation of Sustainability Appraisals. This provides useful information especially on sources of baseline information and indicators, along with possible climate change SEA objectives which may prove useful in the formation of the Sustainability Appraisal of this SPD. We therefore enclose a copy for your attention.</p>	<p>Information regarding the RAMSAR/SPA designations has been included.</p> <p>The SEA Table provided has been reviewed. Many of the indicators and targets, which are appropriate to Halton, are already included as indicators within the SAF.</p> <p>This document has been reviewed but changes are not necessary.</p>
Sam Turner North West Regional Assembly	By email 16/08/07	<p>As the draft RSS is now some way progressed towards its adoption, it should also be given consideration when preparing the SPDs.</p> <p>As well as the Adopted and Submitted Draft RSS, the NWRA has produced a number of other documents that you may find of some assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The North West Best Practice Design Guide, provides broad advice on design issues with more specific guidance on topics such as, Biodiversity, Design and 	<p>The Draft RSS has been given due consideration.</p> <p>These documents have been included within the plans, policies and programmes section.</p>

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		<p>Security, EcoHomes, Energy Efficiency, Use of Renewable Energy, Sustainable Drainage and Modern Methods of Construction;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West provides a detailed definition of green infrastructure, as outlined in Policy EM3 of the Submitted Draft RSS. The guide offers broad advice on how to plan and enhance green networks; • The Sustainable Energy Strategy for the region reinforces relevant policies from the draft RSS but more importantly offers important practical advice and information on taking these issues forward. • The NWRA (in association with a number of partners) have produced a Sustainability Appraisal Toolkit for use with a variety of strategies and development plans. The toolkit aims to ensure integrated plans and projects create sustainable developments within the North West. 	
<p>Steve Eccles Integration and Policy Manager, Mersey Gateway Project Team Unit, HBC</p> <p>Steve Eccles Integration and Policy Manager, Mersey Gateway Project Team Unit Halton Borough Council</p> <p><i>Continued...</i></p>	<p>By email 14/08/07</p>	<p>Para. 3.1: On the Widnes side of the Bridge the road splits between the A557 and the A562, which is the road towards Liverpool.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.1 has been amended to include this information.</p>
	<p>By email 14/08/07</p>	<p>Para. 3.2: The bridge is of major strategic importance to Merseyside and North Cheshire with 82% of traffic crossing the bridge making trips across the region.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.2 has been amended to include this information.</p>
		<p>Para. 3.2: Traffic growth has been about 1.2% per annum over the last seven years, which is not double the national average.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.2 has been amended to include this information.</p>
		<p>Para. 3.2: The bridge has four sub-standard lanes and average flows of over 80,000 vehicles per week day</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.2 has been amended to include this information.</p>
		<p>Para. 3.3: Halton Borough Council and The Mersey Crossing Group (a partnership of Halton Borough Council, all the Merseyside local authorities, Mersey Travel, Warrington Borough Council, the local Chambers of Commerce, English Partnerships, NWDA and Peel Holdings) are promoting a second integrated road crossing of the Mersey within the Borough, between Runcorn and Widnes.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.3 has been amended to include this information.</p>
		<p>Para. 3.5: The proposed route runs from the Central Expressway in Runcorn to the Eastern bypass in Widnes and ultimately Speke Road, and is 1.5 kilometres to the east of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, see Figure 1.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.5 has been amended to include this information.</p>

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		SAF and Issues Tables: There are inconsistencies between these two tables in terms of economic activity figures – these should be checked.	These have been checked, no changes necessary.
		SAF: It should be noted that in general footfall over represents trips, i.e. at minimum two footfall counts per trip.	Comment acknowledged.
		Section 8 Table 4: The last face on the first row should be blank or the box should be red.	Change has been incorporated.
Paul Byrne Government Office North West	By email 14/08/07	No comment.	N/A
Jermaine Daniels Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service	By email 06/08/07	After an in-depth review of the document, we advise that the scoping report has adequately addressed the issues associated with the proposed regeneration of the action areas. With respect to the issue of compliance to the SEA regulation, we are of the view that the document is in line with the requirement of the SEA Directive as well as the criteria outlined within Government guidance 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents'. We have the following detailed comments to make: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the nature of both planning documents, it seems unusual for the Council to undertake a single SA to satisfy the requirements of both documents. We advise that the scoping report should include within a separate section, information clearly explaining how both documents relate to each other and how a single SA will satisfy their individual remit. 	Comment acknowledged, no change required.
Jermaine Daniels Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service Continued	By email 06/08/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scoping report makes reference to COMAH sites being immediately outside the boundary of the SPD and we expect that the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy and South Widnes Regeneration Area SPD should consider the potential risk associated with the regeneration proposals and COMAH sites in particular sensitive end user such as residents. As a precautionary approach we would expect any new major residential development proposals to be direct away from COMAH sites. 	A combined SA scoping report has been issued to avoid duplication. However, separate Sustainability Assessments will be carried out for the Regeneration Strategy and SPD. Comment acknowledged, however, HBC do not monitor the proximity of residential development to COMAH sites and is therefore immeasurable.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general the overall list of issues and problems appears to be robust. 	Comment acknowledged no change necessary.

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Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the 1 October 2006 the Environment Agency must be consulted on all application for development within flood risk areas (except minor development) and with a majority of the proposed South Widnes Regeneration Area being located in flood zones 2 and 3, it is likely that the EA will have to be consulted on proposals within this area. On this basis we suggest that the indicator measuring 'number of planning permission granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality' is included as an indicator linked to objective 13 of the SA Framework. 	The indicator suggested has been added to Objective 13.

APPENDIX D - TESTING THE OPTIONS

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<p>1) To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate – will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Office and retail floor space accounts for 11.8% and 9.2% of Halton’s floorspace respectively. This is significantly below the regional (13.1% and 16.9%) and national (17% and 17.5%) respective levels. Industrial premises account for 77.1% of total floorspace usage, significantly above the regional average (66.9%) and national average (62.1%) (Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy: Issues report). The development of new office and retail space will help to address this balance.</p> <p>New office/commercial sites will be created close to the road network. A large area of existing business will be improved. A new mixed use development will be created close to business and residential sites which will provide new employment opportunities.</p> <p>In total there will be 83,246m² of B1 uses and 1,525m² of general industrial B2 uses. It is estimated that the total net additional jobs in the core area (within 10 minutes) will be 164 jobs; in the outer area of Merseyside net additional jobs will be 421 jobs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>There will be an improved balance between the amount of industrial floorspace and office and retail floorspace – see option 1.</p> <p>New office/commercial sites will be created close to the road network. There will be a large area of business improvement and a large site of mixed use development which will create new employment opportunities.</p> <p>In total there will be 1,235m² of shops, 79,861m² of business B1 and 1,479m² of general industrial B2 uses. It is estimated that the total net additional jobs in the core area (within 10 minutes) will be 160 jobs; in the outer area of Merseyside net additional jobs will be 410 jobs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>There will be an improved balance between the amount of industrial floorspace and office and retail floorspace – see option 1.</p> <p>New office/commercial sites will be created close to the road network. Three employment village sites will also be created to house relocated businesses and there will be a small business improvement area. There will be two sites for mixed use development which will create new employment opportunities.</p> <p>In total there will be 2,050m² of shops, 121,019m² of business B1 and 2,273m² of general industrial B2 uses. It is estimated that the total net additional jobs in the core area (within 10 minutes) will be 242 jobs; in the outer area of Merseyside net additional jobs will be 623 jobs.</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
2) To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment – will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people? Will it provide local employment opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses?	?	?	?
	<p>The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre is proposed. This could provide access to adult education facilities.</p> <p>Vocational training and skills development could be provided by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include further information on education provision in the preferred option.</p>	<p>The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre is proposed. This could provide access to adult education facilities.</p> <p>Vocational training and skills development could be provided by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include further information on education provision in the preferred option.</p>	<p>The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre is proposed. This could provide access to adult education facilities.</p> <p>Vocational training and skills development could be provided by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include further information on education provision in the preferred option.</p>
3) To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development – will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses?	✓	✓	✓✓
	<p>The improvement of existing business areas and improved access which will widen the potential market and customer base will both help to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses.</p>	<p>The improvement of existing business areas and improved access which will widen the potential market and customer base will both help to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses. The at grade junctions will facilitate access into the business area.</p>	<p>A number of existing businesses will be relocated in Employment Villages which will be created adjacent to the existing A533. The A533 will be at grade with the sites and a new junction will be created leading to enhanced access and profile as the sites will be seen from the road. This will increase the profile and access for local businesses, widening the market and customer base.</p>
4) To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business – Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	✓	✓✓	✓✓
	<p>There will be increased accessibility through the provision of two new junctions onto the A533 leading across the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This will help businesses to be more competitive as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers.</p>	<p>There will be increased accessibility through the provision of two new junctions which will be at grade onto the A533 leading across the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This will help businesses to be more competitive as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers.</p>	<p>There will be increased accessibility through the provision of two new junctions which will be at grade onto the A533 leading across the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The Employment Villages will be adjacent to the A533 and there will be a new junction to access them. This will help businesses to be more competitive as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers.</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
5) To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes) – will it provide an improvement to one of more of the town centres?	?	?	?
	Improvements will be made to the streets running under the new Mersey Gateway Bridge to Widnes. However it is unclear whether the option would enhance the vitality and viability of Widnes town centre.	Improvements will be made to the streets running under the new Mersey Gateway Bridge to Widnes. However it is unclear whether the option would enhance the vitality and viability of Widnes town centre.	Improvements will be made to the streets running under the new Mersey Gateway Bridge to Widnes. However it is unclear whether the option would enhance the vitality and viability of Widnes town centre.
6) To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment – will it encourage inward investment?	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	A new Waterside Boulevard and increased greenspace is proposed which will enhance the image of the area. The development of new employment and residential sites will encourage new investment. The provision of two new junctions from the A533 will promote the area as a place to access rather than just bypass.	A new Waterside Boulevard (this will be more extensive than option 1) and increased greenspace is proposed which will enhance the image of the area. There will be public realm improvements with the development of New Sankey Square. The development of new employment and residential sites will further encourage new investment. The provision of two new junctions at grade from the A533 will promote the area as a place to access rather than just bypass.	A new Waterside Boulevard (this will be more extensive than option 1 but slightly less than option 2) and increased greenspace is proposed which will enhance the image of the area. The development of new employment and residential sites will further encourage new investment into the areas. The provision of two new junctions at grade from the A533 will promote the area as a place to access rather than just bypass.
7) To improve health and reduce health inequalities – will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly? Will it support healthy lifestyles?	?	?	?
	<p>There will be a number of improved green areas including improved leisure uses on Spike Island. A new Waterside Boulevard will be created. These will both provide valuable amenity space to encourage healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles.</p> <p>However there could be potential negative impacts on health due to a large amount of the residential area being adjacent to a large industrial site and the A533 which although downgraded will still be a busy road.</p>	<p>There will be a number of improved green areas including improved leisure uses on Spike Island. A new Waterside Boulevard will be created which will be more extensive than option 1. These will both provide valuable amenity space to encourage healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles.</p> <p>However there could be potential negative impacts on health due to a large amount of the residential area being adjacent to a large industrial site and the A533 which although downgraded will still be a busy road.</p> <p>No information is provided on healthcare</p>	<p>There will be a number of improved green areas including improved leisure uses on Spike Island. A new Waterside Boulevard will be created which will be more extensive than option 1 but slightly less than option 2. These will both provide valuable amenity space to encourage healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles.</p> <p>The residential element is away from main roads and therefore likely to benefit from improved air quality.</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	<p>No information is provided on healthcare facilities for the new (and existing) residents.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should include a reference to the provision of or access to healthcare.</p>	<p>facilities for the new (and existing) residents.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should include a reference to the provision of or access to healthcare.</p>	<p>No information is provided on healthcare facilities for the new (and existing) residents.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should include a reference to the provision of or access to healthcare.</p>
8) To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime – will it encourage crime-sensitive design? Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime? Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour?	✓	✓	✓
	<p>The provision of new employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. General improvements to the appearance of streets should help to encourage a greater feeling of wellbeing.</p> <p>The provision of a neighbourhood centre could provide activities, particularly for young people who might otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include reference to Crime Sensitive Design in preferred option, for example following Secured by Design principles.</p>	<p>The provision of new employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. General improvements to the appearance of streets should help to encourage a greater feeling of wellbeing.</p> <p>The provision of a neighbourhood centre could provide activities, particularly for young people who might otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include reference to Crime Sensitive Design in preferred option, for example following Secured by Design principles.</p>	<p>The provision of new employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. General improvements to the appearance of streets should help to encourage a greater feeling of wellbeing.</p> <p>The provision of a neighbourhood centre could provide activities, particularly for young people who might otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include reference to Crime Sensitive Design in preferred option, for example following Secured by Design principles.</p>
9) To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing – will it provide for affordable housing for local people? Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout? Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing?	✓/!	✓/!	✓✓/!
	<p>Approximately 184 Apartments, 68 Town Houses, 98 Family Houses will be developed. This will provide a greater variety of housing types as the property type profile in Halton is skewed towards terraced and semi-detached houses at present. The stock of flats is low and the majority are in the social housing sector. (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006). There is a demand for new housing and</p>	<p>Approximately 79 Apartments, 99 Town Houses, 89 Family Houses will be developed. This will provide a greater variety of housing types and help to meet new housing demand – see option 1.</p> <p>However, there is no information on whether the houses will be affordable, good quality and resource efficient.</p>	<p>Approximately 185 Apartments, 161 Town Houses, 136 Family Houses will be developed. This will provide a greater variety of housing types and help to meet new housing demand – see option 1.</p> <p>The new residential sites have more potential to be desirable than options 1 or 2 as two of the sites are adjacent to the riverside and the proposed Waterside Boulevard and opposite the large expanse</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	<p>the council must significantly increase its annual dwelling completion rates to meet with regional prescriptions, at present it is estimated that there will be a shortfall of 2,235 dwellings (Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy: Issues report).</p> <p>However, there is no information on whether the houses will be affordable, good quality and resource efficient.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should set a target for the % of affordable homes provided and contain design standards to encourage resource efficiency and quality design. There is an affordability issue with a need for an additional 176 affordable housing units per annum (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006).</p>	<p>Recommendation: Preferred option should set a target for the % of affordable homes provided and contain design standards to encourage resource efficiency and quality design. There is an affordability issue with a need for an additional 176 affordable housing units per annum (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006)</p>	<p>of Spike Island which will be improved for leisure uses. However, these houses are more likely to be aspirational and may therefore not respond to the needs of local people.</p> <p>There is no information on whether the houses will be good quality and resource efficient.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should set a target for the % of affordable homes provided and contain design standards to encourage resource efficiency and quality design. There is an affordability issue with a need for an additional 176 affordable housing units per annum (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006)</p>
10) To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities – Will it support transport provision and accessibility? Will it provide for local retail needs? Will it improve public access to services and amenities?	✓	✓✓	✓✓
	<p>Access will be enhanced through the development of two new junctions on to the existing A533 leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge. A number of local streets will be improved and pedestrian and cycle routes created to improve access.</p>	<p>Access will be enhanced through the development of two new junctions at grade on to the existing A533 leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge. A number of local streets will be improved and pedestrian and cycle routes created. It is proposed that 1,235m² of new shop space would be created.</p>	<p>Access will be enhanced through the development of two new junctions at grade on to the existing A533 leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge. A number of local streets will be improved and pedestrian and cycle routes created. It is proposed that 2,050m² of new shop space would be created.</p>
11) To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace – Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live? Will it improve access to natural greenspace?	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	<p>Access to greenspace will be improved and large areas of improved greenspace will be provided. Spike Island will be improved for leisure uses with pedestrian/green routes linking it with existing areas. A new Waterside Boulevard will also be created.</p>	<p>Access to greenspace will be improved and large areas of improved greenspace will be provided. Spike Island will be improved for leisure uses with pedestrian/green routes linking it with existing areas. A new Waterside Boulevard will also be created (more extensive than option 1).</p>	<p>Access to greenspace will be improved and large areas of improved greenspace will be provided. Spike Island will be improved for leisure uses with pedestrian/green routes linking it with existing areas. A new Waterside Boulevard will also be created (more extensive than option 1, slightly less than option 2).</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
12) To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities – Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected?	✓ Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities for this area which is one of the most deprived in Halton. New pedestrian and cycle routes will improve accessibility to local facilities and employment. The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre should provide a valuable community service.	✓ Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities for this area which is one of the most deprived in Halton. New pedestrian and cycle routes will improve accessibility to local facilities. The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre should provide a valuable community service.	✓ Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities for this area which is one of the most deprived in Halton. New pedestrian and cycle routes will improve accessibility to local facilities. The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre should provide a valuable community service.
13) To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters – Will it improve the quality of controlled waters? Will it ensure that the area within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase? Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding?	x The new residential sites would be in flood zone 3 but there is no history of flooding in this area. Bowers Brook which runs through the area is culverted. The majority of development is on existing hardstanding so there will be so significant increase in runoff. The area is adjacent to the River Mersey leading to potential flood risk. However the amount of development right next to the river is limited and the provision of large areas of green space should help to mitigate potential impacts.	x The new residential sites would be in flood zone 3 but there is no history of flooding in this area. Bowers Brook which runs through the area is culverted. The majority of development is on existing hardstanding so there will be so significant increase in runoff. The area is adjacent to the River Mersey leading to potential flood risk. However the amount of development right next to the river is limited and the provision of large areas of green space should help to mitigate potential impacts.	x The new residential sites would be in flood zone 3 but there is no history of flooding in this area. Bowers Brook which runs through the area is culverted in this area. The majority of development is on existing hardstanding so there will be so significant increase in runoff.

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
14) To protect, enhance and manage diversity – Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites and habitats of nature conservation value? Will it protect or enhance statutory protected species? Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats? Will it protect or enhance BAP species?	?	?	?
	<p>Whilst a number of greenspaces are to be improved, there is no information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include targets for biodiversity improvements in the preferred option.</p>	<p>Whilst a number of greenspaces are to be improved, there is no information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include targets for biodiversity improvements in the preferred option.</p>	<p>Whilst a number of greenspaces are to be improved, there is no information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>Recommendation: Include targets for biodiversity improvements in the preferred option.</p>
15) To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates – Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal?	x	x	xx
	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process.</p> <p>Recommendation: the preferred option should require implementation of Site Waste Management Plans, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>Reference should also be made to ensuring that there is sufficient space for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process.</p> <p>Recommendation: the preferred option should require implementation of Site Waste Management Plans, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>Reference should also be made to ensuring that there is sufficient space for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process. Due to the extent of the alterations made with this option the levels of waste generated are anticipated to be the highest.</p> <p>Recommendation: the preferred option should require implementation of Site Waste Management Plans, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>Reference should also be made to ensuring that there is sufficient space for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>
16) To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources – Will it minimise the need to travel? Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport? Will it improve air quality?	✓	✓	✓
	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The A533 will become a bus priority zone.</p>	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The A533 will become a bus priority zone.</p>	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The A533 will become a bus priority zone.</p>

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Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
17) To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast – will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance? Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton’s heritage?	?	?	?
	<p>No information is available at this stage regarding building design.</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require the developers to assess the townscape impacts of their developments; undertake an archaeological desk study; and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>	<p>No information is available at this stage regarding building design.</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require the developers to assess the townscape impacts of their developments; undertake an archaeological desk study; and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>	<p>No information is available at this stage regarding building design.</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require the developers to assess the townscape impacts of their developments; undertake an archaeological desk study; and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>
18) To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources – Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings? Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy? Will it use water efficiently and with care? Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy resources?	?	?	?
	<p>New development will use land efficiently through the re-use of brownfield sites. However construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require specific environmental standards to be met. For example BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>	<p>New development will use land efficiently through the re-use of brownfield sites. However construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require specific environmental standards to be met. For example BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>	<p>New development will use land efficiently through the re-use of brownfield sites. However construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require specific environmental standards to be met. For example BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>

APPENDIX E – TESTING THE REVISED PLAN OBJECTIVES

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

KEY

✓ - Compatible x - Incompatible ⊖ - No Links ? - Dependent on nature of implementation measures

Objective						
<p>1 - Image and Place Making – lift perceptions of Widnes and Runcorn, ensure any new development attributable to the catalytic effect of the Bridge, makes a positive enhancement to the character of the locality in terms of design quality and resource use. Build on the strong local sense of community, and place, enhancing and promoting key assets in each of the localities (physical and community)</p>	Regeneration Strategy					
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓				
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖				
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓				
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓				
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓				
	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓				
	<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	⊖				
		<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	✓			
			<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	✓		
				<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	⊖	
					<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	⊖
						<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>
	<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>					
		<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>				
			<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>			
				<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>		
					<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>	
<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>						⊖
	<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>					⊖
		<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>				⊖
			<p>7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p>9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing</p> <p>10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities</p> <p>11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</p> <p>12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities</p>			⊖

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	⓪
		17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⓪
		16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓
		15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	⓪
		14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⓪
		13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⓪
	Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⓪
		11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	✓
		10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
		9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⓪
		8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⓪
		7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	✓
	Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
		5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
		4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓
		3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓
		2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⓪
		1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓
		2 – Accessibility and Sustainable Movement – Increase the catchment area for labour, goods and markets; Facilitate enhanced sustainable movements by pedestrians, cyclists and local vehicular travellers.	

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental		18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	✓
			17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖
			16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⊖
			15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	✓
			14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
			13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖
	Social		12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	✓
			11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖
			10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	⊖
			9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	✓
			8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⊖
			7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖
	Economic		6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
			5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
			4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓
			3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓
			2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖
			1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓
<p>3 - Development and Economic Prosperity – improve the commercial and residential accommodation in the area, having particular regard to local needs, and providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient accommodation. Bring back into use land for new development. Development should use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery of waste.</p>				

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Objective			
Southern Widnes	<p>1 - Re brand Southern Widnes through the creation of high-quality gateway locations with excellent access to the regions principal conurbations and population; development of high-quality, aspirational and affordable housing and services.</p>		
	<p>2 - Facilitating the development of resource efficient high-quality business accommodation, providing mixed-use leisure and recreational facilities, providing resource efficient and affordable housing and upgrading the standard of the public realm including access to high quality greenspace.</p>		
Economic	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓	✓
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖	⊖
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓	✓
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓	✓
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	⊖	⊖
	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓	✓
Social	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖	✓
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⊖	⊖
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	✓	✓
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓	✓
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖	✓
	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	✓	✓
Environmental	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	?	⊖
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖	⊖
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	?	✓
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⊖	⊖
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖	⊖
	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	?	✓

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	⊖	?
		17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖	⊖
		16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⊖	⊖
		15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	⊖	?
		14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖	⊖
		13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖	⊖
	Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	✓	✓
		11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖	⊖
		10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	⊖	✓
		9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖	⊖
		8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⊖	⊖
		7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖	✓
	Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓	✓
		5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	⊖	⊖
		4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓	⊖
		3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓	⊖
		2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	✓	⊖
		1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓	⊖
		3 - Enable local residents to share directly in the wider investment benefits of regeneration – develop local skills and capacity; increase local employment opportunities and reduce worklessness in Southern Widnes. It is important that local employment opportunities must remain, and be further encouraged in the area.		
		4 – To provide investment to support, and develop, training facilities for local sporting provision, incorporating flood lights and changing rooms.		

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	?
		17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖
		16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓
		15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	⊖
		14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
		13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖
	Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	✓
		11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	✓
		10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
		9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖
		8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	?
		7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖
	Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
		5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	⊖
		4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓
		3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓
		2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖
		1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓
<p>5 – To provide an additional access route, served by public transport through the Sustainable Transport Strategy in particular, but also serving new walking and cycling routes into Southern Widnes to negate the existing bottleneck situation, improve east-west connectivity, upgrade links to Widnes Town Centre and the River Mersey and utilise the de-linking of redundant expressways to unlock new development opportunities and reduce the severance and isolation experienced by local communities.</p>			

Southern Widnes Spd Sa Appendices

Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	⊖	⊖
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖	⊖
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⊖	⊖
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	⊖	⊖
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖	⊖
	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖	⊖
Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⊖	⊖
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖	⊖
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	⊖	⊖
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖	⊖
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	✓	⊖
	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖	✓
Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓	⊖
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	⊖	✓
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	⊖	⊖
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	⊖	⊖
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖	✓
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	⊖	⊖
Objective	6 – To improve safety (incorporating Secured by Design principles), and local physical amenities, by upgrading street lighting and the wider public realm within Southern Widnes and the links from this area to Widnes Town Centre.		7 – To create a new heart for Southern Widnes with the consolidation of local retail, services and improved education and health provision.

APPENDIX F – TESTING THE PREFERRED OPTIONS

In carrying out the appraisal of the policies contained within the SPD, matrices have been used to document the predicted effects of the policy against the 18 Sustainability Objectives that have been developed in the earlier stages of the SA process.

For the purpose of this assessment, significant effects are defined as are those which have been identified as very sustainable (✓✓) or very unsustainable (xx) in the assessment.

The following key indicates the symbols and abbreviations that have been used in these matrices.

Abbreviation	Description
Scale of Effect	
L	Local
R	Regional
N	National
G	Global
Permanence of Effect	
T	Temporary
P	Permanent
Timescale	
S	0 – 10 years of the plan
M	10 – 20 years of the plan
L	After the life of the plan
Likelihood of Effect	
H	High
M	Medium
L	Low
Assessment of Effect	
✓✓	Very sustainable
✓	Sustainable
–	Neutral
?	Uncertain
x	Unsustainable
xx	Very unsustainable

Southern Widnes Strategic Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect				Assessment	Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood		
ECONOMIC						
To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate (SA1)	L	P	S-L	H	✓	New office/commercial sites will be created close to the road network. There will be a large area of business improvement and a large site of mixed use development which will create new employment opportunities.
To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment (SA2)	?	?	?	?	?	The development of a new neighbourhood centre is proposed (Policy CC1) which the SPD states should allow for provision of a new skills and training centre (para 5.4), although this is not a specific policy requirement. Vocational training and skills could be provided by linking new construction taking place to apprenticeships at local colleges.
To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development (SA3)	L	P	S-M	H	✓	The improvement of existing business areas and improved access will widen the potential market and customer base and help to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses. The at-grade junctions will facilitate access into the business area. New space will be provided to meet the needs of a variety of different business types and sizes with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of local small and medium sized businesses.
To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business (SA4)	L	P	S-M	H	✓✓	There will be increased accessibility through the provision of two new junctions at grade onto the A533 leading across the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This will help businesses to be more competitive as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers.
SOCIAL						
To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes) (SA5)	L	P	S-L	L	-	Improvements will be made to the streets running under the new Mersey Gateway Bridge to Widnes together with public transport connections to the town centre. However it is unlikely that this would significantly enhance the vitality and viability of Widnes town centre.
To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment (SA6)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	A new Waterside Boulevard and increased greenspace is proposed which will enhance the image of the area. The development of new employment and residential sites will further encourage new investment into the areas. The provision of two new junctions at grade from the A533 will promote the area as a place to access rather than just bypass. Viewing corridors of the Sankey Canal, Spike Island, the Mersey Estuary and the new Mersey Gateway Bridge should be improved.

Southern Widnes SPD SA Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect				Assessment	Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood		
To improve health and reduce health inequalities (SA7)	L	P	S-L	L	<p>✓</p> <p>?</p>	<p>There will be a number of improved green areas including improved leisure uses on Spike Island. A new Waterside Boulevard will also be created. These will both provide valuable amenity space to encourage healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles.</p> <p>However there could be potential negative impacts on health due to the location of some residential areas adjacent to a large industrial site and the A533 which although downgraded will still be a busy road.</p> <p>The new neighbourhood centre may provide health facilities to serve new and existing communities although this is currently not certain.</p>
To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime (SA8)	L	P	S-M	M	✓✓	<p>The provision of new employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. General improvements to the appearance of streets should help to encourage a greater feeling of wellbeing.</p> <p>The provision of a neighbourhood centre could provide activities, particularly for young people who might otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The SPD requires reference to be made to Secured by Design in the development of new housing.</p>
To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing (SA9)	L	P	S	M	✓	<p>The new neighbourhoods will be focussed towards family and affordable housing. This will provide a greater variety of housing types as the property type profile in Halton is skewed towards terraced and semi-detached houses at present.</p> <p>Within the Southern Widnes Character area, new, high quality residential development is supported together with the ongoing programme of investment in existing residential properties.</p> <p>The SPD requires all new residential development to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or higher. This will increase the resource efficiency of the homes. The SPD also requires development to have regard to the Council's Design for New Homes SPD and the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>
To improve access to basic goods, services and	L	P	S	H	✓✓	<p>The SPD aims to create a permeable movement network within Southern Widnes where walking and cycling is promoted. Access will be enhanced through the development of two new junctions at grade on to</p>

Southern Widnes Spu Sa Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect				Assessment	Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood		
amenities (SA10)						<p>the existing A533 leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge. A number of local streets will be improved and public transport connections, pedestrian and cycle crossings will facilitate access to Widnes Town Centre.</p> <p>The Southern Widnes residential area is currently poorly served by retail uses and the new neighbourhood centre aims to improve the convenience goods of the area as well as providing a community function.</p> <p>New retail and leisure facilities are also proposed within the Hutchinson Street area to meet the needs of the new residents.</p>
To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace (SA11)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	<p>Large areas of improved greenspace will be provided. Spike Island will be improved for leisure uses with pedestrian/green routes linking it with existing areas. A new Waterside Boulevard will also be created.</p> <p>The SPD requires residential development to include greenspace provision in accordance with the Council's Provision of Open Spaces SPD and UDP Policy H3.</p>
To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities (SA12)	L	P	S-M	M	✓	<p>Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities.</p> <p>The development of a new Neighbourhood Centre should provide a valuable community facility.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL						
To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and costal waters (SA13)	L	P	S-L	L	×	<p>The new residential sites would be in Flood Zone 3 but the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment states that there is no history of flooding in this area. Bowers Brook which runs through the area is culverted. The area is adjacent to the River Mersey leading to potential flood risk. However the amount of development right next to the river is limited and the provision of large areas of green space should help to mitigate potential impacts. In any event, the SPD requires flood risk to be assessed and, where necessary mitigated.</p> <p>The SPD requires appropriate mitigation measures to be proposed including SuDS to restrict run off to existing rates or better.</p>
To protect, enhance and manage diversity (SA 14)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	<p>The SPD policy aims to protect and enhance the Mersey estuary's habitats (Policy CC4). A number of improvements to open spaces and landscaping are proposed, and the SPD policies require these to enhance the ecological performance of the area (Policy CC8).</p> <p>Woodland planting is also required in accordance with the objectives of Mersey Forest.</p>

Southern Widnes Spu sa Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect				Assessment	Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood		
To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates (SA15)	L	T	S-M	H	-	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process. However, the SPD requires Site Waste Management Plans to be prepared, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>The SPD also aims to create flexible premises that can sustain a variety of uses over time. This should help to reduce the amount of waste in the longer term.</p> <p>The SPD also requires sufficient space to be provided for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>
To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources (SA16)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The A533 will become a bus priority zone and public transport links should be facilitated.</p>
To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets (SA17)	L	P	S-M	M	✓	<p>The SPD requires all future developments within the area to be of the highest design quality, taking into account the character of the area although this is not a specific policy. Key view corridors, including those of St Mary's Church, the Mersey Estuary, the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the new Mersey Gateway Bridge are to be protected and new development should enhance the setting of the listed Catalyst Museum.</p> <p>The SPD requires environmental constraints associated with development to be identified and mitigated, including landscape and visual impacts. An archaeological assessment is required for all planning applications affecting known or potential areas of archaeological interest. Where potential impacts are identified, appropriate measures should be proposed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.</p>
To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources (SA18)	L	P	S-L	H	?	<p>New development will use land efficiently through the re-use of brownfield sites. Whilst construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use the SPD requires new residential development to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and commercial development to achieve a BREEAM rating of Very Good. This should encourage resource efficiency. Renewable energy generation is also encouraged.</p>

Southern Widnes Spina Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect				Assessment	Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood		
Conclusions	<p>The SPD policies and proposals generally perform well against the sustainability objectives, particularly the social and economic objectives through provision of new and improved employment sites, new residential neighbourhoods, provision of local retail facilities, improved greenspace and improved access. The environmental effects should largely be positive providing appropriate assessment and mitigation measures are put in place during the planning approvals process.</p> <p>The Appraisal represented above, is an assessment of the completed proposals. However, the proposals are intended to be developed in three distinct phases. Phase 1 comprises development of the infrastructure associated with the new Mersey Gateway bridge and downgrading of existing infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This Phase is unlikely to bring about any significant sustainability benefits in isolation. Phase 2 includes development around the Hutchinson Street area together with the new Neighbourhood Centre opposite Sankey Island and access improvements. This phase is likely to bring about the majority of sustainability benefits identified above. Phase 3, comprises provision of new employment sites and improvement of the existing light industrial area. This phase would result in economic benefits with associated knock-on social benefits.</p>					

Halton Borough Council

Southern Widnes

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Statement of Consultation

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February 2009

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it is a requirement to prepare and publish a Consultation Statement for a range of planning policy documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This is a reflection of Government's desire to "strengthen community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities".
- 1.2 This Consultation Statement is being made available during the formal period of public consultation, alongside the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report, in accordance with Regulation 17 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

2 Stakeholder Consultation

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation
Waterman Environmental were appointed by Halton Borough Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. As Southern Widnes was recognised as one of the key focal points for regeneration and development within the Regeneration Strategy, it was considered that the SA Framework developed for the Regeneration Strategy remains applicable to the SA of the Southern Widnes SPD.
- 2.2 Consultation on the key issues and SA objectives that emerged from both the existing context of the Southern Widnes area and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy were undertaken in July 2007 with English Heritage, Natural England, and the Environment Agency to confirm that they were in agreement with the findings of the initial stages, and to provide an opportunity to suggest changes to the assessment. Consultation with these bodies is a legal requirement, however, a wider group of stakeholders were also included in the SA Scoping Report consultation. The comments and responses can be found in Appendix C of the Southern Widnes SA.
- 2.3 Stakeholder consultation
The stakeholder consultation took place between 17th December 2008 and 12th January 2009. During this time key stakeholders in the purpose of the Southern Widnes SPD were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the document's content prior to the formal consultation process. A summary list of consultees can be found at the end of this report.

- 2.5 Comments received and the resulting responses and amendments to the draft SPD are contained in the following table:

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para's 2.7 - 2.9	Reference is made to unnecessary /redundant pieces of highway structures. The link between Watkinson Way and the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the existing Ditton flyover will clearly need to be removed. However other roads are described as redundant without any evidence being provided to support this view. A traffic model is available to test different scenarios and should be used. This should give guidance on journey times and distances. We are concerned that benefits to through traffic seem to be at the expense of local people wishing to travel between West Runcorn and the A562 to Liverpool, for example. The traffic model needs to provide information to alleviate these concerns and test the impact of proposals to build 4,000 dwellings in the Runcorn Dock area for example.	The de-linking proposals in the draft SPD are based on the current Mersey Gateway Scheme, which were in turn considered by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Executive Board in June 2008.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.15 Objective 1	West Bank already has excellent access to the region's principal conurbations and infrastructure north of the River Mersey. The opening of a direct link from Waterloo Road to the SJB will provide this excellent access in a southerly direction. The removal of the Ditton Flyover is an integral part of the Mersey Gateway project but further downgrading of Queensway will worsen the northerly links for both West Bank and West Runcorn.	The de-linking proposals in the draft SPD are based on the current Mersey Gateway Scheme, which were in turn considered by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Executive Board in June 2008.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 4.6	Local links across the SJB are only frustrated at peak hours by congestion and not by traffic speed	Accepted - text amended.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 5.24 HS7, 5.31 and 6.9.	Queensway should be downgraded to its 1975 form. Any further downgrading will be extremely expensive and disruptive to this important local route. The estimated cost of highway works is £57 million excluding contingencies and fees and the disruption has not been quantified. The grade separated link between the SJB and Waterloo Road is safer than an at grade junction for cyclists and pedestrians. The local people who currently cross the SJB to use the services in Widnes West Bank area and Runcorn Town Centre will use other centres which do not involve crossing the River Mersey after years of disruption and the need to pay toll charges.	The de-linking proposals in the draft Supplementary Planning Document are based on the current Mersey Gateway Scheme, which were in turn considered by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Executive Board in June 2008.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.1	The estimated cost of the favoured option for West Bank is £347 million. Even at the estimated land values at the beginning of 2008, we consider these proposals are unrealistic.	Noted
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.5	It is unclear how the changes on Victoria Road will improve linkages for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.	This is an aspiration at this stage. This would be a matter for detailed design
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.11	Queensway in West Bank has never been a residential road (para. 6.11) and should not be converted into one. It was purpose built to provide a good link between Runcorn and both Widnes and the Speke Road to Liverpool, which was opened 5 years after the SJB. The objective of the proposals should be to bring the older areas of Runcorn and Widnes closer together. This link needs to be a reasonable standard to provide that function.	Text amended

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	General	<p>This document would benefit from an introductory section on the history and context of Southern Widnes, as included in the Runcorn Town Centre draft SPD.</p> <p>We suggest that the Widnes and Farnworth Archaeological Assessment in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey is used as an information source for this section and is referenced in the document. This document provides a detailed history of Widnes and the surrounding area, and can be found on Cheshire County Council's website at: http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/Planning/Regenerationresources/Historic/NHE_Historic_Halton.htm</p>	Accepted - introductory historic section added in section 2.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Planning Policy Context	This section outlines the relevant policies in the UDP. It includes some built historic environment policies but omits those relevant to archaeology (BE5 and BE6). These are especially relevant as the West Bank area of Widnes is included in the Area of Archaeological Potential identified in the town in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey.	Accepted - additional policy references included.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Development Principles	The development proposals for the Catalyst Centre and West Bank Existing Residential sub areas are appropriate as they recognise the historical elements of the area and seek to preserve and enhance these features.	No further action required.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Development Principles	The boundaries of the character areas as shown on Fig 5.1 do not correspond to the boundaries of the regeneration action areas shown on figures 1.1 and 4.1, as they stretch south to the bank of the Mersey.	Boundaries amended as discussed on plans - note that there is a difference between the Policy RG1 Regeneration Action Area boundary and the SPD boundary.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Development Principles	The inclusion of a map after the description of each area, as in the Runcorn Town Centre SPD, would help to identify which areas are under discussion.	Site references included as appropriate - maps provided in chapter 6

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Delivery & Development Control Matters	The Area of Archaeological Potential defined by the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey covers the West Bank Area of Widnes. This designation is based on the fact that the area includes sites that were occupied before the industrialisation of the area during the 19 th century. In addition, the area contains a variety of industrial remains, evidence for which survives both above and below ground. Any such remains could be damaged or destroyed by new development	Accepted - additional reference included.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Delivery & Development Control Matters - 6.31	The requirement in paragraph 6.31 for the preparation of an archaeological assessment to accompany planning applications that affect areas of archaeological interest and the implementation of appropriate mitigation strategies, where required, prior to the start of development work, represents an appropriate strategy.	No further action required.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/09	Delivery & Development Control Matters	The completion of an archaeological assessment and, if appropriate, a programme of field evaluation prior to the determination of a planning application is important as it allows the need, if any, for further archaeological mitigation to be established at any early stage. Any further archaeological mitigation (excavation, watching brief, etc) may then be secured by an appropriately-worded condition. It is, of course, possible that pre-determination assessment and evaluation will demonstrate that further archaeological mitigation would not be appropriate, in which case this will have been established at an early stage in the development process and no further work will be required.	Accepted - additional detail to be included in section 8.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Planning Policy Context	We note that there is no reference to National and Regional Planning Policy within the SPD. To be a robust document reference should be made to all levels of planning policy. Nationally, we would recommend reference be made to PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control and PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.	Accepted- additional national and regional policy details included in section 4.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Planning Policy Context	Areas of the SPD are located within flood zones 2 and 3 on the Environment Agency Flood Maps and within the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Map 1). We therefore recommend that reference is made to Policy PR16 - Development And Flood Risk, of the Halton UDP within Planning Policy Context. The SPD should also make reference the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which was adopted October 2007.	Accepted - policy reference to be added.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Planning Policy Context	We would recommend that due to areas of historic landfill (notably at Ditton Road, ICI Coal Stockyard, Spike Island) and possible historic contaminative land-use of the SPD area that reference is made to Policy PR14 Contaminated Land, of the Halton UDP.	Accepted - policy reference to be added.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Flood Risk	There is little mention of flood risk as a constraint within the document. Our Flood Maps show much of the area within Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high probability of flooding). PPS25 requires flood risk to be taken into account at all stages in the planning process and ensure inappropriate development is directed away from areas at high risk of flooding. We would recommend that flood risk be discussed in more detail within the SPD.	Additional details and requirements included.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Flood Risk	While the SPD states on page 2 that ' <i>... these policies do not allocate individual sites for specific land-uses...</i> ', we note that the document discusses potential residential development in areas that could fall within Flood Zone 3. Table D.2 of PPS25 states that residential developments are classified as more vulnerable to flood risk. Therefore, in accordance with Table D.3 of PPS25, the exception test will need to be demonstrated and passed for residential proposals. For mixed use development a sequential approach should be made where only part of the site is located within flood zone 2 & 3, ensuring more vulnerable classes of development are steered away from areas of higher risk of flooding. We would object to any planning applications proposing inappropriate development within flood zone 2 & 3.	Accepted - further details included.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Flood Risk	We welcome the inclusion within paragraph 6.28 that Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can be used to ' <i>...restrict surface water run-off to existing rates or better...</i> '. This should be expanded to explain that surface water run-off rates from greenfield sites should be restricted to greenfield rates (including making allowances for climate change).	Accepted - further details included.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Objectives	We welcome the inclusion of bringing back contaminated land in the West Bank of South Widnes (Priority Regeneration Objective 3 – Development and Economic Prosperity). However, in light of the constraints noted within the document (paragraph 6.18, pg 47) and within this letter we would advise an objective that aims to ' <i>... provide appropriate development that fully mitigates all environmental constraints including landscaping, contamination, noise, air quality, water quality, flooding, and visual impacts...</i> ' be included within the document.	Accepted - additional objective added.
Environment Agency	12/01/09	Objectives	We would also welcome greater emphasis to be placed on greenspace and the ecological and recreational benefits that appropriate landscaping can achieve (such as the creation green networks and the expansion and improvement of existing green spaces).	Reference made

- 2.6 A summary list of those consulted as part of the Stakeholder Consultation for the draft Southern Widnes SPD is given below.

Southern Widnes SPD Consultees
Arriva North West & Wales
Bridgewater Canal
British Waterways
C/O St Modwens Developments Ltd
Cheshire Area Health Authority
Cheshire Police
Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Chester & Halton Community NHS Trust
DLA Piper
English Partnerships
English Partnerships Regional Office
Environment Agency
Fire Officer (Warrington)
Giffords
Government Office North West
Groundwork Mersey Valley
Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust
Halton Borough Council Councillors
Halton Borough Transport
Halton Chamber of Commerce
Halton Community Transport
Halton General Hospital Trust
Halton Housing Trust
Halton LSP
Health & Safety Executive
Home Builders Federation
M Farrow - Conservation Officer (CCC)
M Leah - Archaeological Officer (CCC)
Merseytravel
Natural England
Network Rail
North West Water Ltd
Peel Holdings Ltd
Sankey Canal Restoration Society
Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd
Taylor Young
The Inland Waterways Association
Urban Splash

- 2.7 In addition to the above stakeholders, relevant Halton Borough Council Officers were also consulted. These comments have been taken into consideration in the drafting of the Southern Widnes SPD. Officer's comments and responses are available upon request.

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Draft Runcorn Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Approval for Statutory Period of Public Consultation

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the publication of the draft Runcorn Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the purposes of statutory public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The draft Runcorn Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix A) be approved for the purposes of statutory public consultation for a six week period;**
- 2) The comments received at the stakeholder consultation stage, as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix C) and responses to them are noted;**
- 3) Further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect the content of the Supplementary Planning Document be agreed by the Operational Director - Environmental & Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, as necessary, before the document is published for public consultation; and**
- 4) The results of the public consultation exercise and consequent recommended modifications to the draft document be reported back to the Executive Board for resolution to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

- 3.1 The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008) is an important element of the Mersey Gateway Project that builds upon the adopted vision that it is *'more than just a bridge'* but the *'catalyst'* for regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.2 The Regeneration Strategy is concerned with how the bridge can deliver a new context for place-shaping, set the agenda for a sustained economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration programme over the next 20 to 30 years and reconnect the communities of Runcorn and Widnes.
- 3.3 The Regeneration Strategy covers an area in excess of 20 square kilometres within the Borough of Halton, including the Runcorn SPD area. The area was agreed with the Council to provide a statutory planning basis for policy development due to its influence on the Local Development Framework.
- 3.4 Several key elements of this SPD have been informed by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, building upon some of the principles, objectives and development opportunities set out within the document. A number of proposals described in this SPD are therefore based upon the preferred option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Councils Executive Board on 19th June 2008. This is especially relevant for the de-linking arrangements for the Silver Jubilee Bridge adjoining Runcorn Town Centre as described below and in more detail in the draft SPD.

Purpose of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD

- 3.5 This SPD updates and builds upon the Council's previous 1997 Runcorn Town Centre Strategy and the draft Runcorn Old Town SPD drafted in 2007.
- 3.6 In light of the opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway Project and the identification of Runcorn Town Centre as an Action Area for regeneration and development in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, the Runcorn Town Centre SPD has been revisited. This current draft has been prepared by GVA Grimley for the formal stages of public consultation.
- 3.7 The Mersey Gateway Project presents a series of distinct long-term opportunities to maximise the potential for the redevelopment of the Town Centre. These opportunities, as expressed in the Regeneration Strategy, are principally facilitated through the de-linking, or downgrading, of existing road transport infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This would result in some areas of land becoming available for development and enabling the existing road infrastructure into Runcorn Town Centre to be improved.

- 3.8 The purpose of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD is therefore to establish and identify potential development or improvement opportunities within the area that arise from the existing context and the proposals within the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy in order to help sustain the existing community and deliver regeneration benefits to the area.
- 3.9 The proposals set out in the Runcorn Town Centre SPD are specifically designed to:
- Enable Runcorn Town Centre to prosper without damaging the health of any other centres;
 - Safeguard and strengthen the centre's role as a safe and accessible place to shop, work and enjoy;
 - Co-ordinate public and private investment decisions;
 - Improve the economic prosperity of the Borough through the creation of new employment opportunities; and
 - Ensure the highest standards of design and architecture.

Sustainability Appraisal – Appendix B

- 3.4 Waterman Environmental were appointed by Halton Borough Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Runcorn Town Centre SPD in order to meet the requirements of planning legislation and regulations. The main purpose of SA (the combined SEA and SA process) is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects.
- 3.5 The SA Framework developed for the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy incorporated Runcorn Town Centre as one of the key focal points for regeneration and development. It was therefore considered that the SA Framework developed for the Regeneration Strategy would be applicable to the SA of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD.
- 3.6 Key issues and SA objectives for the Runcorn Town Centre area that emerged from both the existing context and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Project were consulted upon in December 2008/January 2009. The comments and responses can be found in Appendix D of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD SA.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 3.7 Required under the European Community Habitats Directive, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) must be undertaken when a project or plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).
- 3.8 A HRA Screening Report was produced in May 2008 as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, which covers the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area. The HRA Screening Report is available upon request.

Statement of Consultation – Appendix C

- 3.7 The requirements of the planning system state that a record be kept of any consultees, their comments, and how they have been taken into account throughout the production of an SPD.
- 3.8 An informal draft of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD was circulated between 17th December 2008 and 12th January 2009 to key stakeholders to comment on the appropriateness of the document's content prior to the formal public consultation process. A list of those consulted, comments received and how these were taken into account is contained within the draft Statement of Consultation (Appendix C of this report).

Next Steps

- 3.9 The SA report, HRA and the draft Statement of Consultation will be made available during the six week formal period of public consultation, alongside the draft Runcorn Town Centre SPD.
- 3.10 Once the formal public consultation exercise has been conducted, the responses will be recorded and taken into account. It is intended that a further report will then be taken to Executive Board, seeking formal adoption of the revised Runcorn Town Centre SPD.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The SPD when adopted will be form part of the Local Development Framework for Halton. The development opportunities set out within this SPD are therefore complementary to relevant saved policies of the Halton UDP and other relevant Council SPDs.
- 4.2 Once adopted the content of this SPD will be a material consideration for the determining of any applicable planning application and so provide Halton Borough Council with greater detail and certainty to control and guide new development within the defined Runcorn Town Centre boundary.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No other implications

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

Children and Young People in Halton

- 6.1 The SPD will help to ensure that children and young people in Runcorn Town Centre grow up and thrive in safe environments and communities.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

- 6.2 Providing locally accessible employment opportunities is recognised in the SPD as a vital component of the redevelopment of Runcorn Town Centre.

A Healthy Halton

- 6.3 The SPD is intended to facilitate the development of a safe, attractive and healthy community that incorporates opportunities for recreation and healthy travel options.

A Safer Halton

- 6.4 The SPD seeks to ensure that Runcorn Town Centre contributes to a Safer Halton by creating and sustaining environments that are well designed, well maintained, safe and valued.

Halton's Urban Renewal

- 6.5 The redevelopment of Runcorn Town Centre is fundamental to Halton's urban renewal. The emerging policy content of the SPD will aid the transformation of Runcorn Town Centre's urban fabric, develop safe and attractive public spaces and create a dynamic and high quality centre that provides employment, commercial, retail and residential opportunities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 No legal or financial risks to the Council can be identified so long as the statutory procedures for the preparation of SPDs are met.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no identifiable equality and diversity implications contained in the SPD.

9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION

- 9.1 These are set out in Section 3, Supporting Information.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 This has been covered by the preparation process of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The SPD will be effective from the date of adoption by the Council's Executive Board.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Saved Policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell
Statement of Community Involvement (2006)	Rutland House	Neil Macfarlane
Draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy SPD (2007)	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Local Development Scheme (2007)	Rutland House	Neil Macfarlane
Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2008)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell
Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (2008)	Rutland House	Andrew Pannell

Runcorn Town Centre

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Draft

P. Watts
Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory Services
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Halton Lea
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Cheshire
WA7 2GW

February 2009

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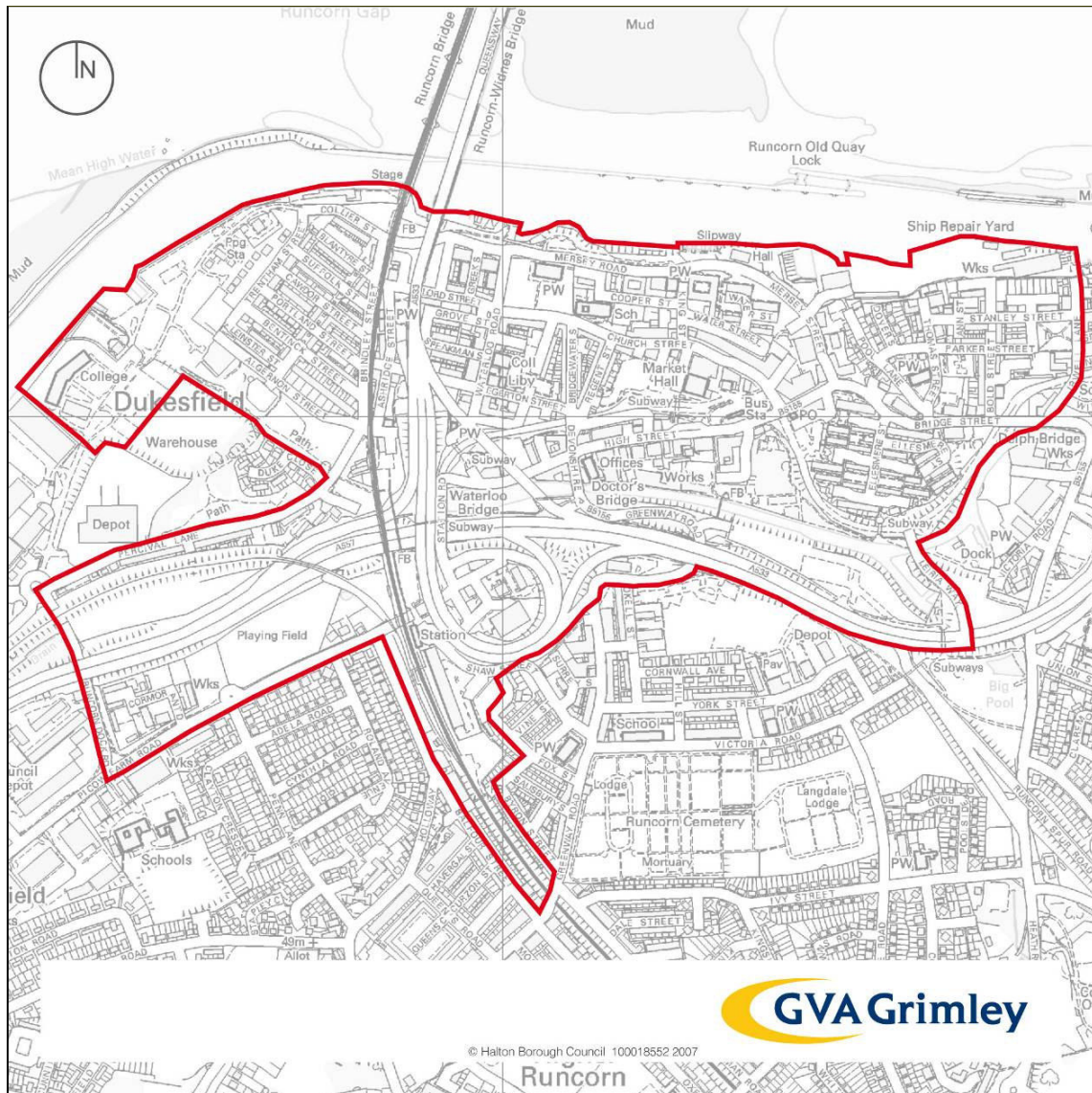
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1. PURPOSE OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This document is a draft version of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Runcorn Town Centre. It has been prepared for the purposes of public consultation and approved by Halton Borough Council's Executive Board Sub-Committee.
- 1.2 Runcorn Town Centre is one of three main shopping locations within Halton Borough. This SPD has been prepared to update and build upon the Council's previous 1997 Town Centre Strategy, dealing specifically with land-use planning matters for the centre. This SPD also develops the opportunities set out within the draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy issued for public consultation in February 2007.
- 1.3 The document serves to provide additional supplementary planning guidance to the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP identifies Runcorn and Weston Docklands as one of six Action Areas within Halton Borough that require significant development or redevelopment to secure their regeneration. The eastern-most parcel of this action area falls within the defined area of Runcorn Town Centre.
- 1.4 There are a range of additional land-use allocations within the defined Runcorn Town Centre area identified on the UDP proposals map. These are referenced in Appendix B. The development opportunities set out within this SPD are therefore complementary to the relevant UDP saved policies, and provide Halton Borough Council, as the determining planning authority, with greater detail and certainty to control and guide new development within the defined boundary shown at figure 1.1.
- 1.5 This SPD has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12: *Local Spatial Planning*. Post-consultation, the draft SPD will be the subject of a Council resolution to formally adopt it as a supplementary planning document, and subsequently form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Halton.
- 1.6 Before this SPD can be used with any weight for development control purposes, it must first be prepared in consultation with the general public, stakeholders and other interested parties, and their views taken into account before it is finalised for adoption.

Figure 1.1: Runcorn Town Centre Area



Purpose

- 1.7 The purpose of this SPD is to complement the adopted policies of the Halton UDP, establishing and identifying potential development or improvement opportunities within Runcorn Town Centre to help sustain the existing community and deliver regeneration benefits within the area. The SPD will specifically lend itself to address the following issues:

- Enable Runcorn Town Centre to prosper without damaging the health of any other centres;
- Safeguard and strengthen the individual role of each town centre as safe and accessible places to shop, work and enjoy;
- Co-ordinate public and private investment decisions;
- Improve the economic prosperity of the Borough through the creation of new employment opportunities; and
- Ensure the highest standard of design and architecture within each town centre.

1.8 The content of this SPD will be used alongside the saved policies of the Halton UDP and other relevant Council Supplementary Planning Documents to determine planning applications submitted to the Council for approval comprising land within the defined Runcorn Town Centre area. It also provides a useful tool for the Council to seek to enhance any development proposals which do not satisfy the principles and policies set out within both this SPD and the UDP.

1.9 All those who have or may have an interest in the vitality and viability of the town centre are encouraged to follow the practical guidance set out within this SPD wherever such opportunities arise, whether or not planning permission or other consents are required.

1.10 This SPD is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, including a Sustainability Appraisal, an Appropriate Assessment (a requirement of the Habitats Directive) and a Statement of Consultation.

Structure of the Document

1.11 The following sections of this SPD are structured to establish the context of Runcorn Town Centre in light of existing national, regional and local planning policy, culminating in the identification of potential land-uses across the area, and the phased delivery of this new development. The delivery of the development opportunities identified within this SPD are supported by the following:

- Strategic policies which will be applied across the centre; and
 - Sub-area policies and proposals which will apply within each of the individual sub-areas.
-

2. CONTEXT AND LOCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Historical Context

- 2.1 Halton Borough has three town centres at Widnes, Runcorn, and Halton Lea. Runcorn Town Centre is the smallest of the three, a quarter of the size of Widnes and Halton Lea, comprising 14,000 sq. m of retail floorspace across c. 160 individual units.
- 2.2 The development of Runcorn Town Centre followed the commercial and industrial growth of Runcorn on the south bank of the Mersey, arising from the development of the Bridgewater Canal in the 1770's, the mainline railway, and the Manchester Ship Canal in the latter half of the 19th century.
- 2.3 The town received a further boost in 1905 at the opening of the transporter bridge, which at the time of construction provided the sole vehicular link between Runcorn and Widnes up to 1961. This development helped to consolidate Runcorn Town Centre as the main town centre in Runcorn, which was home then to a population of c. 30,000.

Figure 2.1: Runcorn Town Centre (1945)



Aerial view of Runcorn Town Centre in 1945 showing original street pattern with Transporter Bridge (top left of image)

Figure 2.2: Transporter Bridge



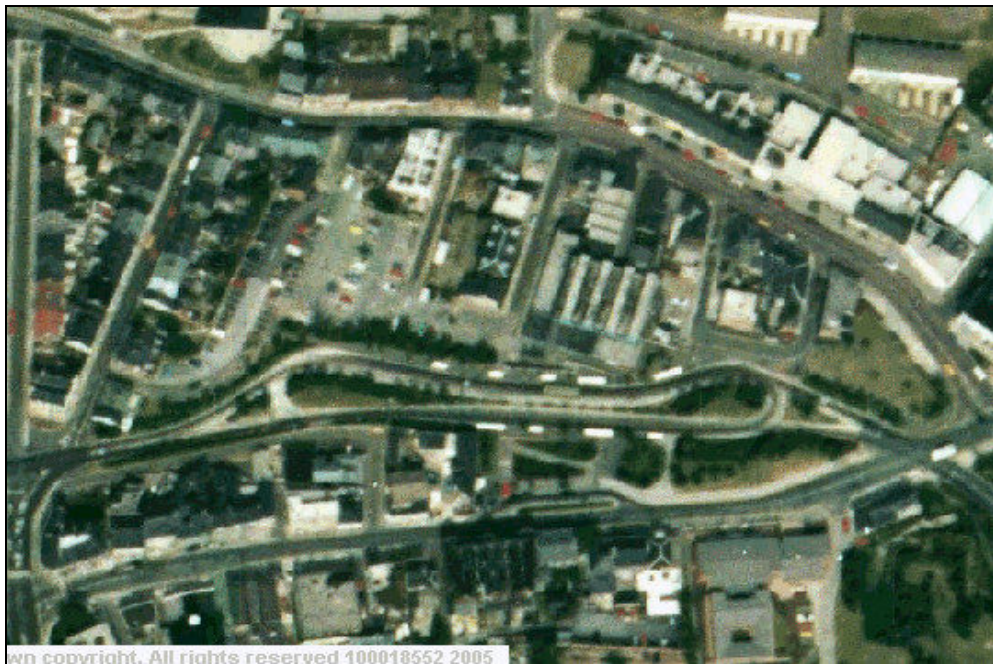
View of the approach to the Transporter Bridge, which provided the sole vehicular link between Runcorn and Widnes until 1961.

- 2.4 Runcorn was designated as a New Town in 1964. This led to the expansion of the town by the New Town Development Corporation, with the creation of new homes, jobs and facilities for c. 70,000 people to the south and east of the town. This increased Runcorn's total population to c 90,000.
- 2.5 The continued growth of Runcorn, on the back of further development by the New Town Development Corporation around this time, did however contribute to the steady decline and neglect of the Town Centre. Chief amongst these were:
- The construction of Shopping City (re-branded as Halton Lea), a purpose-built shopping and commercial centre located 2.5km to the south-east of the Town Centre. The existing Town Centre suffered as a result, becoming a district or large neighbourhood centre.
 - The creation of a segregated busway network that cut through the Town Centre between Church Street and High Street, effectively split the centre in two.

- The creation of a grade separated expressway road network, linked to the Silver Jubilee Bridge across the Mersey. This effectively by-passed the Town Centre following the line of the Bridgewater Canal to reinforce the Canal barrier.
- Redevelopment of land to the south of Church Street to provide a covered market hall and surface level open car park.
- Redevelopment of the buildings along the north side of Church Street, and southern Bridge Street to provide modern flexible unit shops with rear servicing.

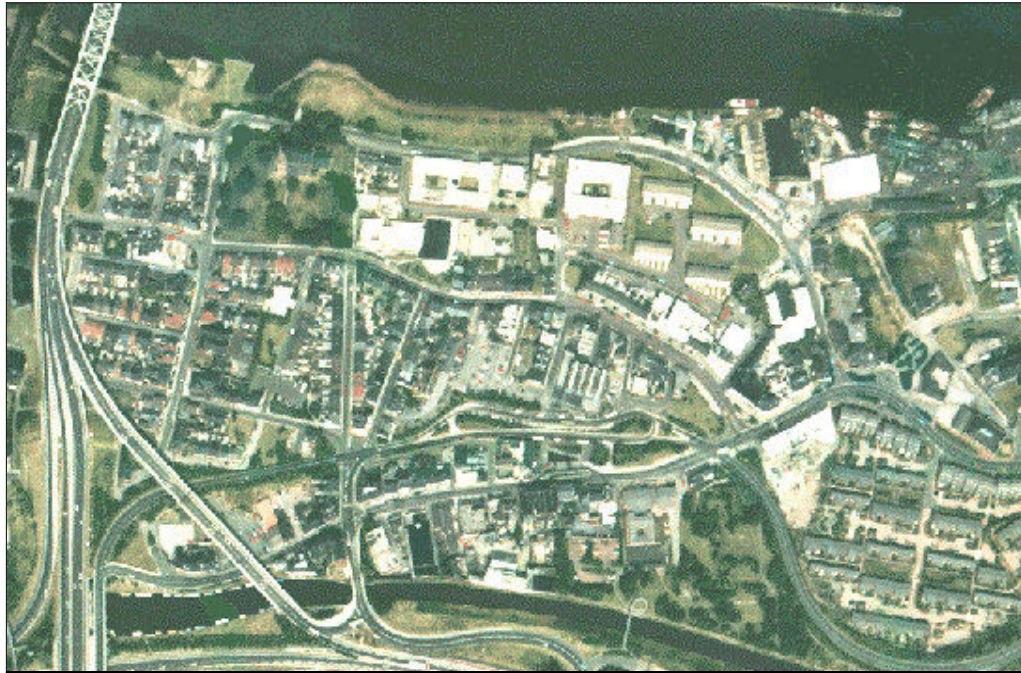
2.6 As a result, the Town Centre struggled for a number of years to adapt to its redefined role within Runcorn's retail hierarchy. This was not helped by the creation of a poorly defined and disjointed physical environment, ultimately leading to a period of neglect and decline.

Figure 2.3: Runcorn Town Centre Central Area (1983)



Aerial view of Runcorn Town Centre central area in 1983 showing the elaborate busway interchange severing linkages between Church Street (top) and High Street (bottom).

Figure 2.4: Runcorn Town Centre (1983)



Aerial view of Runcorn Town centre in 1983 showing new Silver Jubilee Bridge (top left) and expressway network (bottom) effectively bypassing the town centre.

2.7 To address these problems, the Halton Partnerships secured £13 million in 1996 from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Challenge Fund for a package of projects aimed at tackling the historical legacy of industrial decline and the negative effects of the New Town expansion. This bid established four main areas for improvement, as follows:

- To revitalise commercial activity within the Town Centre;
- To revitalise the existing housing stock;
- To revitalise the community, including health, employment and skills; and
- To revitalise the environment, maximising the town's attractive locational attributes and assets.

2.8 This bid facilitated the development of 39 projects between 1996 and 2003, with 75% of funding spent on capital projects including:

- Improved vehicular access via Leiria Way, layout of the town centre, and existing foot and cycle linkages;
- Levering in new retail investment;
- Improvements to the physical appearance of the Town Centre and shop fronts, and canal side locations; and
- Increased levels of activity within the Town Centre, aided through the delivery of new housing stock, a local college, and a new arts centre.

2.9 Each project has thus far delivered benefits to the viability and vitality of the Town Centre. However, significant regeneration and investment is still required.

Figure 2.5: Runcorn Town Centre (2000)



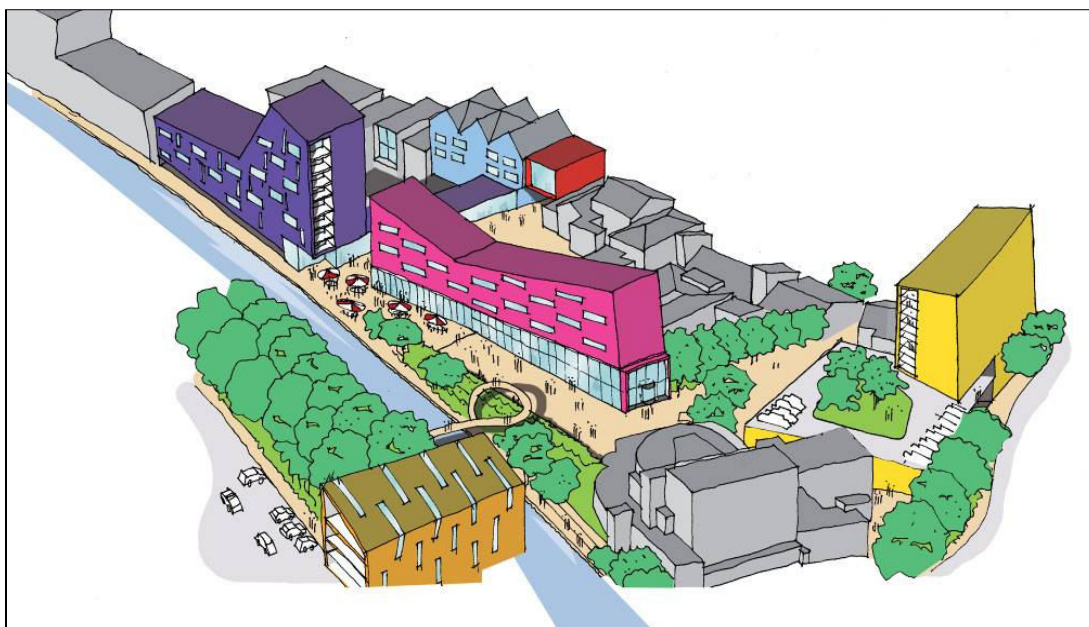
Aerial view of the Town Centre in 2000 showing the new access road from Daresbury Expressway (bottom right) and construction of the new bus station (top right).

Locational Characteristics

- 2.10 The character of Runcorn Town Centre can be broken down into a number of discrete sub-areas largely defined by the underlying topography and the layout of streets, roads, waterways and the railway.
- 2.11 There is a recurring theme of poor circulation and poor permeability, a by-product of the transport networks which converge upon the town at the crossing point of the river Mersey, creating physical barriers to access (see Figure 2.7).
- 2.12 The character of the Town Centre is defined by the quality of the views to the north, which offer an impressive sense of scale with some of the best views found on the north facing Runcorn slopes, which lie above the older town.
- 2.13 The Promenade to the north of Mersey Road includes waterside pocket parks, visitor car parking and some limited interpretation boards from which excellent views of the Mersey and the Silver Jubilee Bridge can be enjoyed. 466 new apartments (by Bryant Homes – The Deck) are also currently under construction to the east of the promenade.
- 2.14 The Bridgewater Canal is located to the south of the town centre and has recently received a number of improvements under the Bridgewater Way Programme – a leisure scheme aimed at regenerating the waterside area along Runcorn’s length of the Bridgewater Canal as part of a wider transformation, connecting numerous communities along the 39 miles stretch of waterway.
- 2.15 Complementary investment has also led to the opening of the Brindley Arts Centre on the north bank of the Bridgewater Canal, which currently terminates at the Runcorn Basin to the west. In former times the Bridgewater Canal continued westwards and joined the Manchester Ship Canal. The original route and alignment of the canal (now dismantled beyond the Runcorn Basin) is protected from development under current planning policy, although the alignment and layout of the “Runcorn loops” of the expressway (leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge) currently limits the opportunity for the original route to be reopened.
- 2.16 Within the town centre, an emerging Canal Quarter now straddles the Bridgewater Canal incorporating land to the rear of High Street and south of the town. A developer competition was conducted in 2005, with Urban Splash selected as the preferred developer for the area. Following this, Alfred Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) were the winners of the architectural competition which culminated in an exhibition of eight submissions at The Brindley Arts Centre in March 2006.

- 2.17 To date, AHMM have produced a feasibility study outlining the scheme and a number of options for the various parts of the site. The current scheme includes a library and public square adjacent to the Brindley Arts Centre, mixed use retail, office and residential accommodation behind and on High Street and terraced housing on the Southern site. The housing on the Southern site was proposed to take the form of apartments in the competition entry, although there is flexibility. However, for the site to be entirely residential is only possible if the North and South site are delivered in tandem, with leisure provided on the North site.

Figure 2.6: Canal Quarter - North Bank Proposal Sketch



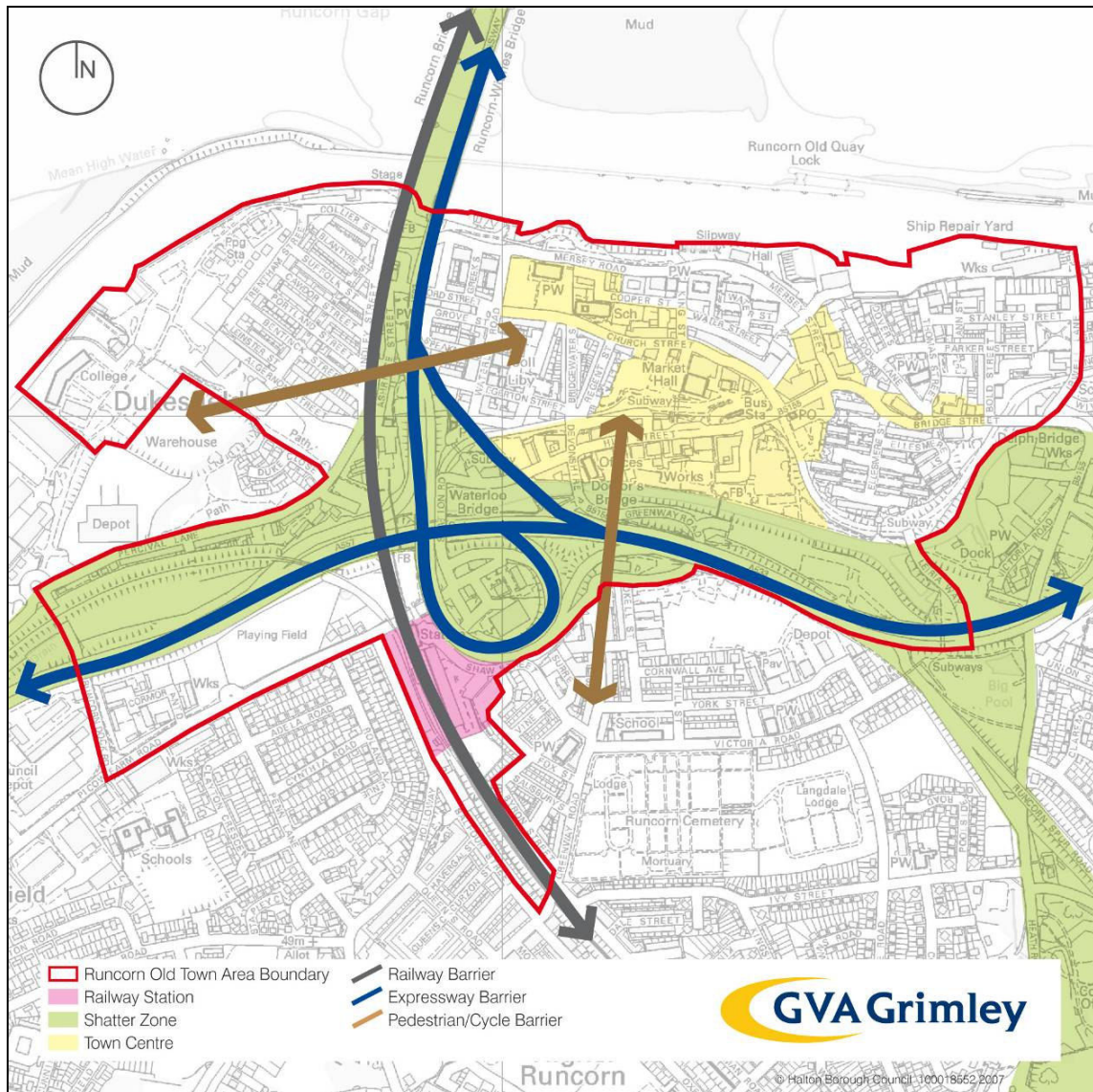
Source: Halton Borough Council

- 2.18 In developing the scheme, English Partnerships have funded site investigations, a commercial viability study and a parking and access study.
- 2.19 Development Agreement negotiations are set to conclude in 2008, followed by a planning application and funding application in 2009. Halton Borough Council will continue to acquire properties, where possible, on High Street (Camden Buildings) which fall within the scheme boundary.

-
- 2.20 The proposed waterside developments at the Canal Quarter and at the Deck overlooking the Mersey Estuary will complement the town's convenience centre helping to create nodes of activity stimulated by the waterside character of the town.
- 2.21 The Town Centre has a mixed character and is laid out around well-defined streets, with the changes of level giving the town its own sense of place. The buildings are predominantly small-scale. The town's transport infrastructure makes the area distinctive with the Silver Jubilee Bridge acting as a local 'iconic' structure.
- 2.22 As the smallest of the Borough's three centres, Runcorn Town Centre serves as the dominant convenience centre within Runcorn's local catchment and is increasingly seen as performing a district centre role.
- 2.23 The prominence of the location of the area is however frustrated by a number of site constraints which comprise the following:
- Contamination: Halton Borough Council recently produced a Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review (2006), which recognised the risks to development of potential contamination within the town and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to management of such risk. The Review will take the Strategy through to 2011. Hence, sites identified as suitable for development are subject to varying degrees of risk associated with land contamination due to the legacy of past chemical works in the area.
 - Flood Risk: The Flood map affecting this area is available on the Environment Agency's web site <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>.
 - Bridgewater Canal: The canal segregates the Town Centre from the main residential locations to the South therefore acting as a constraint on development and limiting access opportunities into and out of the Town Centre.
 - The Daresbury Expressway: The expressway road network, which includes grade-separated routes, has effectively created a large barrier between the town and the residential suburbs lying to the south.
 - The Railway Infrastructure: Expansive elevated rail structures physically segregate one local area to the next. The poor pedestrian routes are shared primarily with vehicles, yet are preferable to subways. Examples include low quality connections between the Station, traditional residential areas (west of the railway) and also between the houses and Runcorn Basin. Pedestrian routes are also diverted along convoluted routes using subways and stairways to circumnavigate the expressway.

2.24 The following plan illustrates the main physical constraints within Runcorn Town Centre.

Figure 2.7: Runcorn Town Centre Constraints Plan



3. THE MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT

- 3.1 A key characteristic of the local area is the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB), a Grade II listed structure linking the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes. However, the Bridge is now operating beyond its capacity at over 80,000 vehicles every weekday, significantly exceeding its original operational capacity, thus creating a congestion bottleneck during peak hours.
- 3.2 To relieve the increasing problem of congestion, Halton Borough Council is promoting the delivery of a New Mersey Gateway Crossing across the River Mersey, situated c. 1.8km upstream of the SJB¹.
- 3.3 The case for an additional crossing of the Mersey at Halton dates as far back as 1978, in which a number of options for route alignment have been considered culminating in the submission of a Major Scheme Appraisal to the Department for Transport in July 2003 as part of Halton's Local Transport Plan.
- 3.4 The vision for the Mersey Gateway is that it is *'more than just a bridge'* but the *'catalyst'* that will connect communities and lead to regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.5 The main objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project are to:
- relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local traffic needs;
 - apply minimum toll charges to both Mersey Gateway and the Silver Jubilee Bridge consistent with the amount required to satisfy affordability constraints and to manage road travel demand to ensure the delivery of transport and environmental benefits by maintaining free flow traffic conditions on the MG and SJB;
 - improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities;
 - improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment; and
 - improve public transport links across the river and to encourage the increased use of cycling and walking; and

¹ Halton Borough Council has also produced a Parking and Access Study (2008) for the authority inclusive of access plans to improve accessibility throughout Halton.

- restore effective network resilience for transport across the River Mersey.

3.6 The reconfiguration of public transport and sustainable movement modes will be achieved through the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS). The principal objective of the STS is to *'identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of Halton's Local Transport Plan and the Mersey Gateway Project'*.

The Route

- 3.7 The scheme comprises 2.4 km of new dual 3-lane highway, a major river estuary crossing and several crossings of other obstacles (i.e. road, canals and a railway).
- 3.8 From the existing A562 Speke Road, the route would head eastwards towards a new junction called the Ditton Interchange, which would replace the Ditton roundabout. It would cross St Helens Canal, Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, Astmoor Saltmarsh and Wigg Island, as well as the Mersey Estuary itself, before turning southwards over the Manchester Ship Canal and across Astmoor Industrial Estate on the southern side of the river. It would connect into the existing road network in Runcorn by joining the Central Expressway and would join up with the M56 Motorway at Junction 12 to the south of Runcorn.

De-Linking Arrangements

- 3.9 The Mersey Gateway Project would reduce the volume of traffic crossing the Silver Jubilee Bridge by directing the natural movement of through traffic over the new crossing, a process known as 'delinking' from the strategic highway network, which will require the physical process of removing unnecessary pieces of highway infrastructure.
- 3.10 Significant analysis has been undertaken to establish the potential de-linking arrangements for Runcorn Town Centre and to investigate the benefits and opportunities which would arise through the removal of redundant infrastructure as compared to leaving the existing link roads in place.
- 3.11 The preferred option for de-linking is shown in figure 3.1 and presents the indicative routes that would be formed through the removal of the redundant infrastructure – namely the 'Runcorn Loops' and the A533 flyover. Key features of this preferred option are set out in the following paragraphs.

Local Accessibility

- 3.12 The de-linking process would remove the direct links to the Silver Jubilee Bridge encouraging non-local traffic to use the Mersey Gateway, resulting in significantly less congestion and traffic flow and returning Runcorn Town Centre infrastructure to local uses. This would ultimately improve local access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge from the local highway network and provide a local link across the river between Widnes and Runcorn.
- 3.13 The preferred approach would improve local vehicular, pedestrian and cycling links connecting the town centre with the Station, Higher Runcorn, West Runcorn and each other. Improved pedestrian and cycle links would also provide direct access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge and existing designated routes.
- 3.14 In terms of public transport the de-linking arrangements support existing bus routes and development opportunities likely to generate additional demand for public transport. Enhanced public transport interchange facilities at Runcorn Station would be provided by at-grade access and general accessibility improvements.
- 3.15 The removal of redundant infrastructure would also result in safer pedestrian and cycling routes without underpasses.

Regeneration and Development Opportunities

- 3.16 The preferred approach for de-linking maximises the potential for development and regeneration in the area. An indication of the areas available for regeneration for the preferred option is estimated at 3.4 hectares as compared to an estimate of 1.7 hectares to leaving the existing link roads in place.
- 3.17 The preferred approach also offers enhanced development and land-use potential through accessibility improvements as a result of the de-linking process and access to national rail services. A higher density of development would also be supported with less parking and reduced reliance on road links given good accessibility to public transport.
- 3.18 In addition, the preferred de-linking option allows for the re-joining of the Bridgewater Canal with the Manchester Ship Canal, which was previously restricted by the height of the A533 approach to the existing SJB.

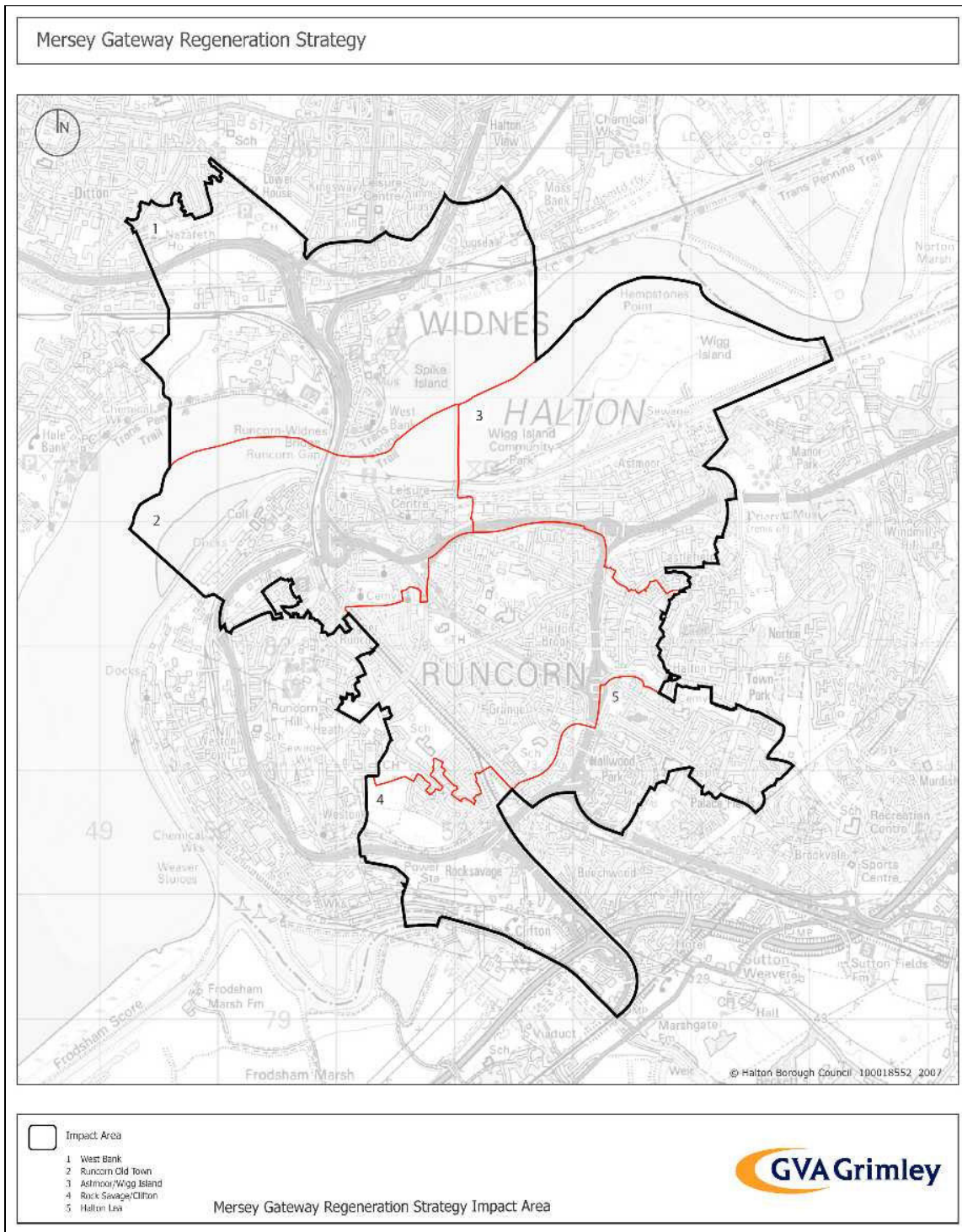
Figure 3.1: De-Linking Preferred Option



The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

- 3.19 The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (May, 2008) is an important element of the Mersey Gateway project. Based on the adopted vision of 'more than just a bridge', it is concerned with how the bridge can deliver a new context for place-shaping, set the agenda for a sustained economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration programme over the next 20 to 30 years and reconnect the communities of Runcorn and Widnes and facilitate regeneration and investment throughout Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool City Region and the North West.
- 3.20 The Regeneration Strategy is **Bold**; it is **Challenging** and it will **Change Perceptions**:
- **Bold** – A visionary and ambitious holistic framework for investment in Halton within a detailed phased 20-year delivery horizon, setting the agenda for new capital and revenue investment based upon the opportunities that the Mersey Gateway will create;
 - **Challenging** – A plan for dealing with some of the most contaminated and constrained land in the country, as part of an ambitious place-shaping regeneration programme, based upon the opportunities that the Mersey Gateway will create;
 - **Changing Perceptions** – Setting a new agenda for investment in delivering a place that people can be proud of and that people aspire to live and work in, invest and spend time.
- 3.21 The Regeneration Strategy covers an area in excess of 20 square kilometres within the borough of Halton (figure 3.2), including the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area. The Regeneration Strategy also incorporates Halton Lea Town Centre, Astmoor Industrial Estate, Rocksavage and Clifton and also includes the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge as well as the proposed route of the new Mersey Gateway.
- 3.22 The area was agreed with the Council to provide a statutory planning basis for policy development due to its influence on the Local Development Framework. Several key elements of this SPD have been informed by the Regeneration Strategy, building upon some of the principles, objectives and development opportunities in the document.

Figure 3.2: Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy – Area of Influence



4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section of the SPD outlines the planning policy context applicable to all emerging development proposals within the defined Runcorn Town Centre area. This SPD revises and updates the previous Runcorn Town Centre Strategy prepared in 1997, and the draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy SPD published in 2007. The saved policies of the Halton UDP should be read alongside this document as a whole as other generic policies, not addressed within this SPD, will also be of relevance in determining and future development proposals. This SPD should also be read in conjunction with other relevant Council planning policy and corporate documents.

4.2 Planning policy of relevance to new development within Runcorn Town Centre is set out at three tiers; national; regional; and local. Those policies of direct relevance to the regeneration and redevelopment of Runcorn Town Centre are discussed below:

National Policy

4.3 **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): *Delivering Sustainable Development***, states that planning policy should promote the delivery of high-quality design through new developments. It recognises the need to focus development that attracts a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion, and sustainable patterns of development.

4.4 **Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1*** sets out the contribution of spatial planning to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change when providing for new development and infrastructure to serve the needs of communities. The guidance aims to:

- Ensure planning policy contributes towards the Government's Climate Change Programme;
- Deliver energy efficient homes;
- Deliver sustainable patterns of urban growth; and
- Secure developments that shape places resilient to the effects of climate change in ways consistent with social cohesion and inclusion.

- 4.5 Government policy on new retail development is set out within **PPS6: *Planning for Town Centres***. This establishes the key objective to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by virtue of:
- Planning for the growth and development of existing centres;
 - Promoting and enhancing existing centres, focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all;
 - Delivering more sustainable patterns of development, ensuring that locations are fully exploited through high-density, mixed-use development; and
 - Promoting sustainable transport choices, including reducing the need to travel and providing viable alternatives to the private car.
- 4.6 To deliver the Government's key objectives, PPS6 requires proposals for town centre uses outside of existing centre's to demonstrate the need for development that it is of an appropriate scale, sequentially compliant and accessible, and will not unacceptably impact upon the vitality and viability of existing centre's.
- 4.7 **PPS9: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*** refers to the role of urban renaissance in enhancing biodiversity. The guidance specifically states that development proposals should;
- Promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development;
 - Conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat;
 - Enhance biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people's sense of well-being; and
 - Ensure that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.
- 4.8 **PPS23: *Planning and Pollution Control*** seeks to ensure the sustainable and beneficial use of land. Within this aim, polluting activities that are necessary for wider social and economic reasons should be carefully sited and planned, and subject to such planning conditions so that their adverse effects are minimised and contained within acceptable limits.

- 4.9 PPS23 states that the planning system should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, and the impacts of those uses, rather than the control of processes or emissions.
- 4.10 The presence of ground contamination is considered to affect or restrict the beneficial use of land, though development can present an opportunity to deal with it. Where land is affected by contamination, *“development can provide an opportunity to address the problem for the benefit of the wider community and bring the land back into beneficial use.”*
- 4.11 The Governments objectives for contaminated land are set out in DEFRA Circular 01/2006, *Contaminated Land*. These include:
- a. *to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;*
 - b. *to seek to bring damaged land back into beneficial use; and*
 - c. *to seek to ensure that the cost burdens faced by individuals companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and economically sustainable.*

Regional Policy

- 4.12 Regional planning policy for the North West is set out in the North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008). RSS comprises several policies of direct relevance to the regeneration objectives of Runcorn Town Centre, as follows:
- 4.13 **Policy DP1 (Spatial Principles)** sets out the key principles underpinning the RSS, namely:
- Promote sustainable communities;
 - Promote sustainable economic development;
 - Make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure;
 - Manage travel demand, reduce the need to travel, and increase accessibility;
 - Marry opportunity and need;
 - Promote environmental quality;
 - Mainstreaming rural issues;
 - Reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

- 4.14 **Policy DP4 (Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure)** affords priority to developments in line with the regional and sub-regional spatial framework set out in Policy RDF1. Developments are required to conform to the following sequential approach:
- (i) using existing buildings and previously developed land;
 - (ii) using other suitable infill opportunities; and
 - (iii) the development of other land where this is well-located in relation to housing, jobs, other services and infrastructure.
- 4.15 The accompanying text advises that the re-use of disused land and buildings, where appropriate, is vital to enhancing the image of the North West.
- 4.16 **Policy W5 (Retail Development)** promotes retail investment consistent with the scale and function of centres so not to *"undermine the vitality and viability of any other centre or result in the creation of unsustainable shopping patterns"*. Although this policy makes no specific reference to retail investment within Runcorn, the accompanying text states that this *"does not preclude the investment of resources in other centres particularly where this will assist in the regeneration of the centre and the wider area"*.
- 4.17 **Policy RDF1 (Spatial Priorities)** affords priority for growth and development within the regional centres of Manchester and Liverpool, and then the inner areas surrounding these regional centres. Runcorn is afforded third tier priority for growth and development, focused in and around its town centre.
- 4.18 **Policy LCR3 (Outer part of the Liverpool City Region)** refers to the outer part of the Liverpool City Region, beyond the city centre and its inner areas. The policy aims to focus economic development in towns and cities, including Runcorn.
- 4.19 **Policy EM3 (Green Infrastructure)** requires schemes to incorporate environmental and socio-economic benefits by:
- Conserving and managing existing green infrastructure;
 - Creating new green infrastructure; and
 - Enhancing its functionality, quality, connectivity and accessibility.

Local Policy

- 4.20 The saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provide the planning policy framework for the Borough, specifically in respect of its social, economic and environmental development.
- 4.21 The UDP contains a number of strategic aims and objectives, set out in Part 1 of the UDP. These include **Policy S14**, which promotes the delivery of a New Crossing over the River Mersey to relieve congestion on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, and form part of an integrated transport system for Halton. With respect to Halton's town centres, they include the aim to increase their vitality and viability, and the need to ensure that no retail development is permitted within one town centre which would seriously harm the success of another.
- 4.22 Part 2 UDP policies seek to implement the broad aims and objectives contained within Part 1. Those directly relevant to this SPD are as follows:

Policy TC1 – Retail and Leisure Allocations

- 4.23 This policy sets out the Borough's retail and leisure allocations, based on an assessment of need and a sequential approach to site selection. Runcorn Town Centre includes several retail and leisure allocations, namely:
- Central Area – Mixed retail (A1, A2, A3);
 - Land rear of 59-69 High Street – Leisure (D2), retail (A1, A2, A3), first floor residential and offices;
 - Camden Gardens – Leisure (D2), theatre;
 - Crosville Bus Depot – Leisure (D2), food and drink (A3); and
 - Land at Chapel Street – Retail warehousing (non food), food and drink (A3), hotel, offices.

Policy TC2 – Retail Development to the Edge of Designated Shopping Centres

- 4.24 This policy introduces criteria for assessing when new retail development will be permitted on the edge of centre locations. Retail proposals located to the edge of the retail core of existing centres will be required to demonstrate that there is quantitative and qualitative need for the additional facilities, and that there are no suitable sites available within the retail core of the centre in question. In addition, new development should be located within easy walking distance, and serve to enhance the shopping environment.

Policy TC4 – Retail Development within Designated Shopping Areas

- 4.25 Retail development within Primary Shopping Areas and designated neighbourhood centres will be permitted provided that proposals contribute to the centre's vitality and viability, and are of a size and scale commensurate to the character and function of the centre. The most appropriate location for many local shops will be in existing neighbourhood centres.

Policy TC5 – Design of Retail Development

- 4.26 This policy establishes the design criteria for considering new retail development and extensions. Retail development is required to contribute positively to the environmental quality of the Borough's town centres as well as develop and enhance local character. Retail schemes of good design will help to strengthen and promote the town centre's viability and attractiveness.

Policy TC6 – Out of Centre Retail Development

- 4.27 This policy sets out the criteria to assess out of centre retail proposals, including small-scale retail developments, to meet local needs. The UDP is clear in its aims and objectives that retail development should be located within existing town centres in order to safeguard the continued viability of those centres, and to aid their regeneration by enhancing their vitality and viability. Proposals for out of centre retail development will need to comply with the policy tests set out in TC6.

Policy TC8 – Non-Retail Uses within Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas

- 4.28 This policy permits Class A2 (financial and professional services) and Class A3 (sale of food and drink) uses and other appropriate non-retail uses at ground floor level within Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas, the number and concentration of which is subject to the requirements of Runcorn Town Centre. Within Runcorn's Primary Shopping Area, up to approximately 20% of outlets should be Class A2 and Class A3 and other appropriate non-retail town centre uses. Within Runcorn's Secondary Shopping Area, up to approximately 50% of outlets should be Class A2 and Class A3 and other appropriate non-retail town centre uses.

Policy TC10 – Runcorn Town Centre Mixed Uses Area

- 4.29 The following uses will be permitted within the Mixed Town Centre Uses Area of Runcorn:
- [Financial and Professional Services \(A2\)](#);

- Food and Drink (A3);
- Business uses (B1);
- Hotels (C1);
- Residential Institutions (C2);
- Dwelling Houses (C3) as part of a mixed development, where appropriate;
- Non-residential institutions (D1);
- Assembly and leisure (D2);
- Retail (A1) provided it would serve local needs; and
- Other non-retail uses appropriate to a town centre.

Policy LTC1 – Development of Major Leisure and Community Facilities within Designated Shopping Centres

- 4.30 Proposals for major leisure and community facilities within Primary and Secondary shopping areas will be permitted provided they are of a size and scale appropriate to the character and function of the centre, and contribute to the centres vitality and viability. These should be located in areas accessible by public transport, and help contribute to the attractiveness of the Borough's town centres outside of shopping hours.

Policy LTC2 – Development of Major Leisure and Community Facilities on the edge of Shopping Centres

- 4.31 Proposals for major leisure and community facilities located to the edge of primary and secondary shopping areas will be permitted subject to satisfying specific criteria. This will include demonstrating that there is a quantitative and qualitative need for the additional facilities, and that no suitable sites are available within the primary and secondary shopping areas in question. Proposals should be minded to take into account walking distances and linkages to and from the proposed site, public transport interchanges, and shopping areas. Edge of centre leisure proposals must not only be within easy walking distance, but also serve to enhance the quality of the local shopping environment.

Policy LTC3 – Development of Major Leisure and Community Facilities in out of centre locations

- 4.32 Proposals for major leisure and community facilities within out of centre locations will not be permitted unless all criteria can be satisfied. This includes demonstrating a need for

development, that it would not affect the vitality and viability of the town centres, and that the site is accessible by a choice of transport modes other than the car thus reducing the need to travel.

Policy TP16 – Green Travel Plans

- 4.33 This policy requires all new development proposals comprising jobs, shopping and services which are likely to generate significant employment opportunities to include proposals for a Green Travel Plan.
- 4.34 The UDP seeks to implement these objectives as spatial policies and proposals, where appropriate.

General Policy

- 4.35 Other UDP land-uses policies relating to development around the defined Runcorn Town Centre area can also contribute to the regeneration aims for the area; to promote social, economic and environmental regeneration. These are set out within Appendix B.

Local Development Framework

- 4.36 The Halton LDF is intended to replace the UDP as the principal planning policy framework for Halton over the next few years. In the meantime – under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – it is necessary to continue to ‘save’ a number of UDP policies until replaced, merged or deleted as appropriate by emerging LDF documents.
- 4.37 The Council’s Local Development Scheme (2007)² provides details on key emerging Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relevant to development within Runcorn Town Centre, as follows:

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- **Core Strategy (DPD)** – this will establish the vision and objectives for future spatial development across the Borough, scheduled for adoption in 2009;

² The Council’s Local Development Scheme is subject to annual review through the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report, and in line with the new PPS 12: *Local Spatial Planning* (June 2008), thus the projected dates for preparation of these documents may be subject to change.

- **New Residential Development (DPD)** – this will allocate sites for residential development within Halton, and comprise detailed policies on the delivery of new housing provision. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;
- **New Employment Development (DPD)** – this will allocate future employment sites across the Borough alongside an accompanying policy framework. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;
- **New Retail and Leisure Development (DPD)** – this will allocate sites for retail and employment development, incorporating specific policies to control the delivery of these facilities. Scheduled for adoption in 2012;
- **Runcorn and Western Docklands Regeneration Area (DPD)** – this will provide detailed guidance for the comprehensive development or redevelopment of the Runcorn and Weston Docks area. Scheduled for adoption in 2011.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

4.38 There are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (adopted and emerging) that will be of relevance to development proposals within the defined Runcorn Town Centre area. Key amongst these are:

- Shop Fronts, Signage and Advertising;
- Designing for Community Safety;
- Design and of New Industrial and Commercial Development;
- Design of New Residential Development;
- Transport and Accessibility;
- Provision of Open Space; and
- Affordable Housing.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

4.39 The Council's SCI was adopted in July 2006, outlining the consultation process to be applied by the Council in the preparation of its future Local Development Documents. This SPD will be consulted upon in accordance with the provisions of the SCI.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

4.40 The Runcorn Town Centre SPD is intended to contribute towards the implementation of the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy (2006). This Strategy co-ordinates the resources of local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes. The vision of the Strategy is that;

“Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.”

4.41 The SCS also includes a priority for the borough titled ‘Halton’s Urban Renewal’ with an objective *“to revitalise the town centres to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors.”*

4.42 Halton Borough Council is committed to contributing to achieving the priorities of the SCS. The Council’s priorities are set out in the Corporate Plan. This plan also has five priorities, including ‘urban renewal.’

4.43 The priorities in the SCS and the Corporate Plan are based on the priorities set by the people of Halton. These were identified through community involvement via area panels, focus groups, and a telephone survey. The Corporate Plan was based on the same community involvement and statistical information compiled for the State of the Borough Report, 2005.

Waterside Strategy

4.44 The Waterside Strategy was launched in March 2005. As it relates to Runcorn Town Centre, it seeks to achieve the better integration of the waterside frontages into the town centre to achieve the following broad aims:

- Environmental improvements;
- Generate additional economic activity;
- Bring derelict and underused sites into active high-quality uses;
- Develop a brand image for the Town Centre based upon its canal heritage;
- Create a leisure, retail and commercial focus on the Bridgewater Canal with secondary residential; and

- Create a residential focus on the Manchester Ship Canal, with ancillary retail and commercial.

4.45 This SPD seeks to build upon the strategic aims of the Waterside Strategy to help achieve a more cohesive town centre that relates better to its canal frontages.

Local Transport Plan 2

4.46 The Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006/07 – 2010/11 states that the ability of local people to access work, learning, healthcare, shopping, leisure and exercise can significantly impact on their quality of life and opportunities. The Local Transport Plan contains four shared priorities, as follows:

- *Tackling Congestion* – to facilitate the emerging regeneration of Runcorn and Widnes, there is the need to address the problem of congestion arising from increased levels of car ownership to deliver a freer flowing road network and associated economic and quality of life benefits. The delivery of a second Mersey crossing is recognised as an important means of addressing localised road congestion, alongside traffic management, public transport improvements, walking and cycling, and travel planning/smarter choices.
- *Delivering Accessibility* – the ability of people to access places of work, learning, healthcare, shopping, leisure and exercise can significantly enhance the quality of life. Schemes and initiatives to improve accessibility to important services and amenities are encouraged in the Local Transport Plan.
- *Safer Roads* – a key Government target is to reduce the number of annual road casualties across UK roads. The provision of a safe environment and reducing the impact of traffic on local communities is a key ambition, delivered through a range of traffic safety, traffic calming and speed management measures.
- *Better Air Quality* – reducing the environmental impact of road-based transportation is a driving ambition of European policy, adopted at local level through the Local Transport Plan. Opportunities to promote alternative transport modes are encouraged, notably walking, cycling, and public transport.

4.47 Helping to ensure that people can access the services which they need and want is not just a matter of improving local transport, but also of improving the provision of other services and developments in more accessible places at more accessible times. In addition, good access is a crucial element in attracting new businesses to relocate to the area or to establish themselves. The LTP is aimed at meeting the targets in the SCS - clearly this demonstrates

that both this SPD and the LTP are ultimately trying to achieve the same goals and each will benefit the other.

Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan

4.48 The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process is the current system for the protection, conservation and enhancement of wildlife in the United Kingdom. As part of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Halton's BAP – of relevance to the Runcorn Town Centre area – focuses on:

- [Wildlife Corridors](#); and
- [Action Areas for People & Nature](#).

4.49 Development proposals within the defined Runcorn Town Centre area will be required to have regard to these policy provisions.

5. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The vision for this SPD is to:

're-establish Runcorn Town Centre as a vibrant waterside location that provides for the day to day shopping needs of it's immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to the neighbouring town centre, as a focus for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers, and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity'.

5.2 It is important to build upon the existing strengths of the Town Centre. It has the potential to develop as a 'market town' where its special historic location - on the banks of the River Mersey - can be used to create a vibrant place to live, shop or visit, defined by its waterway, rail and road networks.

5.3 Underpinning the vision is a strong economic rationale. A focus for this growth is within the business services sector, with the Town Centre well placed physically to benefit from growth when considering the accessibility opportunity offered by Runcorn Station - providing direct rail links to London, Birmingham and Liverpool.

5.4 Yet, at present, the Town Centre lacks the commercial, retail and leisure offer to fully take advantage of future opportunities. At present there is a necessity to rationalise the existing transport infrastructure providing access into, and out of, the Town – particularly the overcomplicated road system. The expansive elevated and 'loops' structures that link the Daresbury Expressway to the SJB impede movement from one local area to the next. In particular a number of unsatisfactory routes form low quality connections between the Railway Station, traditional residential areas (west of the railway) and also between the houses and Runcorn Basin. Pedestrian and cycle movement is also diverted along convoluted routes using subways and stairways to navigate the expressway. It is these deficiencies that the SPD principally looks to address.

5.5 Building on this vision, this SPD provides an opportunity for under-utilised or vacant land in the Town Centre to be brought forward to support the economic aspirations of the area by diversifying the residential offer, offering mixed use employment and commercial space alongside a revitalised public realm sympathetic to the 'market town' tendencies of the area.

Existing Opportunities

5.6 To inform the preparation of this SPD, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the existing Town Centre has been undertaken and is reproduced at Appendix C. The main findings from the SWOT analysis are:

a) Strengths

5.7 Runcorn Town Centre is the dominant convenience centre within its local catchment. The centre has developed a strong complementary role to Halton Lea specialising in financial and professional services with specialist traders also increasingly evident. Shop fronts and environment are generally very good and there are below average vacancies. Recent developments have improved the centres appeal.

b) Weaknesses

5.8 The Town Centre lacks mainstream offer with few national multiples present. The centre lacks identity or prominence and suffers from convoluted access routes, poor legibility (differentiation & linkages between areas), poor signage and fails to maximise on its key environmental assets. Parking in the central core car parks and the commercial streets surrounding them is quite congested on a weekday, where there can be little if any spare capacity between 9am and 3pm. This is limiting capacity for higher-value short-stay parking in this central retail location

c) Opportunities

5.9 There is remaining capacity to support additional convenience goods retailing to further consolidate the centres strength in this area. Current development proposals at the Canal Quarter and The Deck together with remaining central development sites present great opportunities to build upon the recent successes of the Central Area redevelopment and the Brindley Arts Centre. These should create a more cohesive and attractive centre, consolidating its retail role and developing an enhanced leisure and cultural functions throughout the day and into the evening. The operation of the existing town centre parking offer would benefit from a system whereby much of the existing long-stay parking was displaced into the spare capacity of the outer car parks. Further, the opportunity to introduce car parking charging and enforcement measures warrant further investigation.

d) Threats

- 5.10 Increased retail competition from surrounding centres (Halton Lea, Widnes and Liverpool), and in leisure terms from Widnes, Frodsham and Stockton Heath. Failure to fully integrate new developments whereby they act as stand-alone developments without generating wider 'spin-off' benefits for the centre as a whole. The need to build on and carry forward the achievements from the previous SRB backed investment (i.e. maintaining the shop frontages/street scene improvements to the same high standard). Introduction of parking management and restrictions for central car parks increases the threat of overspill of parking uses into areas surrounding the Town Centre.
- 5.11 Analysis of the factors above has informed the development of a primary series of Objectives to deliver the regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre, which are to be implemented imminently.
- 5.12 Furthermore, the long-term ambition of the Mersey Gateway Project, detailed in chapter 4, enables the facilitation and development of a related and interconnected set of Objectives, which will act as a catalyst in achieving the vision of this SPD.

Priority Regeneration Objectives

- 5.13 A number of priority regeneration objectives for Runcorn Town Centre have emerged from both the existing context, and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. These are as follows:
- **Objective 1 – Enhance Employment Role:** Initiate physical redevelopment of Runcorn Station Gateway for high value employment uses, following environmental and secured by design principles utilising the improved access and visibility, achieved through de-linking of A553 (and 'loops') infrastructure.
 - **Objective 2 – Expand Specialist Retail & Leisure Role:** Providing accommodation and development opportunities for the refocusing of the role of the Town Centre for specialist niche traders to complement the roles of the boroughs other town centres and capitalise on the 'market town' appeal. Initiate physical opportunities for the development of leisure uses in the Town Centre– particularly in the new Canal Quarter- to develop a vibrant, cultural and safe day and night-time economy building on the achievements at The Brindley.
 - **Objective 3 – Improve Community Facilities:** Provide opportunities for the development of improved services and public realm upgrades across the Town Centre. This should focus on protecting, managing and enhancing the cultural, built and natural environment and promoting cycle and walking facilities between the Station, Town Centre, surrounding

residential neighbourhoods and the waterside. Re-open the closed section of the Bridgewater Canal to meet the Manchester Ship Canal for business and leisure travel uses. Utilise the Halton Parking & Access (2008) study to achieve improved parking and accessibility.

- **Objective 4 – Enhance Public Transport:** Rationalise the existing A553 road infrastructure through de-linking providing improved and simplified bus access to Runcorn Town Centre and Runcorn Rail Station via the Town Viaduct and High Street and new Station Gateway Quarter³. Consider options to re-model the existing bus station to enhance circulation.
- **Objective 5 – Increase & Diversify Housing Offer:** Increase, and diversify, the housing offer within Runcorn, providing resource efficient and affordable housing – with a particular focus on developing sites made available through infrastructure removal in Runcorn Town Centre to meet forecast population expansion. Build on waterfront achievements at The Deck to encourage the appropriate and economically viable development of housing within the Canal Quarter. This would establish a north-south activity corridor that supports food, drink and complementary uses for the sustainability and wider regeneration of the Town Centre and expand the user-base of the Town Centre’s retail and leisure offer.
- **Objective 6 – Sustainable Development:** To use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing re-use, recycling and recovery of waste.

³ Halton Borough Council have established a ‘de-linking Topic Group’ to consult on the rationalisation of the A553 infrastructure.

6. STRATEGIC POLICIES

- 6.1 The following Strategic Policies are applicable to all new development proposals within the defined Runcorn Town Centre. As a SPD, this document cannot formally designate sites for development.
- 6.2 However, it is able to identify development principles for existing opportunities. Sites that are identified as new opportunities can, if necessary, be taken forward as designations through the Local Development Framework.

Strategic Policy: SP1

Opportunities to enhance the environment and increase the localised population by infill residential development (including as part of appropriate mixed-use schemes) should be identified and promoted.

- 6.3 An increased population will provide additional customers for convenience businesses, increase footfall and activity levels, and provide a more vibrant atmosphere.

Strategic Policy: SP2

The Town Centre's role within its localised catchment should be protected and enhanced wherever possible. Opportunities for additional convenience provision should be identified and promoted.

- 6.4 The Council will undertake periodic retail capacity studies to identify any quantitative and qualitative gaps in provision to inform the provision of up-to-date development plan policies.

Strategic Policy: SP3

The Town Centre should build upon its strong complementary retail role to Halton Lea, providing a location for uses not well catered for within its larger neighbour, particularly retail services and specialist or niche retailers, serving the needs of the whole community.

- 6.5 Developments that maintain or enhance the centre's specialist retail offer will be for the private market.

Strategic Policy: SP4

The Town Centre should build upon its complementary leisure role to Halton Lea, providing a location for uses not well catered for within its larger neighbour, particularly entertainment, leisure and food and drink. Opportunities exist, building upon the success of the Brindley Arts Centre, to develop the cultural and leisure role of the centre creating a safe and attractive day and evening destination serving the needs of the whole community, and reducing the need to travel outside of the Borough to competing destinations.

Strategic Policy: SP5

The Canal Quarter and The Deck developments should facilitate the introduction of a new north/south activity corridor, incorporating Public Hall Street, capable of attracting and supporting food, drink and complementary uses building upon the successes of the Brindley Arts Centre, waterside environmental improvements and promoting the Town Centre as a cultural, leisure and entertainment destination to the benefit of the whole community.

- 6.6 The Council recognises the strong opportunity for the development of enhanced leisure facilities within the centre, building upon the success of the Brindley Arts Centre and utilising the areas waterside frontages and other environmental assets.
- 6.7 The commercial and passive leisure developments and improvements at the Canal Quarter and The Deck / Promenade provide an opportunity to establish better links between the two waterside locations, helping to integrate the centre as a whole and introducing a north-south leisure orientated activity corridor.
- 6.8 The Council recognises that opportunities to re-model the existing bus station to support improved accessibility, circulation and the introduction of a new north/south activity corridor should be encouraged and supported.

Strategic Policy: SP6

Opportunities to develop new leisure based activities based around or on the Bridgewater Canal, including developments associated with the potential re-opening of the Runcorn Locks and/or the creation of a second Cheshire Canal Ring should be encouraged and supported.

- 6.9 The Bridgewater Canal remains navigable, and provides valuable opportunities for waterborne and waterside leisure activities.
- 6.10 The revised access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge arising from the proposed Mersey Gateway Project de-linking works will result in the removal of the current highway that blocks the route of the Bridgewater Canal. These works will open up the opportunity to re-instate this section of the canal route.
- 6.11 In the longer term, there is the possibility of re-establishing the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring.' Such a route is likely to be very attractive to leisure craft and holiday-makers. Runcorn basin would become a layover point for craft waiting to enter the lock 'staircase' creating opportunities for commercial activities to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors.
- 6.12 Developments that maintain or enhance the centre's waterborne or canalside leisure offer will be for the private market. Policy GE29 of the UDP places a presumption against development that would prejudice the operation or attractiveness of the canal environments.

Strategic Policy: SP7

Applications for Change of Use and those required to be supported by a Design and Access Statement will be expected to demonstrate that their proposed development either:

- **Contributes positively towards the aims of reducing greenhouse gas emissions; or**
- **Represents the most appropriate environmental solution.**

- 6.13 The issues surrounding climate change and 'global warming' are among the most problematic facing modern society worldwide. In order to ensure that the Borough is developed in a sustainable manner and minimise its contribution to climate change, it is important that even minor developments are located within appropriate locations to minimise the need to travel, and designed and constructed to minimise their energy requirements.
- 6.14 Policies S10 and BE1 of the UDP require development proposals to clearly demonstrate how they will minimise greenhouse gas emissions and how their detailed proposals will maximise efficiency in the use of resources. Design and Access Statements will provide the appropriate

mechanism to demonstrate that environmental issues have been adequately addressed through the application proposals.

Strategic Policy: SP8

Improve pedestrian and cycling linkages within the centre and from surrounding areas by:

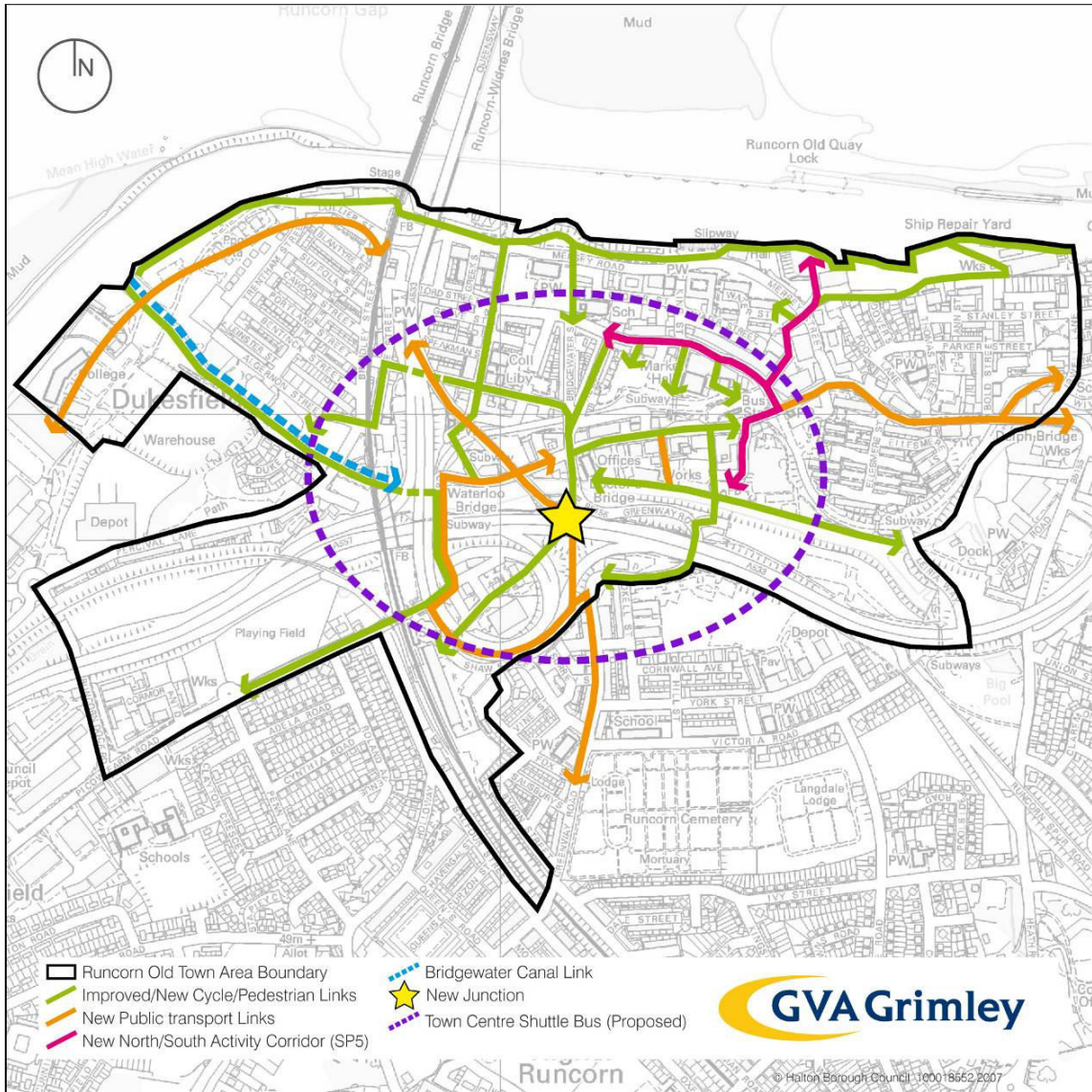
- The enhancement of existing pedestrian and cycling routes; and
- The creation of a new network of pedestrian and cycle paths within the centre, including:
 - along the proposed new north-south activity corridor from the Brindley Arts Centre to the Promenade;
 - from Runcorn Station to the High Street, Regent Street, Central Area, Church Street and the Promenade sub areas;
 - from the High Street sub-area to Runcorn Docks; and
 - from the Bridge Street sub-area along the Promenade to Runcorn Docks to the west of the Town Centre.
- Linkage of new routes with strategic cycle network through the proposals of the Halton Sustainable Transport Strategy.

6.15 The Council will seek contributions for this from all new developments within the Town Centre through planning obligations. This may include contributions towards parking, and travel planning (trip demand management), which should be examined in Transport Assessments submitted as part planning applications.

6.16 Recent improvements generated by the central area redevelopment have created the opportunity to fully integrate the different elements of the town centre. Further improvements to the footpath and cycle network are required to fully realise this aim.

6.17 The Council will seek planning obligations from all major new developments within the town centre areas to provide contributions towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment. This will include the improvement of linkages to surrounding areas by the enhancement of footpaths and cycle linkages, as shown on Figure 6.1 overleaf.

Figure 6.1: Runcorn Town Centre Movement Plan



Strategic Policy: SP9

Development of sites incorporating or adjoining greenways should be in accordance with the provisions of UDP policy TP9.

- 6.18 Halton's greenway network is made up of proposed and potential off-road routes for walking, cycling and where appropriate, horse-riding. These connect people to facilities and green spaces.
- 6.19 Development proposals which incorporate a greenway will be expected to enhance the condition and appearance of proposed routes and implement potential routes. Where proposed development adjoins a greenway, extensions and improvements to the network will be sought through negotiation.

Strategic Policy: SP10

The supply of safe and attractive short-stay shopper's car parking is essential to the vitality of the centre. The Canal Quarter redevelopment and/or other schemes significantly affecting the existing provision or likely demand for parking should contribute to the development and subsequent implementation of a comprehensive access and parking study. This study will also need to address issues of long stay car parking for traders and commuters.

- 6.20 The availability of short-stay car parking has been identified as a major issue for the centre. Almost a third of cars are parked for seven or more hours, limiting the spaces available to other visitors during the day.
- 6.21 Where any development scheme is demonstrated to significantly alter the existing parking provision or the demand for parking spaces, it will be expected to contribute to, or conform to, a comprehensive Access and Parking Study. The results of this Study will be used to inform the work of the Parking Partnership⁴.

Strategic Policy: SP11

Develop a Parking Partnership with all private car park operators within the centre that will review and monitor the demand for, provision and management of car parking

⁴ Halton Borough Council has now produced a Parking and Access Study for Runcorn Town Centre – however, this is subject to approval by the Council's Executive Board. As redevelopments occur, the Parking and Access Study will require updating as appropriate.

spaces. All new developments will be required to provide adequate car parking provision, adopting a co-ordinated approach having regard to additional sites for development arising from the Mersey Gateway Project.

- 6.22 The Local Transport Plan identifies that the Council will seek to develop a Parking Partnership with private car parking operators. This is important in and around the Town Centre where much of the car parking provision is in private control.
- 6.23 Long stay car parking, either by rail commuters or local shop staff is believed to be a significant issue affecting the centre. Long stay parking obviously restricts the availability and convenience of parking for shoppers and others visiting the centre during the day to conduct their business.
- 6.24 The largest Council owned car park (to the rear of High Street) is scheduled for redevelopment. Whilst the Canal Quarter development will be expected to provide a level of replacement provision, this will probably be in private hands.
- 6.25 The Council will seek to facilitate the development of a co-ordinated approach to parking management within the centre by developing a Parking Partnership, involving the main parking operators within the centre.

Strategic Policy: SP12

Environmental and frontage improvements secured through the previous SRB programme should be maintained and where possible enhanced by public and private sector partners and stakeholders as appropriate.

- 6.26 The frontage improvements secured during the SRB programme continue to have a beneficial effect on the centre, with very few individual shop fronts being adjudged to be of poor quality.
- 6.27 Any proposals for new shop fronts are expected to be of high quality in accordance with policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the UDP and the Shop Fronts, Signage and Advertising SPD.
- 6.28 Following SRB, NRF and WNF funding, there will be continued investment in Commercial Property Improvements with the benefit of a grant scheme.

Strategic Policy: SP13

All new developments must include secure, concealed bin storage, and all existing units will be encouraged to create secure, concealed bin storage areas.

- 6.29 Secure, concealed bin storage areas are required within the town centre to reduce the risk of arson and to improve the general appearance of the area.
- 6.30 Policy BE1 of the Halton UDP requires that development must be designed to minimise the risk of crime; not cause unacceptable pollution or nuisance; and must provide for waste storage and collection in a suitably screened and enclosed area.

Strategic Policy: SP14

Proposals should, where possible, increase the quality and quantity of public art within the Town Centre.

- 6.31 UDP Policy BE2 states that developers should take account of the provision of public art and the integration of art and craft work into the design of development schemes. Supporting text to the policy explains that the Council will actively encourage developers to spend a percentage of the total development cost or a fixed amount of money on providing art and craftwork and, on seeking the influence of artists and craft skills alongside architects and building professionals, to ensure integration of art and craftwork features as an essential part of the design.
- 6.32 In accordance with policy BE2, the Council will seek all new development within the centre to allocate 1% of the total development costs towards the enhancement of public art within the Town Centre. This will be required to be either directly provided on or off site; or via a commuted sum towards the provision of public art in the defined area. All public art must be demonstrated to be provided within a publicly accessible or visible locality. Where appropriate, maintenance and other revenue implications will be taken into account when provision relates to a specific work of public art.

Strategic Policy: SP15

Provide a co-ordinated approach to the future provision of street furniture and ensure that it is usable by all members of the public, is well located and does not cause a safety issue. The Council will consider the development of a 'design palette' to secure uniformity to create a better visually more integrated centre.

- 6.33 The provision of street furniture needs to be well managed and co-ordinated. It will also need to be durable, easy to maintain and fit for purpose, and placed with consideration to ensure that it will contribute to the aesthetic and functional qualities of public spaces.

- 6.34 Furthermore, the use of a co-ordinated 'design palette' will help to visually integrate the centre, reduce visual clutter, and produce a more welcoming environment.
- 6.35 The Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of high-quality and co-ordinated street furniture.

Strategic Policy: SP16

Key points of vehicular and pedestrian access into the town centre should be enhanced with attractive entrance features such as landscaping, art forms or other 'gateway' features.

- 6.36 These gateways should also be well linked to the town centre through the use of appropriate routes, signage and lighting. They are displayed spatially in Figure 5.1. Environmental enhancement to High Street in particular is perceived as important to upgrade the quality of public realm in the town centre.
- 6.37 Key vehicular and cycle 'gateways' include:
- Bridge Street;
 - Leiria Way;
 - Greenway Road / Devonshire Place;
 - New Station Gateway Quarter / Greenway Road;
 - Station Road / Devonshire Place.
- 6.38 Additional key pedestrian access 'gateways' include:
- High Street Bus Station;
 - Bridgewater Canal footbridge;
 - Bridgewater Canal towpaths;
 - St. John's Brow;
 - Victoria Road / Runcorn Spur Road underpass;
 - Mersey Road;
 - New Station Gateway Quarter / Greenway Road / Bridgewater Street;

- Promenade;
- Picow Farm Road / Station Road.

6.39 Key internal nodes, sub-zone interfaces include:

- High Street / Church Street junction;
- Church Street / Granville Street / King Street;
- Regent Street;
- High Street / Canal Quarter routes;
- High Street / Station Gateway Quarter routes
- Central Area car park / entrances;
- Brindley Plaza.

6.40 The overall importance and significance of key gateways into and out of town centres are often overlooked. The first impressions of visitors to the town centre, whether arriving by car, public transport, on foot or bicycle is of great importance. The quality and appearance of approach routes and the outer edge that the town centre presents to the 'outside world' are crucial to the formation of a positive town centre image and identity.

6.41 In its role as both highways authority and local planning authority, the Council will seek to improve these gateways into the Town Centre, particularly from Runcorn Station, using planning obligations from town centre development to make the town centre more attractive to both pedestrians and car users.

Strategic Policy: SP17

All new developments should make suitable provision for safe and convenient cycle access linked to existing or proposed routes where the opportunity exists, and provide for convenient, safe, secure and covered cycle parking that is likely to be attractive to potential users in line with UDP policy TP6.

6.42 An important element of encouraging the greater use of sustainable forms of transport is the availability of alternatives. The provision of new cycle facilities should ensure that any bicycles are safe from theft and are not causing a hazard to other road/footpath users.

- 6.43 Where the provision of cycle lockers is not practicable, for reasons of security, 'Sheffield' style bicycle racks will be required in preference to the less secure 'butterfly' designs.
- 6.44 Where development proposals require off-site access improvements, or the development is incapable or unsuitable for the on-site provision of cycle parking either due to site constraints or highway safety issues, payment in lieu of on-site provision as part of a planning obligation may be acceptable.

Strategic Policy: SP18

Improve directional signage to and within the town centre, in accordance with the provisions of the Parking and Access Study. All signage should be co-ordinated to ensure a consistent approach is taken to design, location and naming across the Town Centre.

- 6.45 Road linkages into and around the Town Centre can be very confusing for visitors to navigate. This can make it very difficult for visitors to find their way into the centre and then gain a sense of where they are in relation to other parts of the centre, or how to find their way back out. Whilst some improvements have taken place already to improve accessibility, better directional signage would be beneficial both in terms of updating and further additions.
- 6.46 The development of the Mersey Gateway project and the de-linking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge will prompt a comprehensive overhaul of the current key vehicular access points, which should streamline the arrangements.
- 6.47 Halton Borough Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of appropriate signage.

Strategic Policy: SP19

Applications for new development likely to attract significant visitor numbers will be expected to provide locations for, or contribute towards, the maintenance or enhancement of the centre's CCTV security system to the benefit of the public safety and the operation of the centre as a whole.

- 6.48 The provision of CCTV coverage helps both in deterring crime and anti-social behaviour and in reducing the fear of crime.

- 6.49 New development may aid the provision of an effective CCTV network by providing mounting or fixing points for cameras or contributing to the provision of the service. These matters are dealt with in more detail in the Community Safety SPD.
- 6.50 Halton Borough Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre likely to attract significant visitor numbers to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of CCTV coverage.

Strategic Policy: SP20

Recycling facilities should be rationalised and/or improved.

- 6.51 At present, recycling facilities are located to the rear of Somerfield in the Central Area car park and smaller facilities at Leiria Way and Top Locks car park.
- 6.52 The Leiria Way facility in particular is not ideal, having a limited capacity, and thus would benefit from replacement or improvement. The policy does not preclude the development of additional recycling facilities, as appropriate, in connection with further developments.
- 6.53 The Council will seek opportunities, possibly in conjunction with existing operators or new developments, to secure the rationalisation or improvement to recycling facilities provided within the centre.

Strategic Policy: SP21

All new developments or redevelopments must not prejudice the comprehensive development opportunities attributable to the Mersey Gateway Project.

- 6.54 The Council recognises the strong opportunity for the holistic redevelopment and enhancement of the Town Centre offered by the Mersey Gateway Project. Any proposals for development or redevelopment that may prejudice such opportunities, particularly in relation to the Station Gateway Quarter, will not be accepted.

Strategic Policy: SP22

All new development proposals should seek to protect and enhance ecological and biodiversity features where possible.

- 6.55 The enhancement of the local environment to support the wider regeneration of the Town Centre is an important ingredient to ensure its long-term sustainability. Proposals should

adhere to the relevant policies of the UDP to ensure the retention and enhancement of important ecological features, and maximise the opportunity to enhance biodiversity.

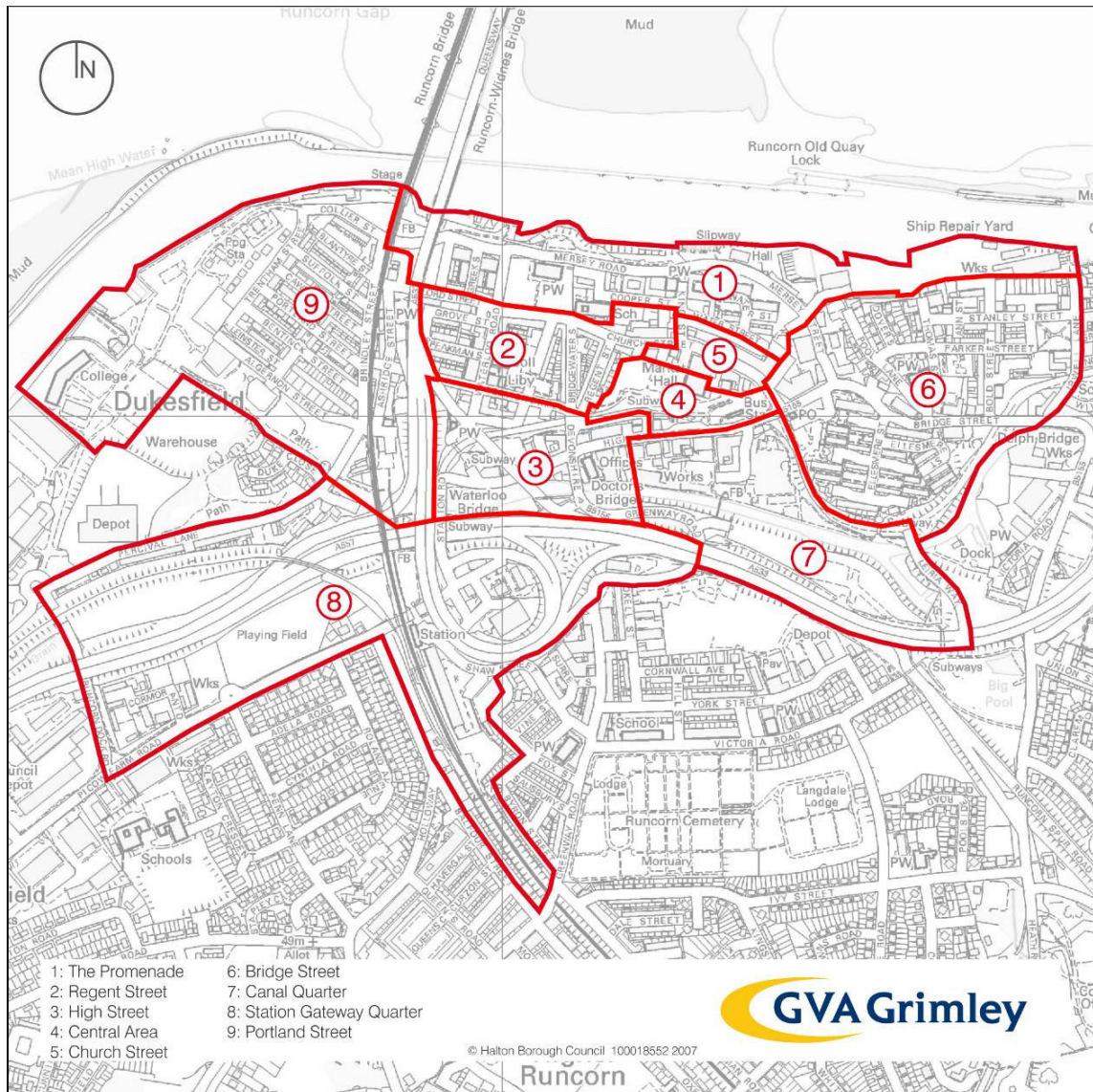
- 6.56 Where appropriate development proposals should include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to minimise the risk of flooding and protect the quality of water courses.

7. SUB-AREA POLICIES

7.1 This section of the SPD sets out a number of key principles and overarching development principles which will apply to the redevelopment of Runcorn Town Centre. It comprises detailed SPD policy, outlining the development proposals for a number of sub-areas (Figure 7.1 provides a visual overview), including:

- Promenade and The Deck
- Regent Street and western approaches
- High Street
- Central Area
- Church Street
- Bridge Street and eastern approaches
- Canal Quarter and southern fringes
- Station Gateway Quarter
- Portland Street - Dukesfield

Figure 7.1 Runcorn Town Centre Sub-Areas

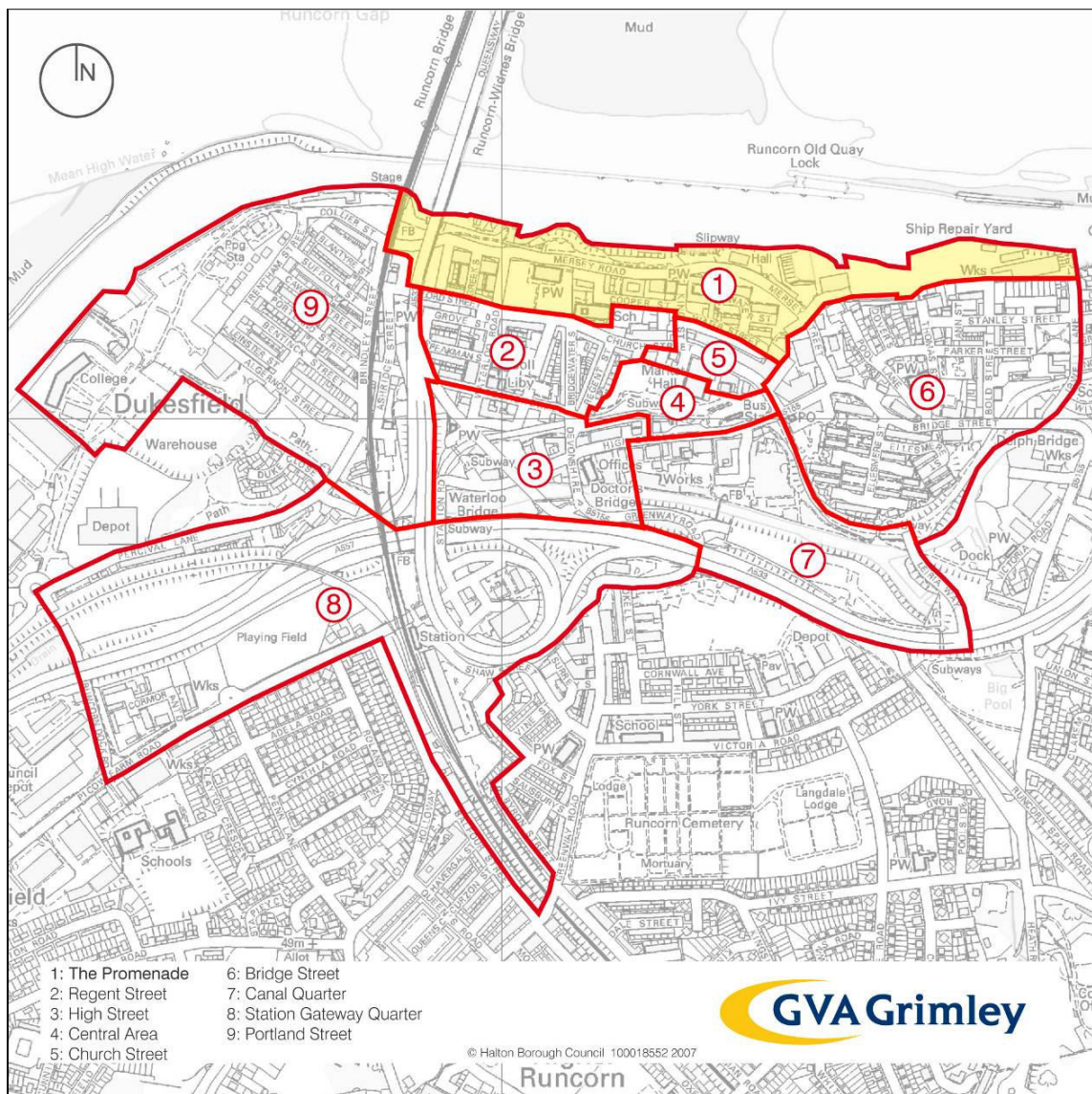


Promenade and The Deck

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.2 The Town Centre benefits from a large waterside frontage along the southern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, with the River Mersey beyond. Access between and views through from the main retail and activity areas to the promenade and beyond are largely blocked by intervening development.
- 7.3 This area forms the northern extent of the town centre fronting the Manchester Ship Canal, with the River Mersey beyond. The area encompasses the recently improved ½ mile promenade stretching to Dukesfield to the west and “The Deck” residential development site to the east comprising 466 waterside apartments with 3 units for complementary commercial uses. Within this area are also located the Grade II* Church of All Saints, and a substation (formerly the Hearse House), which is Grade II listed. These are important features which should be retained and protected from development where possible.
- 7.4 This development represents a key opportunity for the delivery of the main strategic objectives of this Town Centre Strategy and will support wider aims and strategies of the Council and its strategic partners. The development will transform a previously industrial site affording new public access to the waterfront with a high quality, desirable residential development offering panoramic views of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and across the River Mersey.
- 7.5 Together with the redevelopment at the Canal Quarter, this will introduce a significant boost to the walk-in population available to the Town Centre helping transform the image of the area, to become a highly desirable residential location.
- 7.6 With the inclusion of complementary commercial uses within the western end of The Deck site, the potential exists to create a northern node of activity to anchor the proposed new activity axis running south via Public Hall Street to High Street and the Canal Quarter / Brindley area.
- 7.7 There are currently a lack of high-quality linkages between the waterfront and the other town centre areas, with Mersey Street acting as a town centre by-pass for traffic to and from Dukesfield and the new Waterside Place and Maritime Quay housing developments.

Figure 7.2: Promenade and The Deck Sub-Area:



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- PD1: The Council will support development proposals that maximise public access to the Promenade and the waterfront, enhancing their usage for leisure and as a safe, accessible pedestrian and cycling corridor. Recognitions should be made to the constraint caused at present by the steep topography and solutions proposed in

redevelopment proposals.

- PD2: Contributions towards improved linkages to the wider pedestrian and cycle network will be sought through negotiation in respect to any future proposals for redevelopment on land between the rear of Church Street and the Promenade. Redevelopment proposals should incorporate measures that support these objectives.

Layout and Design

- PD3: Development of sites adjoining the Promenade or between the Promenade and the main retail area on Church Street will be expected to enhance the condition and appearance of existing or proposed pedestrian or cycle through routes.
- PD4: Development of sites adjoining or overlooking the Promenade will be expected to maintain or enhance the areas attractiveness as a pedestrian / cycle route and leisure facility.

Transport and Movement

- PD5: Any proposals for redevelopment on land between the rear of Church Street and the Promenade will be expected to contribute positively towards increasing the pedestrian permeability of the area, establishing clear, legible and attractive pedestrian through routes.

Justification

7.8 The policies above highlight that the Promenade and waterfront, with their views over the Mersey and the Silver Jubilee Bridge represent a valuable environmental asset to the Town Centre. With the location of the College and new residential developments to the west, the area's importance as an attractive pedestrian route to, and past, the Town Centre is also enhanced.

7.9 Pedestrian linkages between the Promenade and Church Street are particularly poor. The existing intervening development includes elements such as undercroft parking areas that present a strong vertical barrier to pedestrian movement. The policies outlined above seek to

ensure that any proposals involving significant redevelopment within this area will be expected to address this deficiency.

Regent Street and Western Approaches

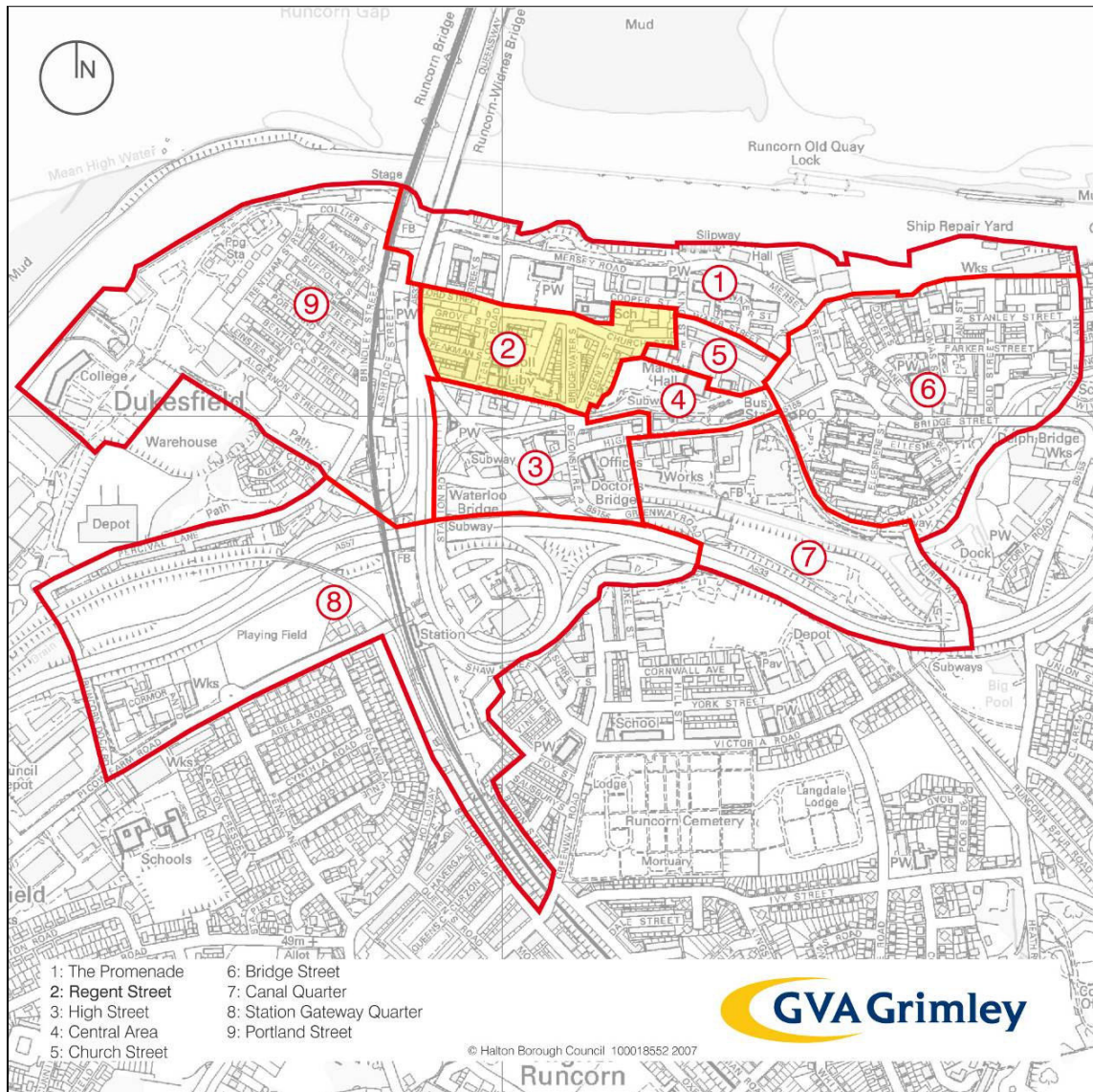
Overview and Existing Character

- 7.10 This area of the Town Centre comprises the historic, now secondary retail frontages on Regent Street with predominantly residential areas behind, including interspersed community uses.

Regent Street and the western fringes of the centre comprise a predominantly secondary retail and commercial area, serving as a transitional zone to the residential areas to the west. A number of small retail units also exist, converted from former residential uses.

- 7.11 There are currently around 30 small 2 storey shop units situated on Regent Street and Western Church Street, generally of good quality, and housing a mix of uses including specialist retail traders and retail services. Units on Church Street to the east of Regent Street are mostly in good or excellent condition, aided by the take-up of the Councils shop front improvement programme. Quality deteriorates further to the west, with poor frontages.
- 7.12 The area is generally undulating, sloping uphill from the junction of Regent Street and Church Street to Devonshire Place. The road network has been converted to a one-way operation, providing valuable short stay on-street car parking.
- 7.13 Bridgewater Street, running broadly parallel to Regent Street, facilitates one-way vehicular movements in the opposite direction, providing the thoroughfare for traffic heading to Church Street and Dukesfield from the south and west via Station Road and Greenway Road.
- 7.14 Land to the west of Bridgewater Street is made up primarily of residential development, alongside interspersed commercial uses arranged around a basic grid road layout including traffic calming and some one-way running.

Figure 7.3: Regent Street & Western Approaches Sub-Area



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- RS1: Reinforce the existing neighbourhood through the addition of some higher quality residential development where possible.
- RS2: Support, and seek, investment within the existing residential stock.

- RS3: The Council will support redevelopment proposals for commercial purposes (A3 Restaurant/Café, A4 Drinking Establishment, A5 Hot food take away or A2/B1 office uses) where 'gap sites' exist or come available where the proposed uses are considered suitable and are deemed to improve the existing character of the area.

Layout and Design

- RS4: Buildings should not exceed three storeys in height in order to preserve the suburban residential character of the area.

Transport and Movement

- RS5: Key pedestrian routes linking Regent Street to Church Street, High Street at its northern and southern ends should be protected and wherever possible enhanced in quality and adapted to include safe cycling facilities, as shown on Fig. 6.1. The Council will utilise its Development Control and Highways powers to improve the connectivity between Regent Street and surrounding residential and commercial locations.
- RS6: Pedestrian and cycle routes from the High Street area to Waterloo Road and the Promenade in the north, and linking into the new Station Gateway Quarter to the south, should be improved and upgraded as part of any scheme of development within these areas.

Justification

7.15 These policies seek to primarily improve the quality of existing housing stock in the area through refurbishment, alongside diversifying the current housing offer through new residential development where appropriate. New development would be dependent on the private market and is to occur through selective demolition of vacant buildings and development of underutilised gap sites. The demolition of any buildings will need to have regard to any historical or conservation merit associated with any particular structure.

7.16 The policies seek to reinforce the character of the area through such refurbishment and redevelopment to create a high quality gateway corridor in this edge-of-town-centre location. Combined with the healthy commercial offer present in the area, and any redevelopment for specialist commercial uses, these proposals would look to attract further residents to the area.

- 7.17 Strengthened and providing new key pedestrian and cycle paths will add to the attraction of the neighbourhood and dramatically improve east-west permeability from the Regent Street area to the Town Centre and to residential communities in the Portland Street area further to the west. In addition, improvement to the pedestrian and cycle routes from the Promenade, along Waterloo Road linked to the new Station Gateway Quarter will provide a valuable north-south sustainable access corridor from railway station through to residential neighbourhood to the waterside (see Fig. 6.1).

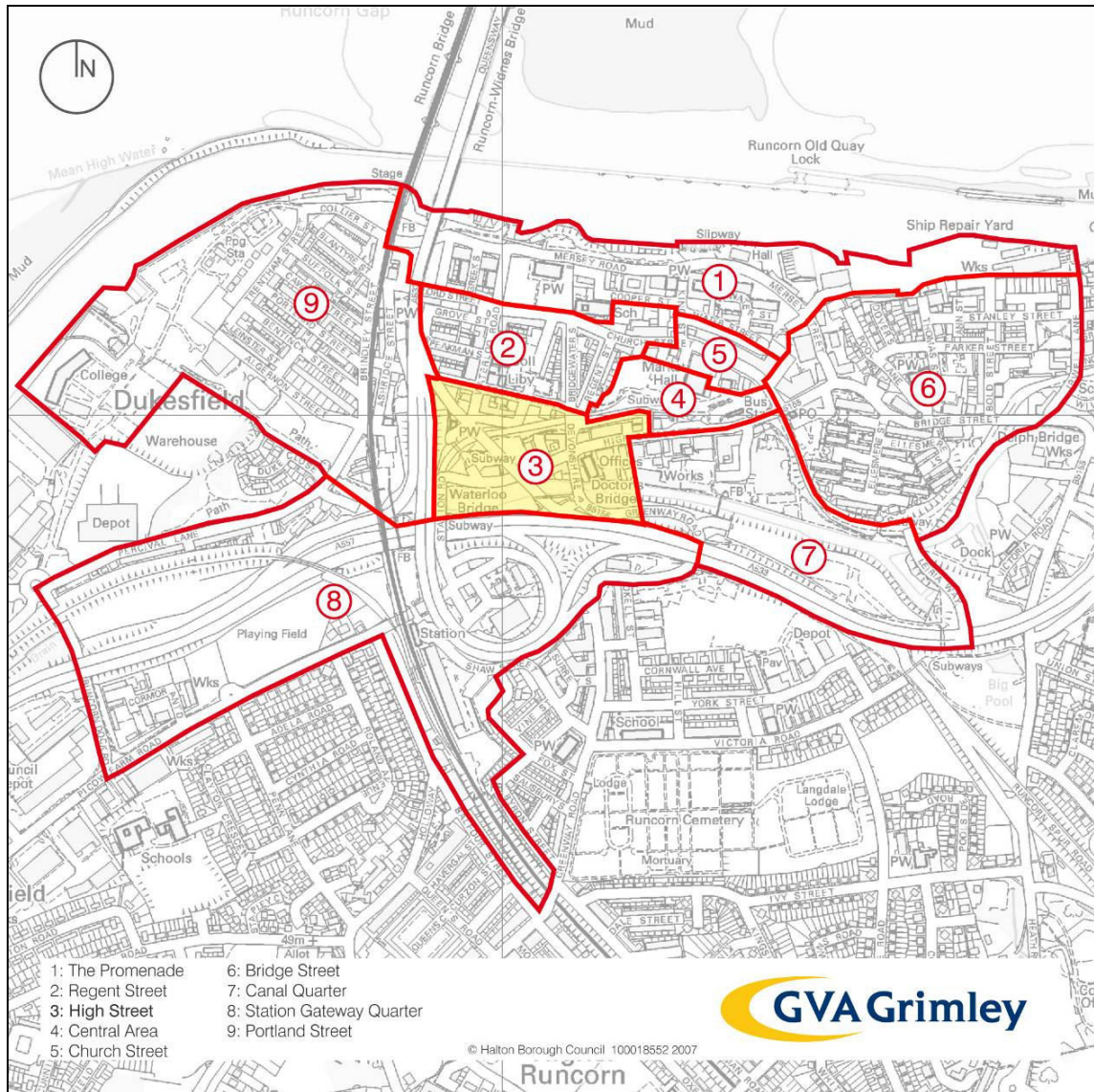
High Street

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.18 This area contains a mix of predominantly commercial and service uses accommodated in a variety of building types and architectural styles. The professional services sector dominates within the area, alongside evening leisure uses.
- 7.19 The quality of the structures varies along the street. The eastern end is less attractive. However, the western end, particularly at its junction with Greenway Road/Devonshire Place contains a number of visually attractive Victorian buildings. A number of Grade II listed buildings and features are also located along the street.
- 7.20 The area benefits from excellent accessibility, serving as the main east-west axis route through the town centre for cars and bus services, linking directly with the main access points from the south. The bus station, central car park and taxi rank are all accessible via High Street. Runcorn mainline railway station lies about a 5 minute walk to the south-west.
- 7.21 The development opportunities within this area are primarily linked to the future development of the Canal Quarter, lying immediately behind to the south. The Canal Quarter redevelopment will need to include certain properties currently fronting onto High Street. Precisely which buildings and what uses their sites will be put to will be determined as site feasibility studies and detailed design work is progressed. Successful implementation of the Canal Quarter scheme will act as a springboard for wider regeneration activities in this area.
- 7.22 In addition, the proposed construction of the new Mersey Gateway Bridge will result in significant changes to the highway network and access routes into the Town Centre as the Silver Jubilee Bridge is “de-linked” from its high capacity feeder roads. This will affect local traffic management and access arrangements with the Town Viaduct being converted to two-way usage as access to and from the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This will terminate in a new junction where the Town Viaduct presently meets Devonshire Place, Greenway Road and the Daresbury Expressway.
- 7.23 This may result in additional development opportunities as land is released from highway use and other land has constraints from development lifted. Furthermore, it will provide opportunities for new, or upgraded, pedestrian and cycle links within the Town Centre along revised highway sections or released land as shown in Fig. 6.1.

7.24 The revised highway and access arrangements will also provide the opportunity to remove physical barriers to the reopening of the former route of the Bridgwater Canal (west of Runcorn Basin to the head of Runcorn Locks) thereby creating the potential for this waterway to be re-instated.

Figure 6.4: High Street Sub-Area



*Policy**Spatial Strategy and Interventions*

- HS1: The Council will support development that utilises or enhances the canal side environment, or supports waterborne leisure activities. In particular, the Council will support proposals for development around the canal.
- HS2: The Council will consider favourably any proposals for the re-instatement of the Bridgewater Canal to the west of Runcorn Basin. The restoration of Runcorn Locks and the connection of the Bridgewater Canal to the Manchester Ship Canal / Weaver Navigation will be supported.
- HS3: The units at High Street contain a number of vacancies and represent a significant redevelopment opportunity. The Council will support proposals for its comprehensive redevelopment for suitable commercial uses taking into account proposals for the wider area.

Layout and Design

- HS4: The Council will expect any proposals for development affecting or adjoining the Bridgewater Canal to be developed to a high standard, to enhance leisure opportunities and fully consider the needs of the canal users, including providing for safe and attractive pedestrian access to the waterside.

Transport and Movement

- HS5: Where appropriate, contributions will be sought from development proposals to support the 'Bridgewater Way' by providing upgraded public access along an improved towpath and to support environmental improvements to upgrade High Street as a key Town Centre 'gateway'.

Justification

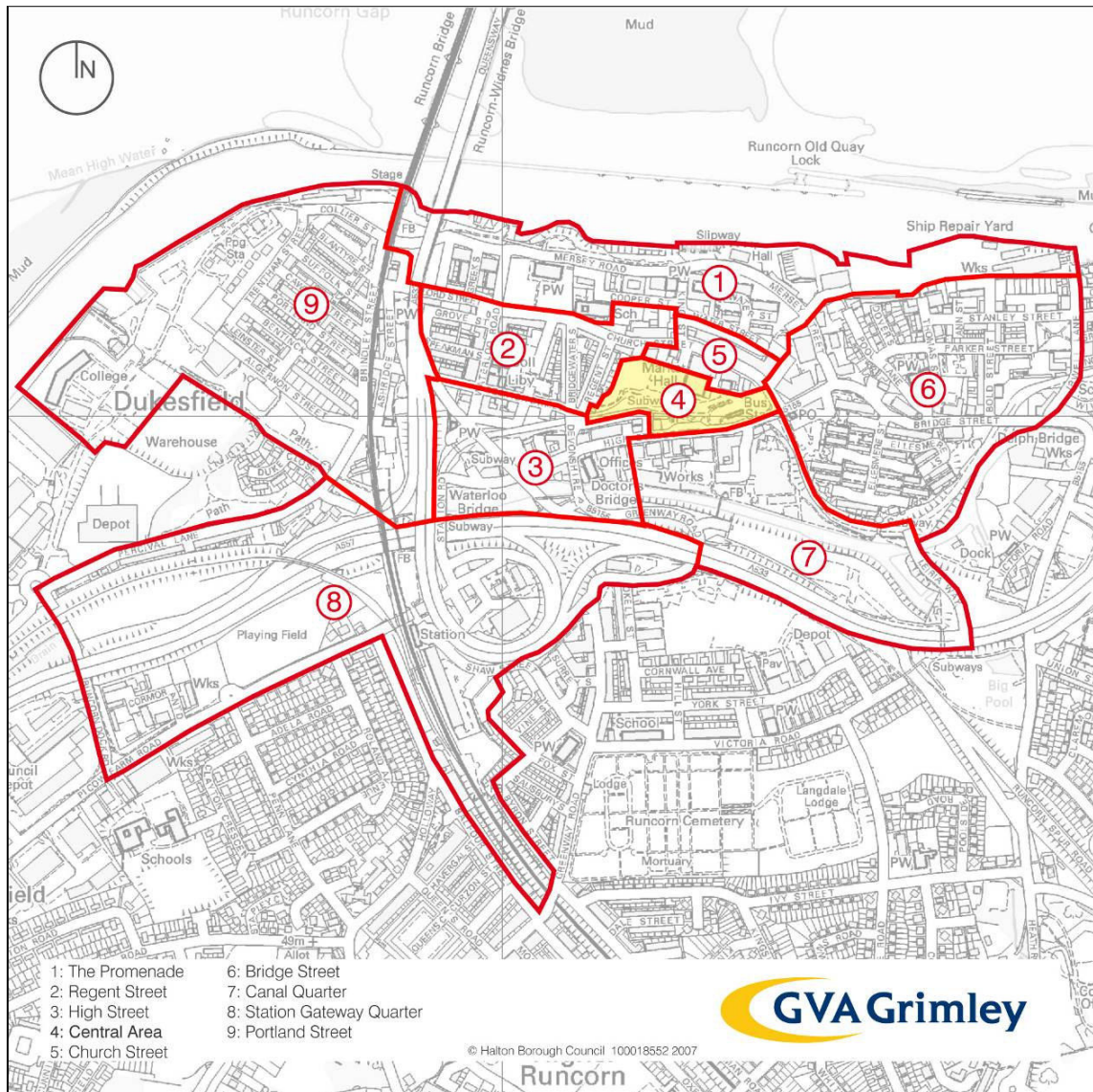
- 7.25 Revised access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge resulting from the Mersey Gateway Project may remove the current highway that blocks the route of the Bridgewater Canal. Should this occur, the policies above enable the re-instatement of this section of the canal.
- 7.26 In the longer term, the policies support the possibility of re-establishing the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring'. Such a route is likely to be very attractive to leisure craft and holiday-makers. Runcorn basin would become a layover point for craft waiting to enter the lock 'staircase' creating opportunities for service industries to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors. Any proposals would be subject to the agreement of the Manchester Ship Canal Company and the control of leisure craft.
- 7.27 The policies above recognise that the units at High Street contain a number of vacancies and represent a significant redevelopment opportunity that could contribute effectively to achieving the vision for the Town Centre if linked successfully to the new Station Gateway Quarter, Central area and Canal Quarter.

Central Area

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.28 This area comprises the recently reconfigured area between Church Street and High Street.
- 7.29 Various redevelopment schemes have taken place over recent years, the most recent of which, an SRB funded programme, witnessed the reclamation of land previously given over to the grandiose busway interchange, creating a new more compact bus station (to the east), new premises for the Council's Direct Link (One-Stop Shop), new retail stores and units (including Somerfield's supermarket), a new indoor market hall, reconfigured central car park, and taxi rank.
- 7.30 The central area now represents the main point of arrival for those travelling by bus, taxi or private car into Runcorn Town Centre. The Somerfield's supermarket (formerly Kwik Save), with its adjacent customer car park (accessible via High Street and Devonshire Place) provides the centre with a much-needed convenience anchor store, which should attract new customers to the Town Centre, increasing patronage and thereby adding to Runcorn Town Centre's viability and overall vitality.
- 7.31 This redevelopment work has provided the opportunity to re-establish attractive pedestrian linkages between Church Street and High Street, which would help to unify the centre around a new core without sacrificing accessibility. This will help to integrate and connect the proposed Canal Quarter development with the rest of the centre.

Figure 7.5: Central Area Sub-Area



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- CA1: Any redevelopment of sites within the central area should have regard to the requirements for the future operational development of the bus station.
- CA2: The Council will support proposals for the re-use or redevelopment of the north side of High Street. This site presents a number of challenges that any proposals for

redevelopment must address. Proposals will be expected to:

- a) present active commercial ground floor frontage onto High Street with retail or commercial uses above;
- b) present an improved aspect, possibly incorporating an active ground floor frontage to the important pedestrian route along Granville Street;
- c) ensure that any rear servicing area from Loch Street is suitably screened from public view; and
- d) if possible and appropriate, provide a pedestrian route from Granville Street to Loch Street.

Layout and Design

- CA3: The Council will support proposals to improve the layout, visibility and design of pedestrian crossings at the entrances to the bus station.
- CA4: The Council will expect any proposals for redevelopment affecting or adjoining key pedestrian routes to enhance the street scene and fully consider the needs of the pedestrian, providing safe and attractive routes across the centre.

Transport and Movement

- CA5: The Council will support re-modelling proposals that enhance the operational efficiency, convenience and attractiveness to passengers of the central area bus station facilities. Development proposals should not unduly impede buses accessing or exiting the station or traversing the Town Centre, either directly or indirectly.
- CA6: Key pedestrian routes linking High Street to Church Street (see Fig. 5.1) and beyond should be protected and enhanced wherever possible in relation to the following:
 - a) Granville Street: The northern section of this street has been pedestrianised and now forms the principal pedestrian through-route from Church Street to the new indoor market and Somerfield units. The south side of the street runs along the side of the main access to the central car park.
 - b) Alcock Street / Vicar Street: These routes are valuable to allow pedestrian

travel between the bus station and Church Street, yet are substandard and require improvement.

- c) Princess Street: This is a valuable, but less attractive route from the rear of the central car park to the western end of Church Street. This presently detracts from the character of the area, but provides a valuable cut-through.

Justification

- 7.32 The policies above seek to ensure that the quality and range of retail provision within this central area is of a suitably high standard to merit its position as the primary destination for visitors to the Town Centre.
- 7.33 It seeks to establish a higher quality, sustainable, safe and accessible shopping environment and public realm whether access is via the bus station, by car, on foot or by cycling. In particular, the policies above look to support sustainable modes of movement within the Town Centre, with improvement to the bus station and access through public transport viewed as particularly important.
- 7.34 The policy also seeks to preserve, improve and extend pedestrian and cycle linkages from the central area to the Church Street sub-area. This, therefore, facilitates onward strategic linkages to residential neighbourhoods within the promenade sub-area including The Deck residential development.
- 7.35 The importance of the area in providing locally accessible employment is also recognised within the above policies. The policies seek to maximise opportunities within the central area sub-area to establish higher value retail and service uses, which also enhance the physical character of Runcorn Town Centre.

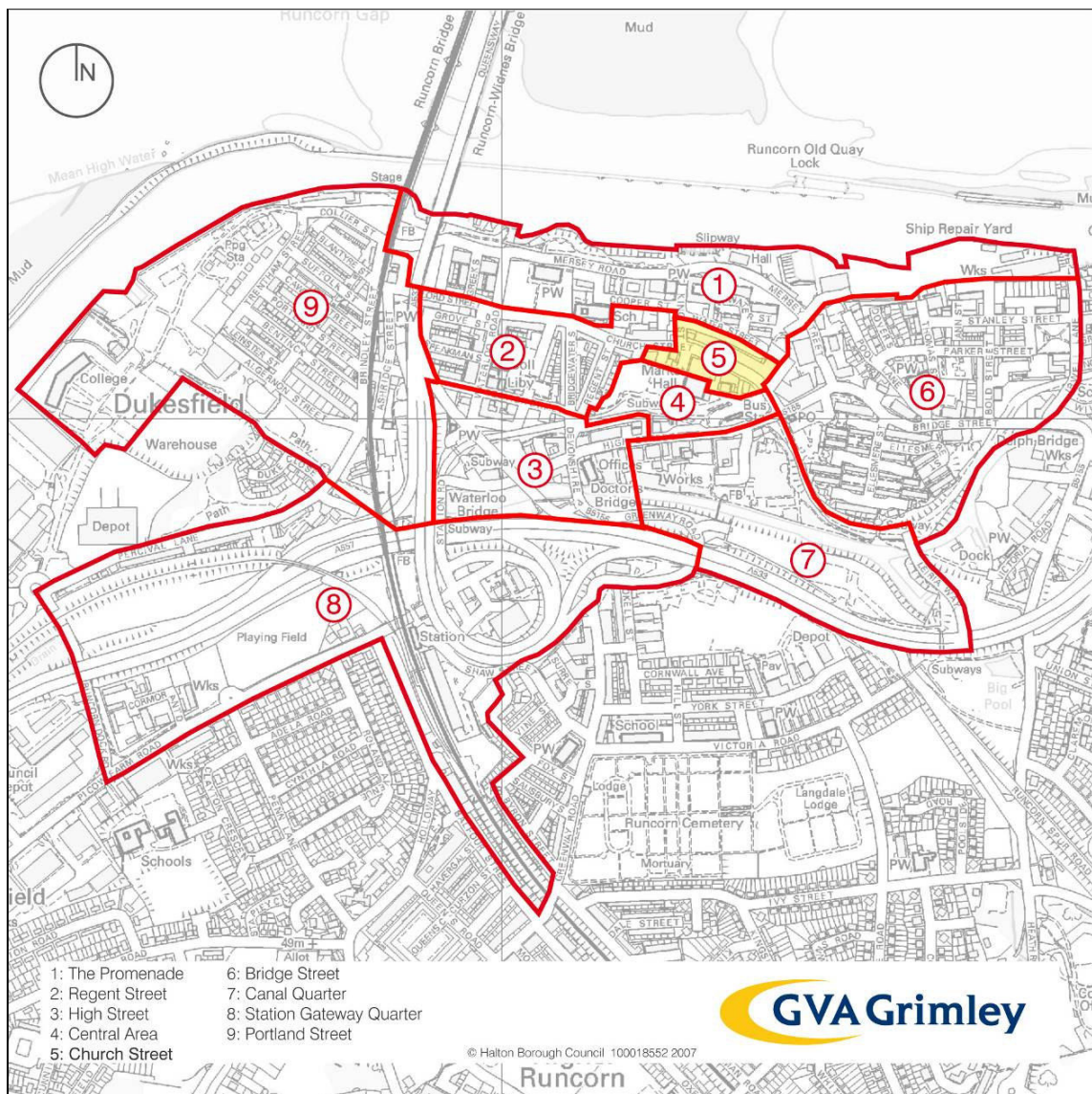
Church Street

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.36 Running on an east to west axis, Church Street forms the retail heart of the Town Centre providing accommodation for a range of traders mostly in 1960's style 2 storey, custom built shop units. The easternmost of these properties have flat roofs, the westernmost having brick fascias to the second floor and traditional pitched roofs. These units, whilst being visually nondescript, appear mostly well maintained and offer modern accommodation housing a mix of national multiple and independent traders. This area forms the backbone of the centres offer for day-to-day shopping needs.
- 7.37 The southern side of the street comprises 19th century two and three storey buildings, mostly well maintained and benefiting from part publicly funded improvements to the ground floor fascias. These units are typically smaller than those opposite and house a range of mostly independent traders offering a range of services.
- 7.38 There are currently six non-retail units within the defined primary shopping area on Church Street, minimising the scope for further diversification.
- 7.39 Traffic-calming measures are in place albeit not pedestrianised, alongside 39 on-street short stay car parking spaces.
- 7.40 Recent central area developments have only been partially successful in creating a cohesive hub to the centre and pedestrian links from Church Street would benefit from further improvements. Pedestrian linkages from the bus station to Church Street are particularly unattractive and detract from the image of the centre⁵.
- 7.41 The Market Hall and central core retail development is not highly visible from Church Street. Prominent, feature signage, gateway arches or street furniture could be used to highlight linkages and better tie the retail zones together.

⁵ Proposed linkages from the bus station to Church Street will need to take account of rear servicing to property numbers 19 to 41 Church Street, the Market Hall and adjacent retail units.

Figure 7.6: Church Street Sub-Area



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- CS1: Church Street's role as the Primary Retail Area for day-to-day (convenience) goods within the Town Centre should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible. The Council, where possible, will primarily seek to improve the convenience goods offer of the area, as well as other community amenities.

- CS2: The Council will support re-use of the existing buildings within Church Street where redevelopment proposals are deemed fundamental to achieving part of the overarching vision of Runcorn town centre as a leisure and cultural destination. Support will be given for change of uses where they include A1 retail, A3 (Restaurant / Café), A4 (Drinking Establishment) or another use that would support the day time economy or the establishment of the leisure based activity corridor.

Layout and Design

- CS3: Any proposals for redevelopment affecting or adjoining key pedestrian routes are to enhance the public realm and street scene and fully consider the needs of the pedestrian, providing safe and attractive through routes across the centre, as shown on Fig. 6.1. Proposals for linkages from the bus station to Church Street will need to take account of the rear servicing arrangements of property numbers 19 to 41 Church Street, Market Hall and adjacent retail units. Proposals will be supported where DDA compliant pedestrian and cycle linkages are facilitated between Church Street, Public Hall Street and Mersey Road.
- CS4: Development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting in the Principal Retail Area. Ground floor active uses must address the street frontage.
- CS5: Upper floor uses will be expected to complement or be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed in any redevelopment.
- CS6: Proposals to increase the visibility of the New Market Hall from the main shopping areas in Church Street will be supported including prominent feature signage, gateway arches, paving treatments or street furniture to improve the inter-linkages between the two retail zones. Proposals should be of a high quality and actively add to the street scene.

Transport and Movement

- CS7: Pedestrian and cycle routes from Church Street northwards to the Promenade and The Deck and southwards to the bus station, new retail market development and beyond should be improved and upgraded as part of any scheme of development within these areas. Proposals and opportunities to re-model the existing bus station to support this corridor will be supported.

Justification

- 7.42 The policies above seek to ensure that the quality and range of retail and service provision within the Principal Retail Area is significantly improved to serve existing and future communities. It seeks to establish a more sustainable distribution of retail provision within Runcorn Town Centre to ensure that the day-to-day shopping requirements of residents are accessible on foot and by cycling.
- 7.43 The policy also seeks to improve and extend linkages to the waterfront promenade helping to unlock leisure based and cultural development opportunities, arranged around the key focal points such a leisure based activity corridor along Church Street and Public Hall Street, forming a north-south axis between the Canal Quarter and The Deck residential development.
- 7.44 At present, the topography acts as a constraint on the delivery of DDA compliant pedestrian and cycle links to form this corridor. Therefore, the Council will support proposals where DDA compliant pedestrian and cycle linkages are delivered between Church Street, Public Hall Street and Mersey Road as part of a comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the leisure corridor.
- 7.45 Furthermore, the bus station presently impedes circulation through this corridor, and proposals to re-model the bus station to facilitate to improve circulation and accessibility will be supported where they enable the delivery of the leisure based activity corridor.

The importance of the area in providing locally accessible employment is also recognised within the above policies. The policies seek to maximise opportunities within the Church Street sub-area to establish higher value retail and service uses, which also enhance the physical character of Runcorn Town Centre.

Bridge Street and Eastern Approaches

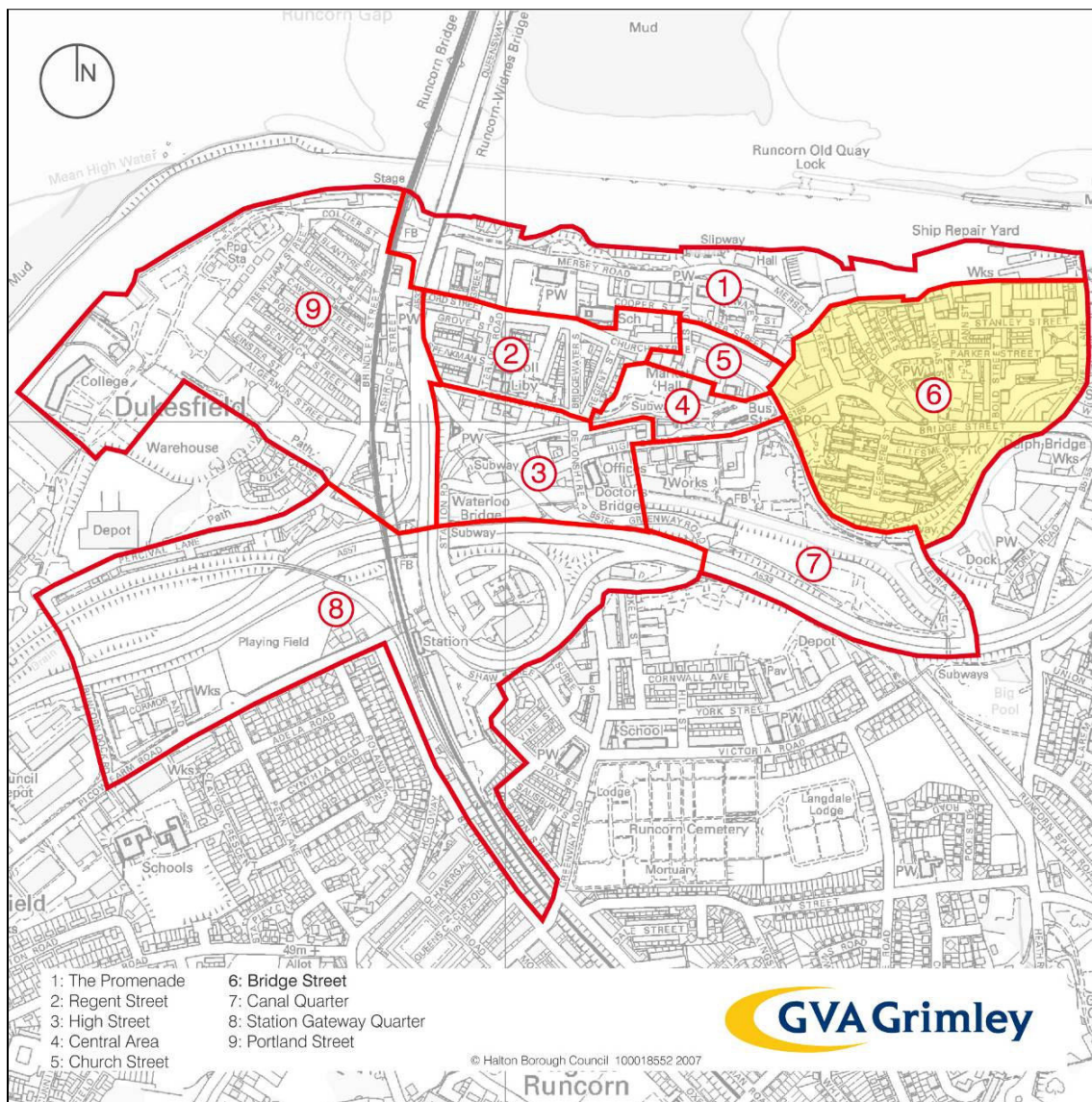
Overview and Existing Character

- 7.46 The general make-up of this area comprises secondary retail frontages on eastern High Street, with predominantly residential areas beyond, with interspersed community and commercial uses along Bridge Street. The area also comprises a number of listed buildings, including the Old Police Station, the Royal Hotel, and the Church of the Holy Trinity.
- 7.47 Bridge Street and the eastern approaches extend eastwards from the cross roads created by High Street, Church Street and Leiria Way. The area retains a number of historic street patterns, including Thomas Street, Bold Street, Stanley Street, and Parker Street.
- 7.48 Retail units extend eastwards downhill for approximately 60m along High Street, comprising 2 and 3 storey 1960's style blocks on the southern frontage with a mix of 1960's style units and older properties on the north. The units on the south of the road mostly house service and leisure outlets.
- 7.49 Bridge Street has excellent accessibility, lying on the principal access routes from the east and the new Leiria Way access road from Daresbury Expressway. The central bus station lies opposite the area, across Church Street. On-street parking is available on the north side of High Street between Church Street and Mersey Road, and a Council operated free car park sits behind the units on the south side of High Street.
- 7.50 There is little further development opportunity on the principal frontages in this area. However, the area is situated in the heart of the proposed new activity corridor stretching between 'The Deck' redevelopment to the north, and the Canal Quarter to the south.
- 7.51 This presents an opportunity for a new development along the route between these two sites, with the underused area around Public Hall street offering particular scope for the creation of a new link route, which could support new A3 (Restaurant/Café), A4 (Drinking Establishments) and complementary uses, thereby combining with the existing leisure provision on High Street and Church Street to create a circuit. Consideration will need to be given within any proposals for the servicing of new development. Servicing could be integral to development proposals or provided via Public Hall Street and Church Street within specified timescales.
- 7.52 With the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter, the site currently occupied by Leiria Way Car Park should increase in prominence and with increased activity in the area, may become an

attractive development site. Compensatory car parking provision would be required in this instance, in line with the Halton UDP maximum car parking standards to satisfy car parking supply and demand. Together with the adjacent units fronting eastern High Street, potential exists for the creation of a significant development parcel capable of exploiting the sites natural topography to accommodate retail units fronting High Street with a large space user fronting the rear car park above.

- 7.53 The section of busway between Bridge Street and Leiria Way appears to offer very little in the way of improved running times to bus operators and potentially opens up a site for development through its removal. The route involves buses running a total distance of 500m, and negotiating the roundabout junction at Leiria Way. Only 40% of this route is dedicated busway, with the other 60% being shared with general traffic. The removal of this section of busway would require buses to be diverted along Bridge Street, a distance of only 350m.

Figure 7.7: Bridge Street and Eastern Approaches Sub-Area:



Policy

- Spatial Strategy and Interventions*
- BS1: The Council will seek to establish a direct pedestrian footpath between The Deck (Mersey Street) and Church Street.
 - BS2: The Council will support proposals for development and conversions to suitable

uses in support of a leisure corridor between the Canal Quarter and The Deck.

- BS3: Existing buildings along Public Hall Street appear to be of little particular architectural merit and their demolition and replacement would be appropriate should they prove unsuitable for conversion. However given their positioning and basic form, it is preferable they are retained and incorporated into a new high quality development.
- BS4: The Council will support a suitable comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the units fronting Bridge Street and Leiria Way provided that the resultant development provides:
 - a) an improved elevation and corner treatments, particularly to the key Bridge Street / Church Street intersection;
 - b) for uses in conformity to the prevailing development plan policy;
 - c) active frontages onto Bridge Street;
 - d) a more efficient use of the site (potentially including a single large space user on the upper level accessed from the higher southern elevation); and
 - e) sufficient parking spaces to service the development in accordance with Highway Authority requirements.
- BS5: The Council will consider favourably any proposals that individually or cumulatively can make better use of the section of busway between Bridge Street and Leiria Way to the benefit of the wider area. Acceptable uses would include residential or commercial uses exploiting the canal side location. General retail uses will not be acceptable.

Layout and Design

- BS6: Upper floor uses will be expected to complement or be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed in any development or conversion.
- BS7: Any proposed development or conversion will be expected to involve improvements to the street scene and lighting in character with vision for the Town Centre.

Transport and Movement

- BS8: Development as per policy BS5 will be expected to:
 - a) include suitable traffic control measures for buses entering and exiting the remaining busway at Bridge Street
 - b) incorporate any residual requirements for a through route between Bridge Street and Leiria Way, as determined necessary by the Local Highways Authority;
 - c) support the Bridgewater Way by providing upgraded public access along an improved towpath⁶; and
 - d) accommodate replacement bus stops on the Bridge Street frontage (if deemed necessary by the Highways Authority).

Justification

- 7.54 The Council has supported the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter and The Deck, as being intrinsic elements of the wider Town Centre renaissance. The redevelopment of these areas should be fully integrated into the wider centre and form key attractions at either end of a new activity corridor.
- 7.55 The Council will seek to secure improvements to the axis between these two major development sites and considers that Public Hall Street offers an ideal opportunity to establish a direct pedestrian link supporting an enhanced leisure quarter. Furthermore, Bridge Street and Leiria Way form further key opportunity sites for the extension of an enhanced leisure quarter to include supporting residential and commercial uses. At present, the topography acts as a constraint on the delivery of DDA compliant pedestrian and cycle link along Public Hall Street. Therefore, the Council will support proposals where DDA compliant pedestrian and cycle linkages are delivered between Church Street, Public Hall Street and Mersey Road as part of a comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the leisure corridor.
- 7.56 National pub chain, JD Wetherspoons, has recently opened a new public house (The Ferry Inn), including a rear beer garden at the heart of this axis in the former Kwik Save unit on the corner of Church Street / Public Hall Street. This forms the first development of this leisure quarter and sets a precedent for future development of the area.

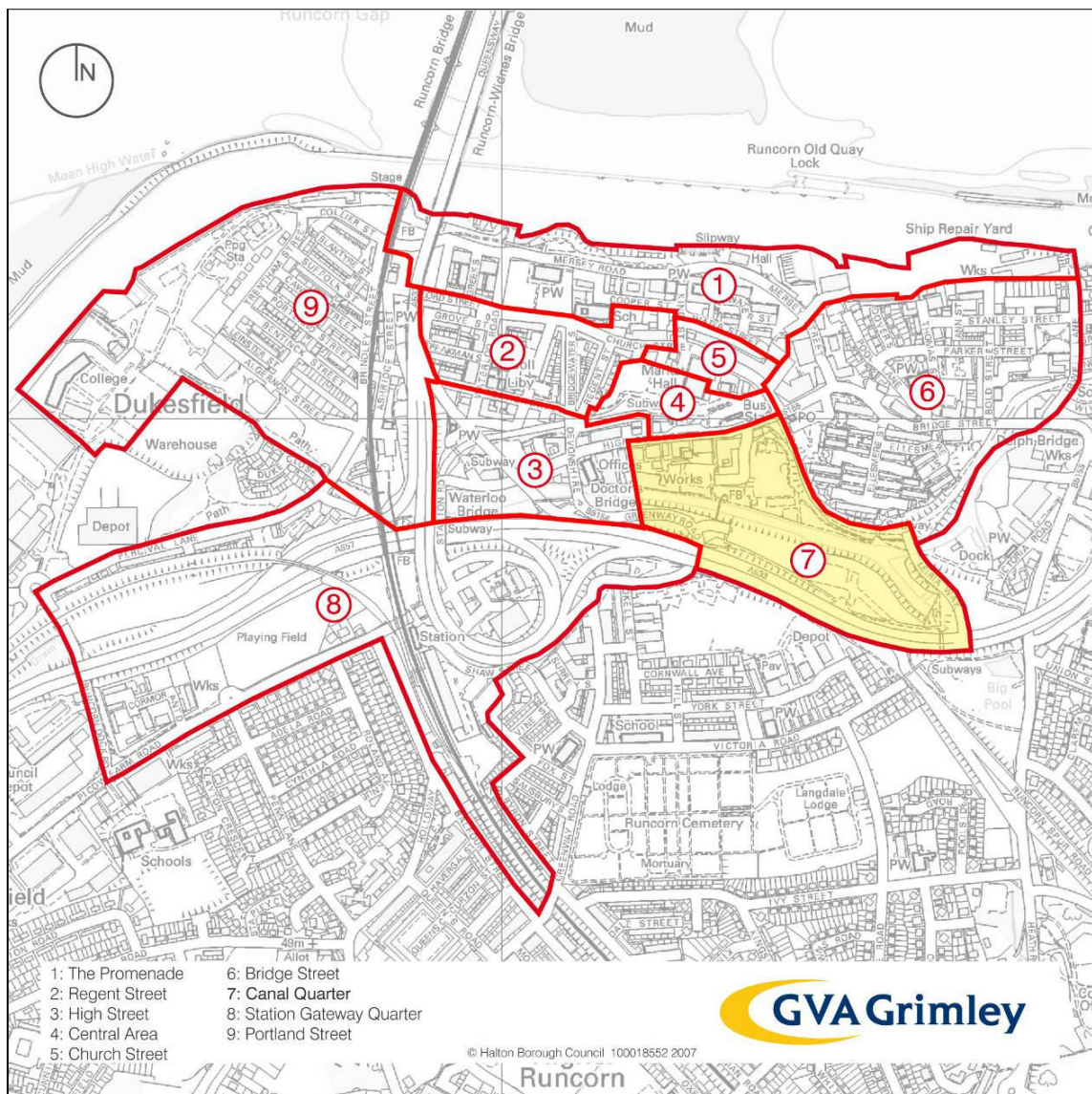
Canal Quarter and Southern Fringes

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.57 The Canal Quarter straddles the Bridgewater Canal to the immediate south of the Town Centre including the area to the rear of High Street.
- 7.58 The Canal Quarter currently houses the award winning Brindley Art Centre, offering a range of events including live theatre, music, participatory workshops and art-house cinema.
- 7.59 Future development will be expected to build upon the success of the Brindley Arts Centre, fully utilising the environmental and leisure opportunities presented by the canal, and contributing to the revitalisation of the centre as a whole.
- 7.60 In 2005 the Council undertook a developer competition to select a preferred development partner to devise and implement a suitable programme of redevelopment to rejuvenate the Canal Quarter, introducing new uses and creating a quality, well-connected environment where people want to live, work and visit.

⁶ Improvements have been undertaken to date from the Town Centre to Preston Brook.

Figure 7.8: Canal Quarter and Southern Fringes



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- CQ1: The Council will work closely with its selected development partners, (or their successors) to achieve a comprehensive redevelopment of the Canal Quarter area to the benefit of the Town Centre and the borough as a whole.
- CQ2: The Council will, where necessary and appropriate, seek to use its compulsory

purchase powers to ensure that land ownership constraints do not hinder the implementation and delivery of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Canal Quarter area.

- CQ3: The Council envisages a coordinated comprehensive approach to the delivery of the Canal Quarter scheme. Sufficient parking provision should be included to meet the Council's maximum parking standards. The development will be expected to adhere to the development principles detailed in the 'Runcorn Town Centre Canal Quarter Developer Competition Brief' (January 2005) and must be of the highest standard of design, including imaginative and contemporary architectural styles that incorporates 'iconic' landmark buildings. Key elements of the scheme include:
 - a) Extensive public realm improvements centred on the Brindley Arts Centre including improvements to the northern towpath, creation of a piazza / public square;
 - b) North bank commercial and residential development. This will incorporate leisure and A3 (food & drink) uses originally envisaged being located on south bank site.
 - c) Delivering a new activity node based around the Brindley Arts Centre forming the southern extent of the new corridor of activity running via Public Hall Street towards the Promenade at The Deck. A suitable scheme of street lighting for the corridor and other improved pedestrian routes should be included.
 - d) New or improved pedestrian footbridge linkages between the northern and southern canal banks.
 - e) South bank development. By relocating the intended leisure and A3 (Food & Drink) uses to the north bank, the south bank area is expected to accommodate mostly residential development with the possibility of including a hotel use at the eastern end of the site. The site should be self sufficient in terms of parking provision.

Layout and Design

- CQ4: All residential units within the Canal Quarter should achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 or above.

Transport and Movement

- CQ5: The Canal Quarter development must create safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes through the site connecting to the wider pedestrian and cycle networks. Of particular importance are the linkages between :
 - a) The Brindley Arts Centre to Church St. / Public Hall St.: The development is expected to create the southern section of the proposed 'corridor' linking key activity nodes at the Brindley Arts Centre towards the Promenade (via Public Hall Street)
 - b) Greenway Rd. to Granville St.: The development is expected to create an attractive accessible route between, Greenway Road, across the canal (possibly utilising the existing footbridge) through the northern site to Granville Street.
 - c) Greenway Rd. to Alcock St.: The development is expected to create an attractive accessible route between, Greenway Road, across the canal (possibly utilising the existing footbridge) through the northern site to Alcock Street.
 - d) Devonshire Place ~ Leiria Way: The existing towpath along the northern side of the Bridgewater Canal should be respected, maintained and where appropriate improved to form a safe, attractive and accessible pedestrian route for walkers and cyclists. Access to the towpath and the wider pedestrian and cycle network should be maximised wherever possible.
- CQ6: Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority that suitable provision has been made for safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle access within the site and connecting to the wider pedestrian and cycle network. In particular, that suitable through routes (as outlined) are provided and that the scheme contributes to the wider aims of this and the Waterside Strategy. A Parking Management Plan will be required to implement the findings and recommendations of the Parking and Access Study, alongside environmental improvements to High Street.

Justification

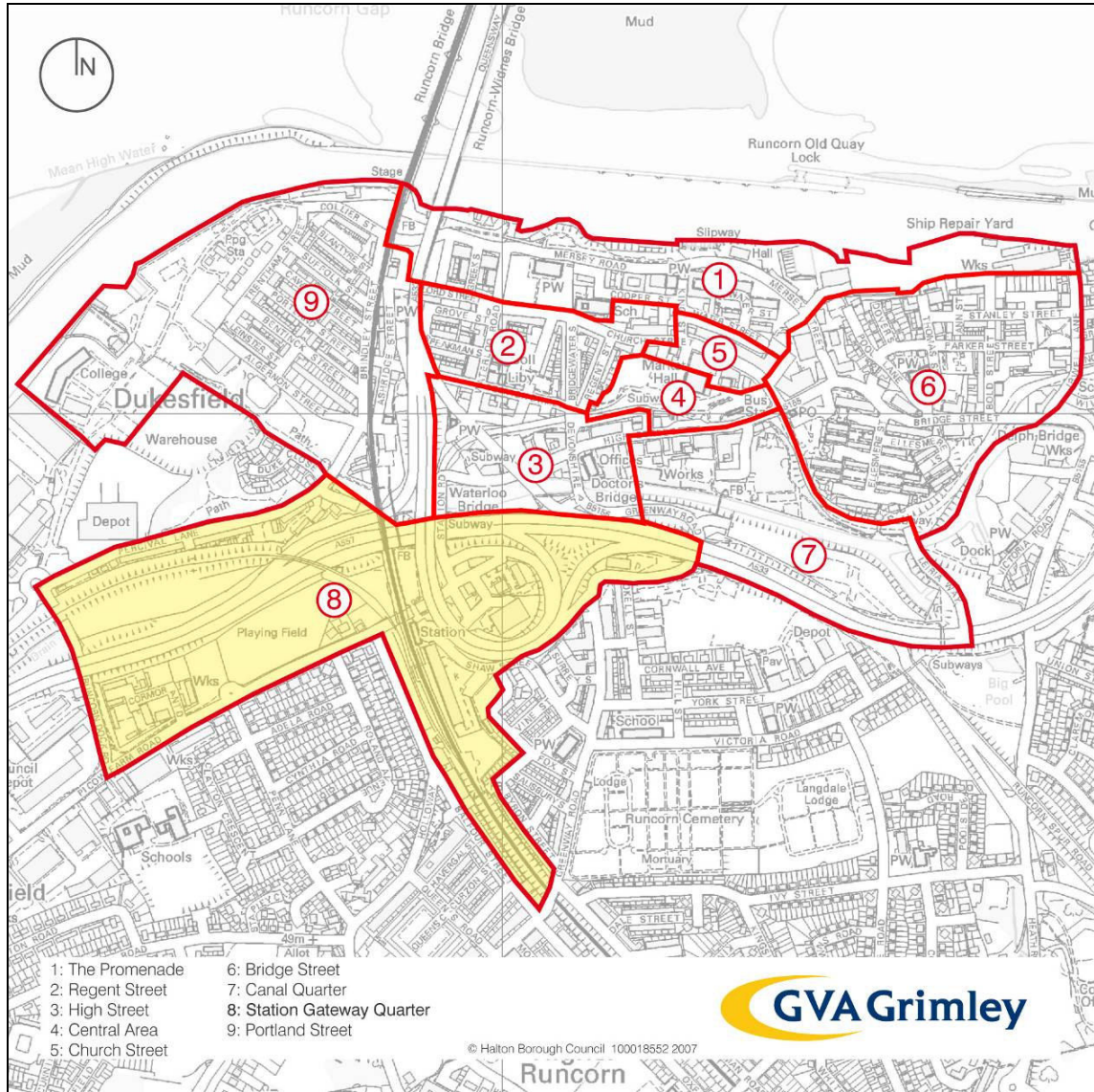
- 7.61 The policies prioritise the Canal Quarter as the principal development in the Town Centre, recognising that it has the ability to build upon recent successes and - in line with the vision - transform the Town Centre into a prime leisure and evening destination for the wider community. Together with the Deck development, it has the potential to rejuvenate the Town Centre by introducing new residential populations in the heart of the area.
- 7.62 The majority of the land holdings required for its delivery are in Council ownership, however, where necessary, the Council or its development partner may need to acquire additional land to fully realise the development. Where this cannot be secured through negotiation, the Council may seek to exercise its powers to compulsorily purchase the necessary land and this is recognised in the policies above.
- 7.63 The policies illustrate the importance of the Canal Quarter as a flagship development. As part of the commitment to securing the highest quality of contemporary design across the site, residential units will be expected to achieve a minimum of 4 stars under the Code for Sustainable Homes Standard.

Station Gateway Quarter

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.64 At present this area principally contains Runcorn Railway Station, which provides access to the West Coast Mainline, therefore linking Runcorn directly to the key centres of Birmingham, Liverpool and London. Other uses include commercial premises within the 'Loops' highway structure and a residential neighbourhood in a grid formation to the east of the station and south of the town centre.
- 7.65 However, the economic and social opportunities presented by this key public transport gateway are presently not exploited to maximise the full potential of the area and its linkages to Runcorn Town Centre. In particular, the expressway road network, which includes grade - separated routes, has effectively created a large barrier between the town, the Station and the residential suburbs lying to the south. The Daresbury Expressway and the Weston Point Expressway are both aligned broadly east to west.
- 7.66 Heavily planted roadside margins, and featureless grass verges, compartmentalise areas north and south of the key route enclosing views for the motorist resulting in them by-passing the Town Centre visually and physically. This also provides a significant barrier to pedestrians and cyclists, who are diverted along convoluted routes using subways and stairways to circumnavigate the expressway.
- 7.67 Furthermore, the expansive elevated rail structures running from north to south impede east-west movement, a number of unsatisfactory pedestrian routes form low quality connections between the Station, traditional residential areas (west of the railway) and also between the houses and Runcorn Basin.
- 7.68 The proposals of the Mersey Gateway Project provide the opportunity to initiate physical redevelopment of underutilised areas in the vicinity of Runcorn Station utilising the improved access and visibility, which could be achieved through remodelling at the Runcorn Loops. The quality of employment and commercial offer within the gateway would be emphasised, where further accessibility improvements would include new pedestrian crossings and public realm improvements making the Station more accessible from other areas of the town.
- 7.69 The removal of the A557 eastern approach slip-road onto the Silver Jubilee, as part of the removal of unnecessary infrastructure, would also release land for a number of high quality development opportunities for employment use to the west of the Station.

Figure 7.9: Station Gateway Quarter Sub-Area



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- SG1: The Council will support proposals for a comprehensive redevelopment scheme supporting a mix of A2 (Financial and Professional Services) / B1 (Business) / A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) / C1 (Hotels) employment development opportunities. Provision should be focused toward encouraging small to medium sized local

enterprises as well as larger floorplate uses.

- SG2: Development within the area will be expected to demonstrate its contribution to local employment for residents of Runcorn as well as wider Borough and regional objectives.

Layout and Design

- SG3: Development should seek to improve the area as a key gateway location between Runcorn Railway Station and the Town Centre.
- SG4: Buildings within the area should retain existing residential amenity and protect important vistas of the iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge.
- SG5: The area should provide a focus for high quality public realm improvements and major development proposals should be targeted toward improving the image of key routes and gateways within the area and linking to the Town Centre.
- SG6: Development proposals should include ground floor frontage and active uses addressing the public realm and fronting the associated new movement corridors.

Transport and Movement

- SG7: Public transport connections between the area and the Town Centre should be facilitated, as shown on Fig. 6.1.
- SG8: Where possible communal car parking should be encouraged and parking should be accommodated in less visible locations. Attention should be paid to the findings of the Halton Parking and Access Study.
- SG9: Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle links should be established to existing neighbourhoods and key destinations within the Town Centre.

Justification

- 7.70 The existing expressway network and associated 'Loops' and elevated structures leading to the Silver Jubilee Bridge currently block movement between the town centre, station area, and impede movement for residents living to the south of the expressway. The policies above

provide support for the main transformations arising for Runcorn Town Centre (from the Mersey Gateway Project), which aim to unlock the potential of this area through redevelopment of land presently occupied by the 'Runcorn Loops' structure and tackling the issues of severance by removing obsolete road infrastructure.

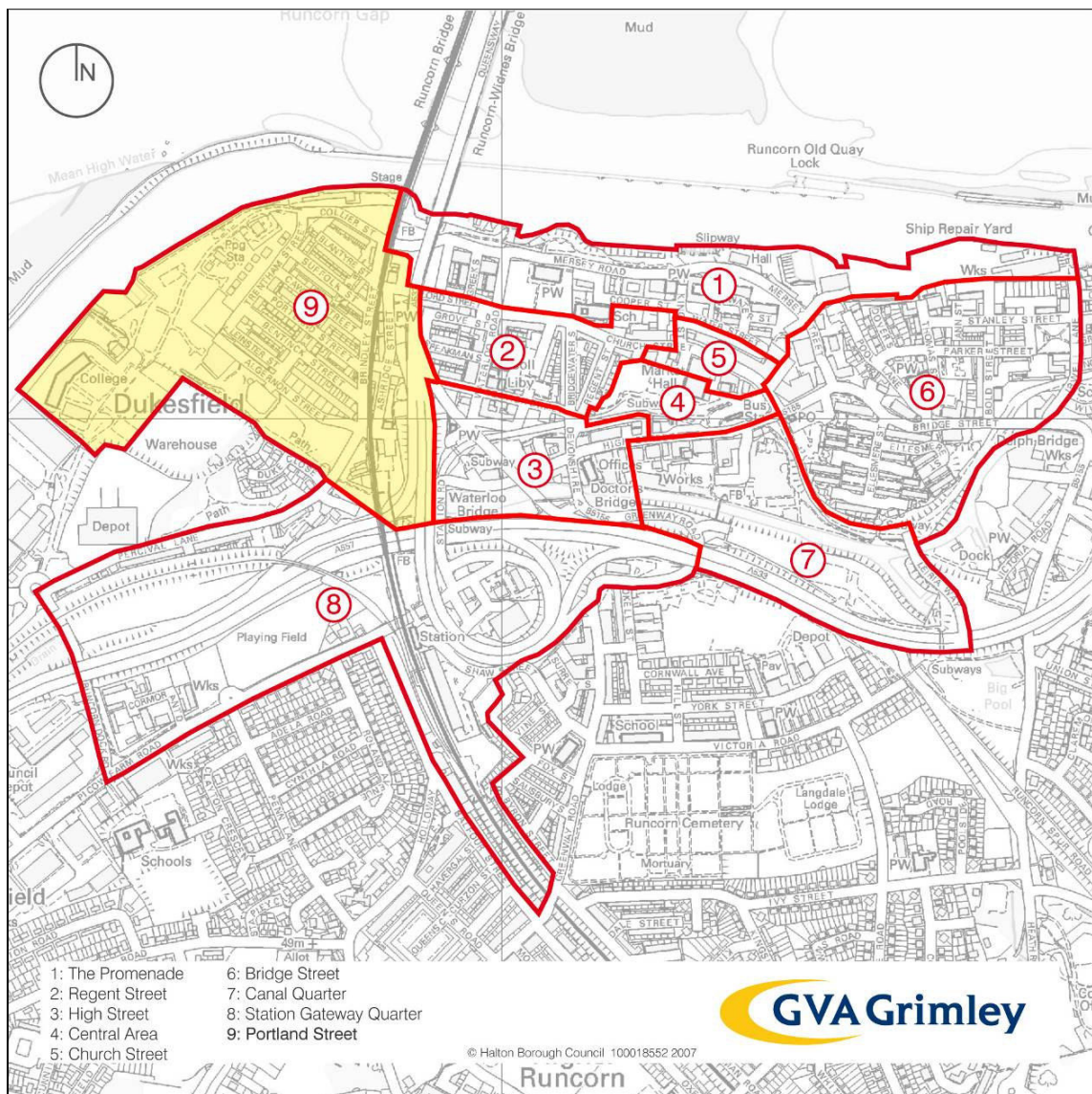
- 7.71 The policies provide support for actions to vastly improve the relationship between the core of the town and the suburban residential hinterland, with the potential to re-link the railway station, which is currently isolated from the Town Centre by the canal and expressway, through a new Station Gateway Quarter. This new gateway area will provide a range of employment development opportunities focused on a mix of A2 (Financial & Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), B1 (Business Uses), and a high quality C1 (Hotel) use. It seeks to address the limited supply of employment land within the Town Centre targeted toward the encouragement of local employment and business creation. It also seeks to meet the development needs of the projected growth in identified economic sectors.
- 7.72 This will also facilitate improvements to connectivity with areas to the west of the A533 Queensway Expressway, which are also poor, presently separating both the station area, and the town centre, from the college area and Runcorn Docks.
- 7.73 The Queensway Expressway, which runs northwards to the Queen's Silver Jubilee Bridge, will take on a new role in the future – focused upon establishing stronger links between Widnes and Runcorn, and encouraging pedestrian, cyclists, and tourists, to linger and enjoy the dramatic aerial structure and views across the Mersey. Therefore, the policies support the de-linking of parts of the network, which will also allow the Silver Jubilee Bridge to serve local needs by re-linking the two towns of Widnes and Runcorn and improving their inter-connectivity.

Portland Street - Dukesfield

Overview and Existing Character

- 7.74 This area of the Town Centre comprises predominantly of residential areas, including interspersed community uses, situated to the west of the Town Centre and Regent Street sub-area. Halton's Riverside College is also situated within this area, with high quality public and sustainable transport linkages from the College to the Town Centre seen as necessary and appropriate.
- 7.75 Residential dwellings are generally of good quality and mix, with the area sloping downhill in a southern direction. Residential streets are arranged around a basic grid road layout.
- 7.76 To the south of the area lies the (former) alignment of the Bridgewater Canal, which has been protected to facilitate re-establishment of the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring'.

Figure 7.10: Portland Street Sub-Area



Policy

Spatial Strategy and Interventions

- PS1: Linked to Policy HS2, the Council will consider favourably any proposals for the reinstatement of the Bridgewater Canal to the west of Runcorn Basin. The restoration of Runcorn Locks and the connection of the Bridgewater Canal to the Manchester Ship Canal / Weaver Navigation will be supported.

- PS2: The Council will support proposals to establish service industries to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors should Policy PS1 be invoked. Acceptable uses will include A1 (Shops), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), C1 (Hotels) and D2 (Outdoor Leisure) uses. Appropriate access and servicing must be demonstrated within any development proposals.
- PS3: Reinforce the existing neighbourhood through the addition of some higher quality residential development where possible.
- PS4: Support, and seek, investment within the existing residential stock.
- PS5: Linked to Policy PS1, the Council will support proposals to utilise the corridor in proximity to the reinstatement Bridgewater Canal for outdoor leisure, greenspace and recreational purposes.

Layout and Design

- PS6: Buildings should not exceed three storeys in height in order to preserve the suburban residential character of the area.
- PS7: All development should seek to enhance the key view of the Silver Jubilee Bridge.
- PS8: Any proposals for residential developments near the waterfront should recognise the requirement to be set back from the waterfront to enable public access to the waterfront itself.

Transport and Movement

- PS9: The Council will support proposals to re-instate the Bridgewater Canal to the west of Runcorn Basin. Proposals must include satisfactory canal tow paths, including accessibility for pedestrian and cycle usage from the High Street sub-area.
- PS10: All development will allow pedestrian/cycle movement along the waterfront.
- PS11: The Council will support proposals for the establishment of a new town centre shuttle bus service providing a linkage between Dukesfield and the Town Centre in line with the objectives of the Halton Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Justification

- 7.77 Revised access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge resulting from the Mersey Gateway Project propose to remove the current highway section that blocks the route of the Bridgewater Canal. Should this occur, the policies above enable the re-instatement of this section of the canal.
- 7.78 In the longer term, the policies support the possibility of re-establishing the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring'. Such a route is likely to be very attractive to leisure craft and holiday-makers. Runcorn basin would become a layover point for craft waiting to enter the lock 'staircase' creating opportunities for service industries to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors.
- 7.79 Therefore, the policies prioritise the canal corridor for recreational, leisure and service-based commercial uses to extract the maximum benefits in employment and economic, environmental and leisure terms.
- 7.80 Furthermore, policies seek to consolidate the existing residential neighbourhood to ensure its long-term sustainability and viability as part of the Town Centre – ensuring it benefits from regeneration elsewhere in the area. Primary focus is given to improving the quality of existing housing stock in the area through refurbishment, alongside diversifying the current housing offer through new residential development where appropriate. New development would be dependent on the private market and is to occur through selective demolition of vacant buildings and development of underutilised gap sites.

8. DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS

8.1 The vision for Runcorn Town Centre, like the aspiration established for the wider Regeneration Strategy, is both bold and challenging, but intentionally so, as the vision is about changing perceptions and setting a new agenda for investment in delivering a place that people can be proud of and that people aspire to live and work in, invest and spend time.

8.2 It is also a vision that will not be delivered in the matter of a few years but represents a sustained programme of investment of at least fifteen years, timed to fit alongside the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.

Phasing of Development

8.3 It is important to emphasise that the Strategic Objectives of the SPD, and the majority of the sub-area policies, can be implemented immediately, yet are predominantly dictated by the market and private sector delivery.

8.4 In addition, development opportunities that are dependent on the Mersey Gateway Project proposals are to be brought forward as opportunities in a phased manner, which takes account of the delivery timescale of the Mersey Gateway, public sector funding streams and market demand projections.

8.5 Therefore, development of Runcorn Town Centre is proposed to take place within three broad phases proceeding in 2016 and completing in 2031. The diagrams below show the estimated phasing programme for the Mersey Gateway related regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre in detail.

8.6 The first phase of development (figure 8.1) is scheduled to take place simultaneously to the scheduled opening of the Mersey Gateway in 2014. It is at this stage that consideration will be given to the removal of any redundant existing highway sections linked to the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. This process will result in a number of opportunity sites being brought forward for redevelopment – principally the Station Quarter.

Figure 8.1: Phase 1 (2016-2021)

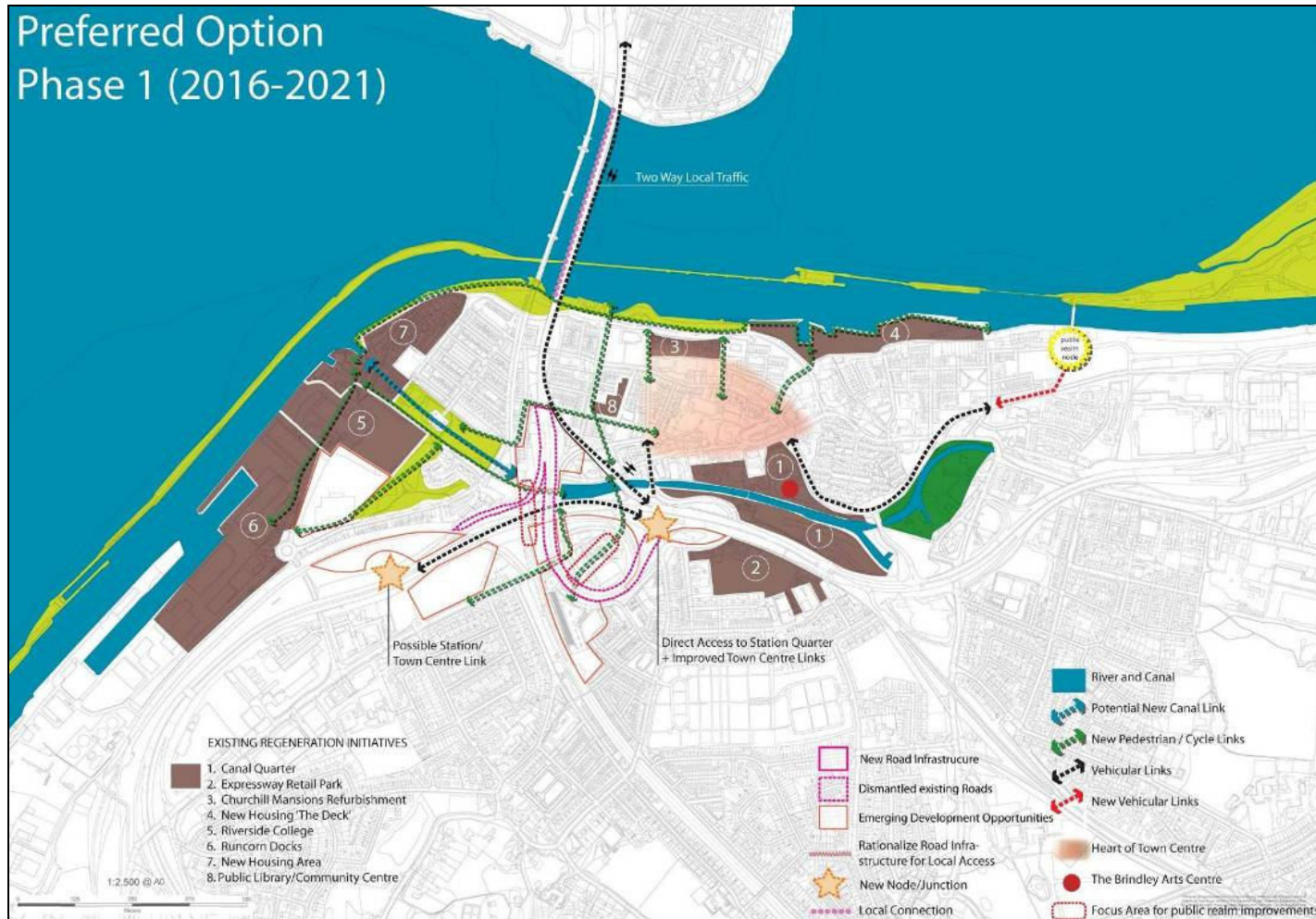


Figure 8.2: Phase 2 (2021-2026)

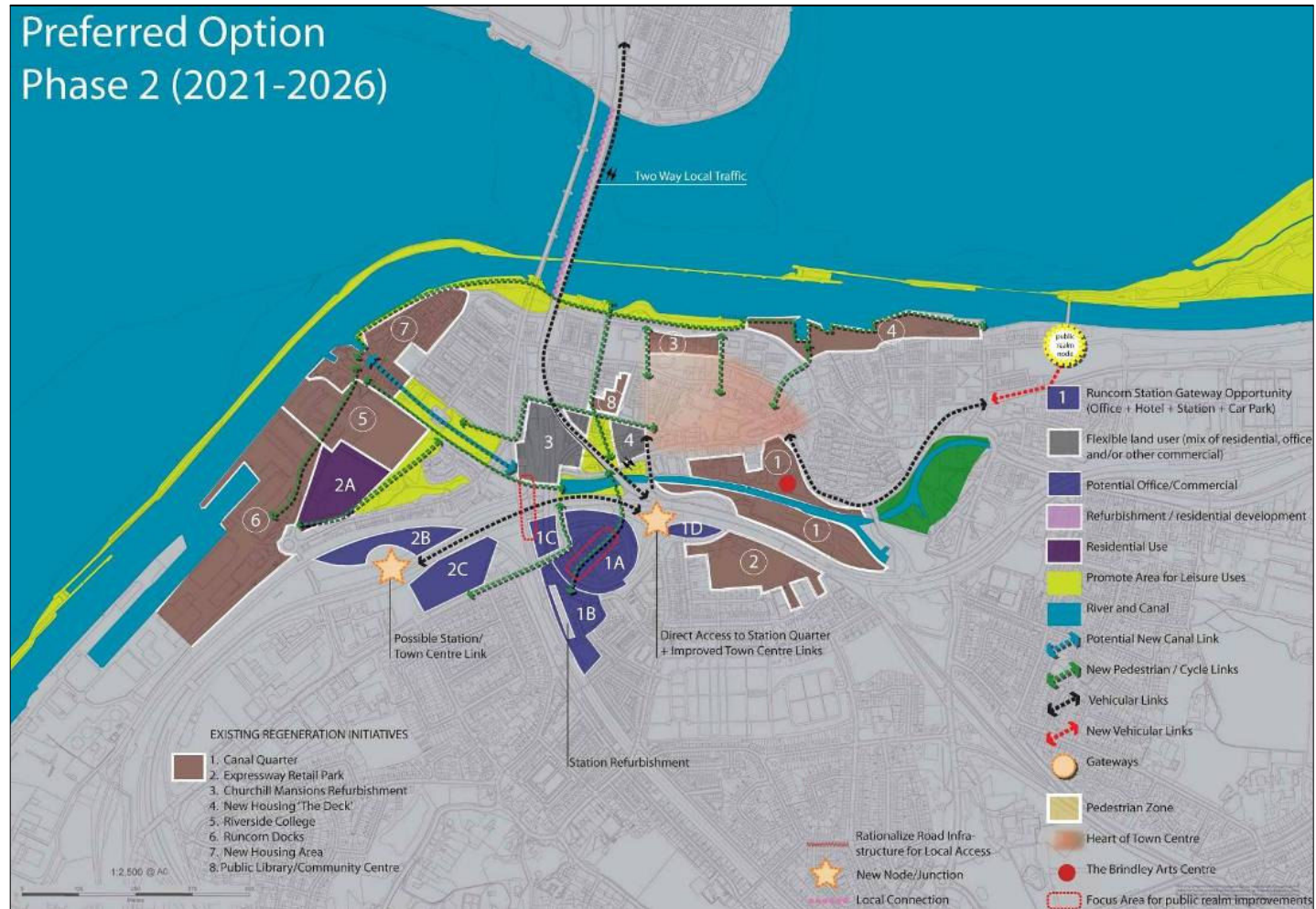
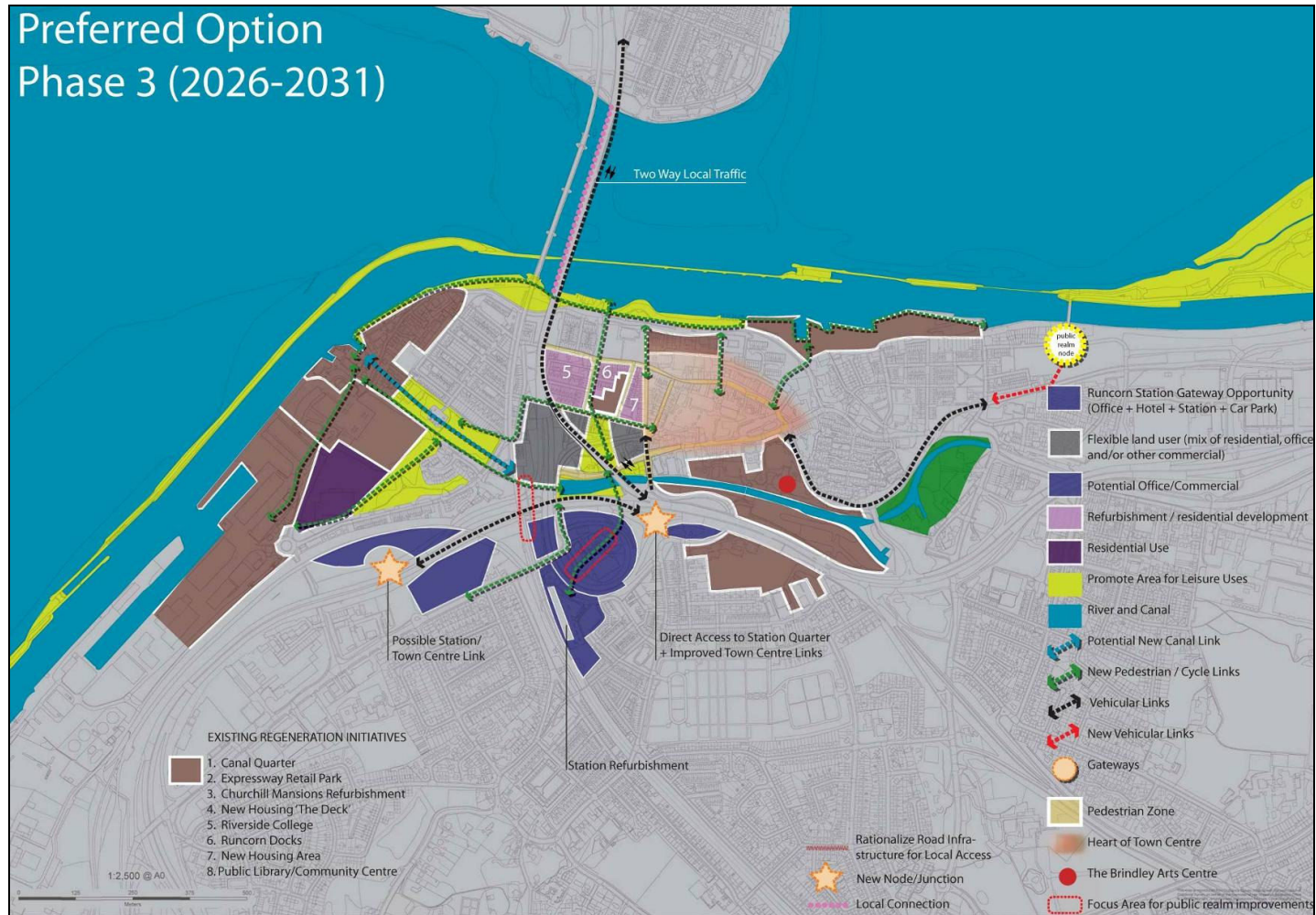


Figure 8.3: Phase 3 (2026-2031)



- 8.7 Phase 2 (figure 8.2) is programmed to commence in 2021, taking 5 years to complete and with the majority of opportunity sites, arising from infrastructure alterations during Phase 1, to be brought forward for regenerative development during this period.
- 8.8 Phase 3 (figure 8.3) will occur from 2026 until 2031 and will form the final segment of proposed development and infrastructure.

Development Control Matters

- 8.9 The determination of development proposals within Runcorn Town Centre will be in accordance with the saved policies set out in the UDP and the contents of this SPD. The contents of this SPD are summarised here in order to set out clearly what the Council will expect in terms of the types of development that will be permitted. This section is however by no means exhaustive. It is recommended that applicants hold pre-application discussions with officers at Halton Borough Council prior to submission of any planning application(s).

General Requirements for all Development Proposals

- 8.10 Development proposals within Runcorn Town Centre are required to:
- Comply with all relevant saved UDP policies;
 - Identify any environmental constraint issues such as contamination, noise, air quality, flooding, landscaping, and visual impacts, and provide suitable improvements, solutions or mitigation measures;
 - Contribute to the identified highway and traffic management improvements;
 - Meet appropriate car parking standards for parking, as set out in the UDP, RSS and the Council's SPD on transportation and accessibility;
 - Contribute towards parking requirements (on/off-site) in line with the parking requirements of the Halton Parking and Access Study.
 - Facilitate and improve access to public transport services, including cross-river;
 - Facilitate appropriate public access to greenspace and movements through the area and cross-river through enhanced foot and bicycle linkages;
 - Provide environmental landscaping improvements that will make a positive contribution to improving the visual appearance of Runcorn Town Centre – in particular to the public realm of High Street;

- Adopt appropriate building design and layout in accordance with the requirements of this SPD and the Halton UDP, creating an attractive environment, and protecting and enhancing existing environmental assets and mitigate against environmental constraint issues;
- Incorporate trees and woodland planting in accordance with the objectives of the Mersey Forest; and
- Allow for the retention wherever possible of any existing trees of good quality in accordance with the principles of British Standard 5837.

Employment Proposals

- 8.11 Proposals for new employment uses will normally be acceptable for B1 / B2 uses, particularly where this respects and serves a local catchment population.
- 8.12 Proposals for new employment uses will be restricted to A2 / B1 uses within the new Station Gateway Quarter and the new Office Quarter.
- 8.13 Proposals for redevelopment, development, alteration or extension to existing employment activity will be required to:
- Adhere to the overall vision and objectives for Runcorn Town Centre and conform with design policies and environmental standards adopted by Halton Council;
 - Incorporate the principles of Manual for Streets and Secured by Design into layout and design where appropriate;
 - Have regard to the Council's Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD and the North West Best Practice Design Guide; and
 - New commercial developments should seek to achieve a Very Good BREEAM rating and concurrently provide the opportunity for and encourage renewable energy generation through building design.

Residential Development

- 8.14 Proposals for new housing development within Runcorn Town Centre will be required to:
- Increase the variety of housing available in Runcorn Town Centre to increase choice – mixed tenure and type including the provision of additional affordable housing;

- Densities will be consistent with the objective of providing a mixed tenure and type but as a general principle will not be below 40 dwellings per hectare;
 - Incorporate the principles of Manual for Streets and Secured by Design into layout and design;
 - All new homes will be required to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes 3 and higher;
 - Have regard to the Council's Design of New Residential Development SPD and the North West Best Practice Design Guide;
 - Provide greenspace provision within any residential proposals in accordance with UDP Policy H3 and the Council's Provision of Open Space SPD.
- 8.15 The release of individual sites for development will be in accordance with a scheme of works intended to ensure that development does not proceed ahead of the infrastructure works required and necessary to support it.

Transport Proposals

- 8.16 All development proposals will respect the proposals of this SPD. All development proposals will be required to enable safe and convenient public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the area and beyond.
- 8.17 All proposals should provide car parking at suitable locations in accordance with Halton Borough Council's adopted parking standards.

Retail Development

- 8.18 Proposals for Town Centre uses will normally be acceptable for A1, A3, A4 and a restricted proportion of A5 uses and only where they support improved and enhanced local services and where they provide for an improved visitor experience, particularly around the new Station Gateway Quarter.

Flood Risk

- 8.19 Applicants seeking planning permission should carry out a flood risk assessment on sites in excess of 1 hectare, and for those sites situated in flood zones 2 and 3 in accordance with the provisions of PPS25 *Development and Flood Risk*. Applications should refer to the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2007) to assess whether their site is location with in area of flood-risk. Developers will need to consider any advice from the Environment Agency concerning flooding issues in the design of their development. Wherever possible,

appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed which should include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to restrict run-off to existing rates or better. Surface water run-off rates from any greenfield sites should also be restricted to greenfield rates (including making allowances for climate change).

- 8.20 Table D.2 of PPS25 recognises residential development as more vulnerable to flood risk. Thus, in accordance with Table D.3 of PPS25, the applicant will need to demonstrate a positive exception test for any residential schemes. With regard to mixed use development proposals, a sequential approach should be made whereby only part of the site is located within flood zone 2 & 3, thus ensuring more vulnerable classes of development are steered away from areas of higher risk of flooding.

Contamination

- 8.21 Developers should undertake their own site investigations in accordance with Policy PR14 (Contaminated Land) of the Halton UDP before any planning application for development is determined.

Waste

- 8.22 Conforming to the adopted policies of Halton Borough Council, for all new development, Site Waste Management Plans will be required to maximise the re-use and recycling of construction waste. As part of any scheme, there should be provision included for recycling facilities.

Archaeology

- 8.23 An Archaeological desk study assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the North West Best Practice Design Guide, and submitted with all planning applications affecting known or potential areas of archaeological interest. Where potential impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed and subject to the agreement of the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.
- 8.24 The completion of an archaeological assessment and, if appropriate, a programme of field evaluation prior to the determination of a planning application will be required to allow for any further archaeological mitigation to be established at any early stage. Further archaeological mitigation (excavation, watching brief, etc) may then be secured through planning condition.

Disability Discrimination Acts (DDAs)

- 8.25 There are Disability Discrimination Acts (DDAs) of 1995 and 2005. The need to comply with the DDA should be considered as inherent within all policies that promote development within the centre where there is access to buildings and public areas. There is also a need to comply with the DDA for improvements that are outwith of the planning system, for example in relation to existing buildings. Consideration should be given to the requirements of DDA in the early stages of drawing up a proposal, alongside access requirements identified by UDP policies BE18-20.

The Council's Responsibilities

In order to achieve its vision for the regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre, the Council will enter into negotiations with developers to secure the environmental and physical improvements described in this SPD through appropriate planning conditions and planning obligations where necessary.

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Further information relating to the purpose of the intended SPD:

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 4, or for further general planning information, visit the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website at www.communities.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact Communities and Local Government by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

To access a downloadable copy of 'By Design, Urban Design in the planning system: Towards Better Practice' and 'Safer Places', documents relating to urban renewal, urban design and creating sustainable communities, and general planning information visit the Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk. Manual for Streets can be purchased from the Department for Transport at a cost of £22.50, quoting ISBN 9780727735010, or downloaded from www.dft.gov.uk.

Investing in the High Street can be purchased from the Civic Trust for £25.00. The Civic Trust, Winchester House, 259-269 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5RA.

Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access can be downloaded free of charge from the National Retail Planning Forum (NRPF) at www.nrpf.org. A hard copy can also be purchased online at the same website address.

Further information on the Secured By Design initiative, including details relating to the standards required for a development to receive Secured By Design accreditation may be found at www.securedbydesign.com

For further information regarding any development which may affect a historic building or conservation area 'Building In Context' will be able to provide advice. It is available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.cabe.org.uk> or for a hard copy contact English Heritage at: Customer Services Department, PO Box 569, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 2YP, Tel: 0870 333 1181, Fax: 01793 414 926

Further information on the Halton UDP can be found online at www.halton.gov.uk or by phone on 0151 424 2061, email at forward.planning@halton.gov.uk or by post to Environmental and Regulatory Services, Environment Directorate, Halton Borough Council, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW.

You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Local information

For advice relating to submitting a planning application, for pre-application discussion or to purchase a copy of this SPD or any other SPD contact:

Planning and Policy
Environmental and Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0303 333 4300

Fax: 0151 471 7304

Email: forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further highways or transport information is required, please contact the:

Highways, Transportation and Logistics
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061

Fax: 0151 471 7521

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further access information is required, or information relating to building control please contact the;

Building Control Consultancy

Environment Directorate

Halton Borough Council

Rutland House

Halton Lea

Runcorn

WA7 2GW

Tel: 0303 333 4300)

Email: building.control@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

APPENDIX B: LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)

Land-Use Policy Designations within Runcorn Town Centre

Policy	Summary
<p><i>Policy RG4 – Action Area 4: Runcorn & Weston Docklands</i></p>	<p>Policy RG4 of the Halton UDP identifies the Runcorn & Weston Docklands Action Area as in need of regeneration, with preference for the development of freight handling and storage and distribution activities. The policy identifies appropriate land uses as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business (B1); • General Industry (B2); • Storage and Distribution (B8); • Open space; • Uses ancillary to an employment area; and • Education and housing. <p>Policy RG4 advises that part of the Action Area should be developed for a rail freight facility as appropriate, and that existing rail links should be enhanced within any new development. The supporting text acknowledges the role of the Action Area in the handling and storage of freight, and states that the redevelopment of the area for employment uses will provide much needed employment. The commercial dock should be maintained and enhanced where commercially possible, and the line of the Bridgewater Canal safeguarded.</p> <p>Policy requires the <i>“visual quality of the built and natural environment should be enhanced”</i>, and the quality of design of any development to enhance its surroundings in order to raise the overall image and appearance of the area.</p> <p>Any new development within this Action Area should maximise its waterside location and the that of the Weaver Navigation within the area. Increased public access to the waterside is encouraged where <i>“compatible with continuing commercial use of the waterway, whilst ensuring public safety”</i>.</p>

<p><i>Policy BE3 – Environmental Priority Areas</i></p>	<p>This policy defines the two Environmental Priority Areas within the Borough, focused largely upon the waterfront / townscape fringes of Runcorn and Widnes. Within the Environmental Priority Areas, Policy BE3 advises that development proposals should be:</p> <p>(a) of a quality of design that enhances the character and appearance of that area; and</p> <p>(b) of a high quality of design in terms of landscape, boundary treatments and facing materials.</p> <p>The westernmost part of Runcorn Town Centre is situated within the designated Environmental Priority Area. Proposals for development in this area will therefore need to have full regard to the provisions of Policy BE3.</p>
<p><i>Policy BE5 – Other Sites of Archaeological Importance</i></p>	<p>This policy states that development proposals likely to have an unacceptable affect on other known sites and monuments of archaeological significance will not be permitted. Appropriate mitigation measures may be appropriate with the agreement of the Local Planning Authority.</p>
<p><i>Policy BE6 – Archaeological Evaluations</i></p>	<p>Where development proposals may affect sites of known or suspected archaeological importance, the Council may require the applicant to submit an archaeological evaluation prior to the determination of any planning application. The prime archaeological objective is the preservation in situ of important remains. Potential measures by which this can be achieved include design modification and landscaping within sensitive areas.</p>
<p><i>Policy BE9 – Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings</i></p>	<p>The predominant consideration in applications for internal or external works to a listed building or structure will be the preservation of the special architectural or historic features and character of the building or structure. This policy sets out the special criteria which apply for proposals which seek to alter or extend a listed building, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions must respect the character and scale of the original buildings and not be allowed to dominate; • The replacement of doors, windows and other features in non-traditional materials will not be permitted; • Attention should be paid to the retention of the original plan form, roof

	<p>construction, and interior features of merit, as well as the exterior of listed buildings;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions must as far as possible be built of materials matching those of the original building. <p>All alterations and additions should not unacceptably affect the essential character of the building, and it should be in-keeping with its architectural style and features. Development should be of a high standard of design and external appearance and materials will be expected to match, as near as possible, those of the existing buildings in kind and in detail.</p>
<i>Policy BE10 – Protecting the Setting of Listed Buildings</i>	<p>It is a requirement of this policy that development likely to affect the setting of a listed building should aim to preserve both the character of that setting and its historic relationship to the listed buildings. This will include the preservation of trees and other landscape features. Close control will be afforded to the quality of design of development in close proximity to a listed building.</p>
<i>Policy BE12 – General Development Criteria Conservation Areas</i>	<p>This policy states that development affecting a Conservation Area will only be permitted if it will preserve or enhance the special architectural or historical character and appearance of the area. Development proposals will need to apply a high standard of design which respects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including building materials and boundary treatments. Development should also harmonise with adjoining buildings to enhance the existing street-scene and views and vistas. Important architectural and historical street features, landscape and ecological features should be enhanced where possible.</p> <p>Victoria Promenade at West Bank was designated as a Conservation Area in 1978.</p>
<i>Policy BE13 – Demolition in Conservation Areas</i>	<p>Policy BE13 states that demolition of buildings or structures will only be permitted provided that they do not contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Consent for demolition of a building or a structure within a Conservation Area will only be permitted where one or more of four exceptional circumstances are satisfied, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proved to be wholly beyond economic repair;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is incapable of reasonable beneficial use; • It is not of intrinsic architectural, historic or townscape importance and its removal or replacement would enhance the appearance or character of the area; or • Its removal would allow the redevelopment or rehabilitation of an adjacent larger site which is underused, neglected or derelict if this would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
<p><i>Policy GE6 – Protection of Designated Greenspace</i></p>	<p>Development within designated and proposed Greenspace will not be permitted unless it is ancillary to the enjoyment of the Greenspace, or in the case of designated Greenspace within educational use, it is specifically required for educational purposes. Exceptions may be made where the loss of the amenity value is adequately compensated for where either of the following criteria can be satisfied:</p> <p>(a) Development on part of the site would fund improvements that raise the overall amenity value of the Greenspace; or</p> <p>(b) The developer provides a suitable replacement Greenspace of at least equal size and amenity value, or significantly enhances the amenity value of nearby Greenspace.</p> <p>No proposals should result in a loss of amenity for local residents by forcing them to travel to a less convenient location and that in all exceptional cases, there would need to be clear and convincing reasons why development should be permitted or that loss of amenity value could be adequately compensated. The accompanying text states that Greenspace, regardless of whether or not it is publicly accessible, makes an important contribution to the quality of life of those who live and work within the Borough. Parts of the Runcorn Town Centre area incorporate greenspace allocated under policy GE6. Development proposals should therefore seek to retain this existing greenspace, or provide compensatory greenspace in accordance with the provisions of Policy GE6.</p>
<p><i>Policy GE19 – Protection of Sites of Importance for</i></p>	<p>The Mersey Estuary is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), part of which is encompassed by the Runcorn Town Centre area. Policy GE19 seeks to restrict development and/or land use change if it is likely to have an unacceptable effect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (i.e.</p>

<i>Nature Conservation</i>	SSSI). Development and/or land use change will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the proposals outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation of the site.
<i>Policy GE23 – Protection of Areas of Special Landscape Value</i>	This policy advises that development will not be permitted where it will result in an unacceptable effect on the visual and physical characteristics of a site of special landscape value. Where existing built-up areas are ‘washed over’ by an Area of Special Landscape Value designation, development that does not significantly affect the landscape will be permitted.
<i>Policy GE24 – Protection of Important Landscape Features</i>	This policy advises that development will not be permitted where it will result in an unacceptable effect on the visual or physical characteristics for which a site was designated as having ‘Important Landscape Features’. Development proposals should seek to protect existing Important Landscape Features, and where possible maintain and enhance them.
<i>Policy GE29 – Canals and Rivers</i>	Policy GE29 restricts proposals adjacent to the St. Helen’s Canal, the Bridgewater Canal or the Trent and Mersey Canal, or adjacent to the River Mersey, River Weaver or Weaver Navigation will not be permitted unless in accordance with the policy criteria. Proposals should not have an unacceptable effect on tourism and recreational potential, or landscape, wildlife and heritage value.
<i>Policy GE30 – The Mersey Coastal Zone</i>	<p>Proposals for development within the Undeveloped Coastal Zone will not be permitted unless the development specifically requires a coastal location, relates to the recreational use of the zone, or is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety. Proposals which would contribute to regeneration, such as within Runcorn Town Centre, and/or to the enhancement of environmental quality, tourism and recreation will be encouraged. Development within the Developed Coastal Zone need not be limited to those which require a coastal location. However, proposals within the Developed Coastal Zone should pay particular regard to environmental quality, and where possible to improving accessibility to the coast.</p> <p>Part of Runcorn Town Centre lies within the Mersey Coastal Zone. Development proposals within this area should conform to the provisions of this policy.</p>

<p><i>Policy PR14 – Contaminated Land</i></p>	<p>This policy establishes a number of criteria which must be satisfied prior to the determination of any planning applications for development on or adjacent to land which is known or suspected to be contaminated, comprising the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit details to assess the nature and degree of contamination (type, degree and extent of contamination); • Identify remedial measures required to deal with any hazard to safeguard future development and neighbouring uses; • Submit details of a programme of implementation for the roll out and completion of mitigation measures to be agree with the Council. <p>The requirement to undertake the above will be controlled either by planning conditions or, when necessary, by planning obligations. Within Southern Widnes, there are historic areas of landfill, notably at Ditton Road, ICI Coal Stockyard, and Spike Island. An assessment of their potential contamination may therefore be required as part of any planning application.</p>
<p><i>Policy TP2 – Existing Public Transport Facilities</i></p>	<p>Proposals likely to have an adverse effect the use of the Runcorn Busway as part of the public transport network will not be permitted. Proposals should seek to preserve, and improve as appropriate, the present or future use of existing stations, their interchange facilities or railway lines.</p>
<p><i>Policy TP8 – Pedestrian Improvement Schemes</i></p>	<p>Where appropriate, pedestrian improvement schemes will be implemented within town centres in the interests of the environment and safety. Within Runcorn Town Centre, the following schemes will be implemented during the plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regent, Runcorn; • Church Street, Runcorn (full pedestrianisation)
<p><i>Policy TP9 – The Greenway Network</i></p>	<p>The 'Greenway Network' comprises proposed and potential off-road routes for walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horseriding. Development proposals for sites that incorporate a greenway network should enhance the condition and appearance of the route, implement the route and appropriately segregate the route, whilst affording priority to pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders at any junction. Where development proposals adjoin a greenway network, improvements and extensions to the network will be sought through</p>

	<p>negotiation.</p> <p>Furthermore development will not be permitted should it have a detrimental effect on access onto or through the greenway network, or should it have an unacceptable affect on the amenity of the network by way of noise, smells or other forms of pollution.</p>
<i>Policy H1 – Provision for New Housing</i>	<p>Sufficient housing land will be provided for 330 new dwellings per annum (net of clearance) in line with the requirements of RSS (2003). The Runcorn Town Centre area includes a number of Phase 1 Allocated Housing Sites / Committed Sites covering the period 2002-2007. Future housing development is phased beyond this period.</p>
<i>Policy H8 – Non Dwelling House Uses</i>	<p>Within existing residential areas, proposals for development other than Class C3 (dwelling houses) will be considered mainly with regard to their effect on residential amenity. In such cases, it must be demonstrated that proposed development will not detract from the character of the area or the amenity of residents; will not result in an over-concentration of non-dwelling houses uses to the detriment of the character of the area or amenity of residents; and where car parking is to be provided fronting a highway, one third of that area should be provided with soft landscaping and screening.</p>
<i>Policy E3 – Primary Employment Area</i>	<p>Development falling within Use Classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry), B8 (Storage and Distribution) and Sui Generis industrial uses will be permitted in the designated Primary Employment Areas. Restricting such uses to appropriate locations – i.e. where the use already exists – will <i>“diversify the local economy away from the over dependence on heavy chemical industry and improve the environmental quality of the Primary Employment Areas”</i>.</p>

APPENDIX C: SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant convenience centre within its catchment. • New Somerfield anchor store. • High proportion of independent / specialist shops (a unique selling point). • Range of professional and personal services (estate agents / hairdressers etc.). • Range of community facilities. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved central car park. • Free parking. • On-street parking in main retail areas. • New bus interchange. • Public Transportation node / interchange. • Number of bus services (23 routes including 9 high frequency services). • Presence of nearby main line train station. • Good access by foot & bicycle <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly good quality environment. • Human scale of centre. • Attractive location (e.g. canal / river / bridges). 	<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor representation of national multiples. • Limited retail offer. • Limited leisure / entertainment offer. • Lack of prominence. • Lack of brand / image. • Limited catchment / lack of market penetration into New Town areas. • Cinema located at Halton Lea. • Few restaurants. • Over representation of service and specialist outlets generating infrequent visits. • Limited amount & variety of office / business space. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusing traffic circulation pattern / junctions / busway etc. • Poor signage • Barriers to access; canal / expressway <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor perception of night-time offer. • Dominance of drinking establishments. • Poor perception of crime / violence. • Brindley Arts Centre hidden from view. • Undeveloped sites / semi-derelict buildings.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Brindley Arts Centre. • Remaining capacity to support additional retail floorspace (foodstore). • Success of new housing developments (Canal Street / Riverside) proving market. • Proposed The Deck redevelopment. • Canal Quarter redevelopment. • Addition of new leisure opportunities. • Bridgewater Canal proposals (Runcorn Locks and new Cheshire Loop) <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal Quarter redevelopment to include improved parking provision. • Peripheral developments to fund pedestrian route improvements. <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment proposals to improve environment of Canal Quarter / The Deck and linkages to town centre. 	<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased competition – Halton Lea. • Increased competition – Widnes. • Increased competition – Other. • Internet shopping (threat to specialist retailers). • Need to generate and maintain additional footfall. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mersey Gateway (new river crossing). • Availability of short-stay shoppers parking (issue re. commuter parking). • New town centre residential areas. • Concentration of A3 (hot food takeaways) along certain frontages. <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector funding needed to maintain SRB aided improvements (shop fronts etc.) • Need to improve vitality and increase investor confidence to secure fresh investment.

Sustainability Appraisal Report
RUNCORN TOWN CENTRE SPD

Sustainability Appraisal Report

RUNCORN TOWN CENTRE SPD

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Non-TECHNICAL Summary

INTRODUCTION

Runcorn Town Centre is one of three main shopping locations within Halton Borough. Halton Borough Council has prepared a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to update and build upon the Council's previous 1997 Town Centre Strategy and develop the opportunities set out within the draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy issued for public consultation in February 2007. Runcorn Town Centre was also identified as a key Action Area for Regeneration as a result of the new bridge proposed across the River Mersey. The new bridge is intended to become the main crossing over the Mersey with the Silver Jubilee Bridge acting as a crossing for local traffic, buses, pedestrians and cyclists. Some of the existing road infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge will therefore be removed and reconfigured. This would result in some areas of land becoming available for development and enables the existing road infrastructure into Runcorn Town Centre to be improved.

The Vision for the SPD is therefore to: *'re-establish Runcorn Town Centre as a vibrant waterside location that provides for the day to day shopping needs of its immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to the neighbouring town centre, as a focus for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers, and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity'*.

The key objectives of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD are:

Objective 1 – Enhance Employment Role: Initiate physical redevelopment of Runcorn Station Gateway for high value employment uses, following environmental and secured by design principles utilising the improved access and visibility, achieved through de-linking of A553 (and 'loops') infrastructure.

Objective 2 – Expand Specialist Retail & Leisure Role: Providing accommodation and development opportunities for the refocusing of the role of the Town Centre for specialist niche traders to complement the roles of the Borough's other town centres and capitalise on the 'market town' appeal. Initiate physical opportunities for the development of leisure uses in the Town Centre – particularly in the new Canal Quarter- to develop a vibrant, cultural and safe day and night-time economy building on the achievements at The Brindley.

Objective 3 – Improve Community Facilities: Provide opportunities for the development of improved services and public realm upgrades across the Town Centre. This should focus on protecting, managing and enhancing the cultural, built and natural environment and promoting cycle and walking facilities between the Station, Town Centre, surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the waterside. Re-open the closed section of the Bridgewater Canal to meet the Manchester Ship Canal for business and leisure travel uses. Utilise the Halton draft Parking & Access (2008) study to achieve improved parking and accessibility.

Objective 4 – Enhance Public Transport: Rationalise the existing A553 road infrastructure through de-linking providing improved and simplified bus access to Runcorn Town Centre and Runcorn Rail Station via the Town Viaduct and High Street and new Station Gateway Quarter. Consider options to re-model the existing bus station to enhance circulation.

Objective 5 – Increase & Diversify Housing Offer: Increase and diversify the housing offer within Runcorn, providing resource efficient and affordable housing – with a particular focus on developing sites made available through communications infrastructure removal in Runcorn Town Centre to meet forecast population expansion. Build on waterfront achievements at The Deck to encourage development of housing within the Canal Quarter. This would establish a north-south activity corridor that supports food, drink and complementary uses for the sustainability and wider regeneration of the Town Centre and expand the user-base of the Town Centre's retail and leisure offer.

Objective 6 – Sustainable Development: To use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing re-use, recycling and recovery of waste.

Waterman Energy, Environment & Design (WEED) was appointed to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD in

order to meet the requirements of planning legislation¹ and regulations². The combined SEA and SA process is subsequently referred to as SA only. The main purpose of SA is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects. Where significant negative effects are identified, recommendations are made as to how these could be avoided, offset or reduced. Recommendations are made on how to enhance beneficial effects. A draft programme to monitor significant effects is also required.

This document forms the Non Technical Summary of the SA Report. The SA has been undertaken on behalf of Halton Borough Council (HBC) by WEED.

THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL PROCESS

The assessment to date has comprised four stages as follows:

- Determining the key issues upon which the SA should focus and setting and agreeing sustainability objectives, a process known as 'Scoping';
- Appraisal of the objectives and options for Runcorn Town Centre. The options were considered as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy;
- Appraisal of the Initial Draft SPD; and
- Appraisal of the Consultation Draft SPD, referred to as the 'SA Report' (this report).

SCOPING

The aim of the scoping stage is to determine the key environmental, social and economic issues arising in the SPD area and the borough as a whole and to devise the framework for assessing the plan.

After documenting the sustainability characteristics of the area, and identifying any trends (i.e. is the situation getting better or worse?), other planning documents and policies were reviewed to see how these would influence the SA and the SPD. From the outputs of these two initial stages, the key environmental, social and economic issues and opportunities that relate to the area, and on which the assessment should focus, were established. These issues are described below.

Key Sustainability Issues and Baseline

Key sustainability issues have been identified from the review of planning documentation, information on the existing sustainability characteristics of Runcorn Town Centre and the Borough as a whole and following discussions with HBC. These are described below.

Economic

The Mersey ward, within which the Runcorn Town Centre SPD is located, has a similar economic activity rate compared to the average for Halton Borough Council although this is lower than the North West and England as a whole. The proportion of working age people in the with 'higher end' skills such as a university degree is similar to the Borough but lower than the region, the Greater Merseyside sub region and Great Britain.

There is a reliance on a narrow range of employment sectors such as the manufacturing industry and wholesale and retail trade.

The rate of new business development is slightly above the national average but the survival rate of new business is below the national average.

¹ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

Social

Health standards in Halton Borough are amongst the worst in the country, with life expectancy in the Borough well below the national average.

Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high compared to the rest of the country. However, the actual overall crime rate has seen a decrease in 2007 and all areas of crime apart from burglary, criminal damage and other offences have seen a decrease.

There is increased demand for affordable housing as there have been significant house price increases across Halton over the last five years, although house prices are still well below the national average. The number of single person households is increasing and there is an increased demand for supported housing for the elderly.

Environmental

The chemical and tanning industries have left the Borough of Halton with a serious problem of contaminated and derelict land which can be an obstacle to regeneration. Despite intense efforts to deal with the huge legacy of dereliction and contamination, a great deal of such land remains. River quality in Halton is below the regional average and no rivers are classed as being of very good quality. However the quality of rivers such as the Mersey is improving.

Runcorn Town Centre is at a low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea although the flood risks associated with the Manchester Ship Canal are unknown.

There has been an increase in the total amount of municipal waste produced in the Borough although there has been a very slight increase in the amount of waste recovered and composted.

There are a number of listed buildings within the SPD Boundary and there is also a reasonable probability of intact archaeological deposits in some areas. The Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) is adjacent to the SPD boundary.

SA Objectives

Based on the key issues and the objectives developed during the production of the Core Strategy Scoping Report, eighteen SA Objectives were developed as shown below.

- 1) To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate;
- 2) To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment;
- 3) To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development;
- 4) To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business;
- 5) To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes);
- 6) To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment;
- 7) To improve health and reduce health inequalities;
- 8) To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime;
- 9) To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing;
- 10) To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities;
- 11) To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace;
- 12) To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities;
- 13) To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters;
- 14) To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity;
- 15) To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates;
- 16) To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources;

- 17) To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets; and
- 18) To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources.

Consultations on the Scope

Consultations on the key issues and SA objectives were undertaken in December 2008/January 2009 with English Heritage, Natural England (formerly English Nature and the Countryside Agency), and the Environment Agency to confirm that they were in agreement with the findings of the initial stages, and to provide an opportunity to suggest changes to the assessment. Consultation with these bodies is a legal requirement however in addition, the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service was also included in the consultation exercise. No changes were made to the objectives listed above but revisions were made to the indicators and targets in some cases.

INITIAL SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (JANUARY 2008 – MARCH 2008)

One of the requirements of SA is to consider alternative approaches to achieving the objectives of the plan, so that the effects of these alternatives can be assessed.

Two options for the Runcorn Town Centre SPD Area were assessed against the agreed SA objectives. The purpose of this appraisal, known as an 'Initial Sustainability Appraisal', was to help to guide the Council on choosing their Preferred Option. Whilst each option had some positive and negative elements, Halton Borough Council was able to use the analysis together with public consultation and economic analysis to choose and refine the Preferred Option.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTION (JANUARY 2009)

This stage of the SA involved predicting the environmental, social and economic effects that were likely to result from the implementation of the Preferred Option, and then evaluating the significance of the predicted effects. A sustainability appraisal was undertaken on the initial draft of the SPD to identify whether the sustainability performance of the SPD could be improved and provide recommendations for improvement, where appropriate. These recommendations were incorporated into the Consultation Draft SPD which was re-assessed against the SA Framework. The results are summarised below.

Significant Positive Effects

Significant positive effects include:

Objective SA4 - there will be significant positive effects on the competitiveness and productivity of business through the provision of new business sites and improved accessibility;

Objective SA5 – the SPD should have a significant positive effect on the vitality and viability of Runcorn Town Centre through improved access into the town, redevelopment of new sites and existing vacant and underdeveloped sites and improvements to the public realm.

Objective SA6 – the overall image of the Borough will be improved and promoted through the redevelopment of the road system to improve accessibility, the provision of new business and leisure sites, the provision of new quality housing and the improvement and development of greenspaces and public realm;

Objective SA8 – The provision of greater employment opportunities should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation, such as crime. New developments are required to incorporate the principles of Secured by Design;

Objective SA10 – Promotion of walking and cycling and delinking of the existing infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge should result in improved access; and

Objective SA11 – public realm improvements, the development and improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes and potential improvements to the waterside and Canalside environments will enhance access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace.

Significant Negative Effects

No negative effects have been identified.

Significant Uncertainties

There are a number of cases where the effect of the plan is uncertain. Significant uncertainties include:

Objective SA2 – Links to existing educational establishments should be improved but new residential development could put pressure on existing schools and colleges;

Objective SA7 – New residential development could put pressure on existing health facilities. However, the development of new amenity spaces and pedestrian and cycle routes will help to encourage active lifestyles;

Objective SA18 - new developments will make efficient use of land by reusing brownfield sites but the construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.

Mitigation Measures

SA Guidance requires that measures should be considered to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects that have been identified during the assessment process.

Where uncertainties have been identified during the assessment process, mitigation measures have been proposed to prevent or reduce the severity of the effect. For example, requiring new developments to meet specific environmental standards such as BREEAM and/or Code for Sustainable Homes.

HOW THE ASSESSMENT HAS INFLUENCED THE PLAN

The process of undertaking sustainability appraisal on the emerging options for the Runcorn Town Centre SPD is an interactive process which informs the option development process. This has resulted in:

- Revisions to the SPD objectives as a result of the initial SA stages;
- Guiding the selection and wording of the Preferred Option; and
- Recommending mitigation measures to include within the Preferred Option.

MONITORING PROPOSALS

The monitoring proposals will allow action to be taken to reduce and/or offset any significant effects on society, economy and the environment. Where possible the monitoring will make use of existing arrangements, such as those reported in the Halton Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report. The recommended monitoring includes:

- The amount of new employment development;
- Level of crime within the area;
- The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria;
- Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle; and
- The accessibility of Halton's Natural Green spaces.

NEXT STEPS

The SPD and Sustainability Appraisal will be made available to a wide audience of consultees including the general public to enable them to comment. The responses will be reviewed and changes made to the SPD, where considered appropriate. Should significant changes be made to the SPD, these will be subject to further Sustainability Appraisal. The SPD will then be formally adopted by Halton Borough Council.

The Final Sustainability Appraisal Report

1. INTRODUCTION

Runcorn Town Centre is one of three main shopping locations within Halton Borough. Halton Borough Council has prepared a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to update and build upon the Council's previous 1997 Town Centre Strategy and develop the opportunities set out within the draft Runcorn Town Centre Strategy issued for public consultation in February 2007. Runcorn Town Centre was also identified within the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy as one of five key Action Areas for Regeneration as a result of the new bridge proposed across the River Mersey. The Regeneration Strategy focuses on the regeneration opportunities that the proposed second crossing of the Mersey Gateway will create and how those opportunities may be realised.

The new bridge is intended to become the main crossing over the Mersey with the Silver Jubilee Bridge acting as a crossing for local traffic, buses, pedestrians and cyclists. Some of the existing road infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge will therefore be removed and reconfigured. This would result in some areas of land, including land within Runcorn Town Centre, becoming available for development and enables the existing road infrastructure into Runcorn Town Centre to be improved.

The Regeneration Strategy reviewed the issues and options for future development within each of the five key Action Areas and a Preferred Option for each area was selected based on community consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal and Economic Viability Analysis. The Regeneration Strategy does not contain policies but was adopted by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to guide future policy development. The Preferred Option for Runcorn Town Centre and policies to guide the regeneration of this area have now been formalised in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Runcorn Town Centre SPD has been prepared by GVA Grimley on behalf of Halton Borough Council (HBC).

Waterman Energy, Environment & Design (WEED) was appointed to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD in order to meet the requirements of planning legislation³ and regulations⁴. The combined SEA and SA process is subsequently referred to as SA only. The main purpose of SA is to test whether implementation of the SPD is likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects. If significant negative effects are identified, recommendations are made as to how these can be avoided, offset or reduced. Recommendations are also made on how to enhance beneficial effects. A programme to monitor significant effects is also required. The SA of the SPD draws upon the SA undertaken of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy which included an assessment of the objectives and options for Runcorn Town Centre. The draft SPD was then reviewed against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and advice and guidance was provided aid GVA Grimley and HBC to finalise the SPD for consultation.

This report provides a summary of the SA undertaken including the Scoping Stage, the Initial SA of the Runcorn Town Centre Objectives and Options, the SA of the initial draft SPD and the SA of the Consultation Draft SPD.

2. THE RUNCORN TOWN CENTRE SPD

The Vision for the SPD is therefore to: *'re-establish Runcorn Town Centre as a vibrant waterside location that provides for the day to day shopping needs of it's immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to the neighbouring town centre, as a focus for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers, and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity'*.

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³ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

Objective 2 – Expand Specialist Retail & Leisure Role: Providing accommodation and development opportunities for the refocusing of the role of the Town Centre for specialist niche traders to complement the roles of the Borough's other town centres and capitalise on the 'market town' appeal. Initiate physical opportunities for the development of leisure uses in the Town Centre – particularly in the new Canal Quarter- to develop a vibrant, cultural and safe day and night-time economy building on the achievements at The Brindley.

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Objective 6 – Sustainable Development: To use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing re-use, recycling and recovery of waste.

3. THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL PROCESS

3.1 BACKGROUND

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) to be carried out on Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SAs help planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans through a structured assessment of the objectives and policies against key sustainability issues for the area.

Planning Policy Statement PPS 1: Creating Sustainable Communities⁵ sets out the Government's vision and policies and proposals for achieving sustainable development. It states that:

'A Sustainability Appraisal is intended to assess the impact of plan policies from an environmental, economic and social perspective. It is first and foremost a process. It is intended to test the performance of a plan against the objectives of sustainable development and thereby provide the basis for its improvement.'

In line with Government guidance, the SA is also designed to meet the requirements of EU Directive 2001/04 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive or SEA Directive. The Directive applies to a wide range of plans and programmes, including SPDs. SEA is a process to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision-makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided.

⁵ Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities, ODPM, 2004.

The objective of the SEA Directive is:

'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, with a view to promoting sustainable development'⁶.

3.2 THE APPROACH

SEA and SA are very closely related. SA aims to integrate sustainability issues into decision making by appraising the plan or strategy using environmental, social and economic objectives. SEA also aims to facilitate sustainable development but its emphasis is on integrating environmental considerations into decision making through a thorough analysis of environmental issues.

The approach adopted in this SA incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations and follows the stages of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (formerly the ODPM) guidance⁷, as set out below.

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

A1: Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives

A2: Collect baseline information

A3: Identify sustainability issues and problems

A4: Develop the SA Framework

A5: Consult on the scope of the SA

Stage B: Developing and Refining Options and Assessing Effects

B1: Test the SPD objectives against the SA Framework

B2: Develop the SPD options

B3: Predict the effects of the SPD

B4: Evaluate the effects of the SPD

B5: Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects

B6: Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD

Stage C: Preparing the SA Report

C1: Prepare the SA Report

Stage D: Consult on the Preferred Options of the SPD and the SA Report

D1: Enable public participation on the Preferred Options of the SPD and the SA Report

D2: Appraise significant changes

D3: Make decisions and provide information

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD

E1: Finalise aims and methods for monitoring

E2: Respond to adverse effects

⁶ EC Directive 2001/42/EC

⁷ 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, department of Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM), 2005

This report represents Stage C of the above process and follows on from a Scoping Stage and an Initial SA which assessed two options for development and the draft SPD.

3.3 SEA SIGNPOSTING

The SEA Directive, as implemented by the Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, places certain requirements which must be addressed through the assessment and reporting process. These are the same for all SEA assessments, irrespective of whether or not they are incorporated into Sustainability Appraisal, as they are in this case.

The following table lists the requirements of the Directive, and provides sign-posting as to where in the Sustainability Appraisal Report they have been covered.

Table 3.1: Requirements of the SEA Directive

Requirements of the SEA Directive	Where covered in appraisal process
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex 1):	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5 and Appendix B
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5 and Appendix B
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43 EEC;	Section 5 and Appendix B
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 5 and Appendix A
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological, heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Section 7 and Appendix F
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 7
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Sections 6 and 7
i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Section 8
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Non Technical Summary
The report must include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or	Ongoing throughout the

Requirements of the SEA Directive	Where covered in appraisal process
programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2).	appraisal process and report writing
Consultation: Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4).	Section 5 and Appendix C
Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2).	Consultation has been undertaken in the development of the SPD and will be undertaken on the draft plan before adoption
Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7)	N/A. Effects on other EU member states are not envisaged.
Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art. 7 must be informed and the following made available to those informed: the plan or programme as adopted a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8 and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9).	This will be prepared at adoption.
Monitoring of the significant environmental of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art.10)	Recommended monitoring is set out in Section 8.
Quality Assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive	All the SA Reports are checked to ensure they are of a sufficient standard.

4. SA REPORT STRUCTURE

This SA Report has been structured as follows:

Section 5 provides details of the scoping stage of the SA. This includes the other relevant plans, programmes and strategies that have been taken into consideration as part of the assessment process; a summary baseline characterisation of the social, economic, and environmental information for Runcorn Town Centre; a summary of the key sustainability issues based on the baseline research; and the Sustainability Appraisal Framework which provides the structure through which the assessment has taken place.

Section 6 provides details of the Initial SA including the review of the objectives and options for Runcorn Town Centre against the SA objectives.

Section 7 presents a summary of the findings of the SA of the Preferred Option.

Section 8 suggests methods of monitoring the predicted significant effects and uncertainties.

Section 9 describes the next steps towards implementation of the SPD.

Appendices are contained within a separate document and include further detail on the baseline information, full Sustainability Appraisal Framework and appraisal undertaken.

A **Non Technical Summary (NTS)** has also been prepared to provide a summary, in non-technical language, of the principal findings of the SA.

5. SA SCOPING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first phase of the SA was a Scoping Report, which identified the key issues facing Runcorn Town Centre and set out 18 Sustainability Objectives against which the SPD would be assessed.

The objectives that were used to test whether the SPD contributes towards achieving sustainable development were taken from those developed during the production of the Core Strategy SA Scoping Report. These were amended, where applicable to ensure that they remained appropriate to the SPD. A summary of the findings of the Scoping Report are set out below and in Appendices A and B. Consultation responses are set out in Appendix C.

5.2 REVIEW OF RELEVANT STRATEGIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

A formal review of relevant policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) was carried out by the Council as part of the SA process for the Core Strategy. A further exercise was undertaken as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy SA scoping exercise, to identify issues, visions and problems within the PPPs of relevance to the SPD. This process reconsidered the following documents:

- International PPPs;
- National PPPs;
- Regional PPPs; and
- Local PPPs.

The main PPP of relevance to the Runcorn Town Centre SPD is the Halton Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. However, a number of other documents contain sustainability objectives and targets and these have been incorporated into the SA Framework, where applicable. The list of PPPs reviewed is contained within Appendix A.

When considering this list, it is important to recognise that no list or review of relevant PPPs can ever be exhaustive and may be added to, as and when required.

5.3 BASELINE CHARACTERISATION

WEED and Halton Borough Council collected information about the current and likely future state of the environment, economy and society at the Scoping Stage to allow the effects of the SPD to be adequately predicted. The baseline data collected has been summarised in the SA Framework in Appendix B. A review of this data has been undertaken in preparing this report to ensure that it remains appropriate.

Trends in performance (i.e. whether something is getting better or worse) were identified where possible and indicator performance was also gauged in relation to wider geographical areas (e.g. regions) where comparable data was available. Key issues identified by the baseline data review are summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Economic, Social and Environmental Issues facing Runcorn Town Centre

Key Issues	Source
Economic	
Unemployment - The official claimant count unemployment rate in Halton halved between 1992 and 1998 and has halved again since. Unemployment rates have generally been some 40% to 50% higher than regional averages though the gap is now narrowing and is presently 15% to 20% higher. In December 2004 the average claimant count was 2.6% compared with the North West average of 2.2%.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Disparity in employment – There remain significant concentrations of unemployment in the 20-29 age band for both males and females. There are also concentrations of unemployment for males in the 30-39 age band and for females in the 17-19 band.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Access to Employment –76.2% of people aged 16-59/64 in Halton are economically active and in full time employment, whilst 23.8% are economically inactive and unemployed. This compares to 76.8% of people aged 16-59/64 in the North West who are economically active and in full time employment with 23.2% economically inactive and unemployed. In Great Britain as a whole 78.6% are economically active and 21.4% are economically inactive.	Office of National Statistics, January 2007 – December 2007
The need to raise the levels of education & skills – The proportion of working age people with 'higher end' skills in Halton is lower than Great Britain, the region and the Greater Merseyside sub region. In 2006, 16.8% of people were qualified to at least NVQ level 4 (a university degree), compared to 26.6% in Great Britain, 24.8% in the North West and 21.3% in Greater Merseyside. Halton's figures have improved by 0.6% since 2005, however other comparator towns saw an average improvement of 3-4%. 22.5% of people in Halton also possessed either no qualifications, or were qualified to NVQ level 1 equivalent in 2006. This is compared to 22.25% in Great Britain, 20.64% regionally, and 20.49% in Greater Merseyside. Whilst this is a big improvement from the 2002-03 figure when 41.7% of the working age population in Halton possessed either no qualifications or were only qualified to NVQ level 1, other areas have improved even more leaving Halton in a worse rank in 2006 than it was in 2002.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008
The need to develop the Knowledge Economy – Halton is one of the lowest ranking districts in the country (374 th out of 408) in terms of the proportion of knowledge workers in the resident population. In 2003 it was 343 rd so there has been a relative decrease in the number of knowledge workers.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008
The need to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship – The level of entrepreneurship is slightly above average with a new business formation rate of 9.9% compared to the national average of 9.4%. The two year survival rate of new business has declined to a level of 79% down from 81.2% in 2000-2002 and compares unfavourably with other comparators including the Great Britain average of 82.1%.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008
Reliance on a narrow economic base and low wage economy – With the exception of chemicals, most local high value added wealth-creating sectors are under-represented within the local economy. Local specialisation is predominantly based within sectors that generate below (local) average GDP per employee, and lower value-added sectors account for close to 60% of estimated GDP. The median gross weekly earnings (full time for resident workers) in 2007 was £427 per week for residents of Halton, compared with £430 for the North West, and £460 for the UK.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008 Nomis 2007
The need to improve the Economy – Halton's economy is relatively small by national standards (the economic scale score of 83.5 is below the national average which is benchmarked to an index score of 100), with low shares of Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment.	The State of the Borough Jan 2008

Key Issues	Source
The need to revitalise the Town Centres – Runcorn Town centre lacks the usual high street nationals but has over 180 shop units and almost 145,000 Sq ft (13,500m ²) of retail floor space, with streets with a unique character and a reasonable quality of external environment. The % of vacant units in Halton Lea and Widnes have increased whilst the % in Runcorn Town Centre has decreased since 1995.	Runcorn Town Centre SPD
The image of the Borough – In 2003 the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. It discovered that there is limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas, in some instances, almost complete lack of awareness of Halton and what it has to offer. There is a tendency not to promote Halton's successes, and too much emphasis on the negative rather than the positive.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Social	
The need to improve health & life expectancy – statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country, with life expectancy in the Borough well below the national average. Women in Halton can expect to live an average of 78.4 years and men to live an average of 74.3 years. This compares to a life expectancy of 80.3 years for woman and 75.75 years for men for the North West. Halton remains relatively unhealthy, ranked 383 rd out of 408 districts in the country, compared to 384 th three years ago.	North West Public Health Observatory, 2008. The State of the Borough Jan 2008
Long-term ill – 41% of Halton's households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness, in comparison to 38.4% of households in the North West and 34.1% in England.	2001 Census
Ageing residents & the need to grow the health-care sector - The 2001 Census shows that 18% of Halton's population were aged 60 or over. The Department of Health suggests that number of very elderly people will rise over the next thirty years and this will increase demands on the NHS and social care providers. Therefore, the effectiveness and efficiency of services must be maximised, and the need for services must be minimised by reducing morbidity and disability in later life.	2001 Census Department of Health
Perception of crime levels and fear of crime – crime / community safety was the top concern for the public, mentioned by four out of five survey respondents as one of the three biggest problems for Halton. Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high; By 2006-07, the total crime score had risen from 103.6 to 114.0 a figure just below the regional average, but 14% above that for England and Wales. In 2002-07 Halton's rank was 79 th out of 376 in terms of total offences per 1000 population. This is compared to 140 th for 2003-04. The actual overall crime rate has seen a 1% decrease in 2007 and all areas of crime apart from burglary, criminal damage and other offences have seen a decrease.	'Quality of Life Survey' of 1999 The State of the Borough Jan 2008 Cheshire Police, 2007
Increased demand for affordable housing – There has been significant house price increases across Halton over the last 5 years but they are still below the average house prices. The average house price in Halton is £116,000 compared to an average house price of £174,000 in England and Wales.	Land Registry, House Price Index Report, August 2008
Providing an appropriate and balanced housing supply – The average household size has fallen from 2.8 in 1991 to 2.44 in 2001, and the proportion of single person households has increased from 22.7% to 27% over the same period. The over 75-year-old group has increased by 17%, which will affect the demand for supported housing provision.	Housing Strategy 2005/06 to 2007/08
Improve access to Services – Halton is ranked 138 th out of 408 districts in Great Britain, for accessibility and connectivity, down slightly from its 2002 rank of 120 th . Halton has an overall connectivity score of 60.4 (indexed against Great Britain), slightly	State of the Borough, 2008. A Community Strategy

Key Issues	Source
below the regional figure of 66.7, and below the national benchmark of 100. The quality and distribution of libraries, One Stop Shops, Post Offices, employment centres and other community resources are an important factor in the quality of life of residents.	for a Sustainable Halton, 2006-2011, Halton Borough Council 2006.
Improve access to Services to those who do not own cars – 29% of all households in Halton do not have access to a car or van. However, there are striking differences between wards with 45% of households in Castlefields; 38% in Riverside; 37% in Halton Lea; 36% in Mersey; and only 6% of households in Beechwood, not having access to a vehicle.	2001 Census
Amount, location and access to Recreational Space – no ward within Halton currently meets the minimum standard of 0.3 hectares of equipped play facilities per 1,000 population, and very few have sufficient areas of formal open space.	PMP Open Space study.
Deprivation – In the 2007 IMD, Halton was rated as one of the most deprived districts in England, but its ranking has improved from 21 st in 2004 to 30 th in 2007 (out of 354 districts in England). There is a high amount of inequality within the district.	2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) State of the Borough Jan 2008
Environmental	
Quality of the Natural Environment – the different elements of the natural environment have been benchmarked, including indicators of weather, tranquillity and natural beauty. Halton scores 72 as an index where the English average is 100, ranking it 249 th out of 354 districts in England for the quality of its natural environment.	State of the Borough Jan 2008
Conserving biodiversity, habitats and species – There are 2 habitats and 7 species that are of particular interest within Halton these are: Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Bluebell, Purple Hairstreak Butterfly, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song thrush and Reed bunting. However, Runcorn Town Centre is not designated for its nature conservation interest and there is no Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Purple Hairstreak Butterfly, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song thrush or Reed bunting recorded on the Local BAP within or near to the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area.	Halton Biodiversity Action Plan, 2003
Ecological Designations - The Mersey Estuary SPA, Ramsar Site and SSSI is adjacent to the SPD boundary. An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy proposals.	English Nature (now Natural England), April 2005
Waste Management – Halton Borough Council deals with about 65,000 tonnes of 'household' waste per year (including the waste which is recycled) (2008). All of this waste goes to make up the total 'municipal' waste in Halton. A kerbside recycling collection scheme is run by the Borough for paper and green waste. A recent kerbside pilot programme for a fortnightly collection of mixed recyclables has been introduced to approximately 6,000 properties in the Borough. Recycling and composting rates have risen from 16% in 2002/03 to 25% in 2006/07. The rate of waste growth has also slowed down and municipal solid waste is projected to increase at +1.25% pa, declining to +1%pa from 2010.	Halton's Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2008 - 2020
Transport congestion & pollution – The major and overriding congestion problem within the Borough is largely restricted to the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which performs both a local function, linking Widnes and Runcorn, and a strategic role for the region. Flows on the bridge regularly reach 90,000 vehicles per day, exceeding its theoretical capacity by 50%.	Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2), March 2006
Air Quality – A 12-month nitrogen dioxide roadside survey was completed in September 2004. No exceedences were found within the boundaries of the SPD. There are no AQMAs within the Borough.	Provisional LTP2

Key Issues	Source
<p>Protecting cultural & built heritage – There are a number of listed structures within the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area including the Aethelfleda Railway Bridge (Grade II Listed). There are no conservation areas within the SPD boundary. Runcorn Town Centre has the potential to develop as a Market Town.</p> <p>There is a reasonable probability of intact archaeological deposits in some areas within the SPD boundary, particularly along the boundary with the Manchester Ship canal/River Mersey.</p>	English Heritage (2005)
<p>Carbon Emissions – It is currently estimated that Merseyside generates 11,018kt carbon emissions – one of the lowest levels for any metropolitan area within the UK. Of the six councils forming Merseyside, Halton had the fourth highest emissions but the highest per capita emissions, which reflects the presence of chemical industries relative to a low population in the area</p>	Merseyside Economic Review, 2008
<p>Ensuring the most effective use of land – Of the total land area within the North West region, 3.5% is classified as derelict land or buildings, compared to an English average of 1.7%. In 2003/4, just over a quarter (29.5%) of new dwellings constructed in the North West in schemes of 10 dwellings or more occurred in low-density schemes (i.e. less than 30 dwellings per hectare).</p>	NLUD 2005
<p>Water resources – Key issues relate to protection of water quality. The principal river in Halton Borough is the River Mersey and this is located beyond the Manchester Ship Canal on the northern boundary to the Runcorn Town Centre SPD Area.</p> <p>The northwest contains a third of the poorest quality rivers in England and Wales. In 2006, no rivers in Halton were rated as having a very good biological or chemical quality. However, over the past 20 years, the water quality of the River Mersey has improved significantly following changes in legislation and investment by industry.</p>	Environment Agency, 2006 Environment Agency 2008
<p>Flood Risk – None of Runcorn Town Centre SPD Area falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3. However, it should be noted that the flood risks associated with the Manchester Ship Canal are unknown. Additionally, new developments could be at risk from flooding from surface water sewers.</p>	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Version 1, Halton Borough Council, 2007 and Environment Agency 2008
<p>Industrial legacy - Dereliction and contamination - Despite reclaiming over 182 hectares of derelict land within the administration boundary of Halton Borough Council between 1994 and 1998, over 200ha – more than 3% of the Borough land surface – remains. The remaining derelict sites are often the more difficult and more expensive to bring back into beneficial use. There has been an increase in the amount of development on PDL with 88% of new and converted dwellings on PDL in 2006/07.</p> <p>The greatest amount of Previously Developed Land (PDL) is within the wards of Ditton, Halton View, Mersey and Riverside.</p>	NLUD 2005 Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007

5.3.1 Difficulties in collecting data and limitations of the data

Ideally the baseline information should relate to 2009. Unfortunately, due to the time it takes to collate data, this has not been possible in many cases. As far as possible the most up-to-date information has been used for each set of data provided.

The information tables also contain some omissions because, in some cases, it has not been possible to establish the most appropriate targets, figures or sources. Some difficulties in collecting data have also been associated with the reliance on external bodies. For example, where external bodies have collected data for their own purposes, in the future the data may not be available, or not available in the same format, in order to make reliable comparisons.

It should be noted that the baseline information represents a 'work in progress' in the sense that it will be added to / amended as new indicators / sources of baseline information come to the attention of WEED or Halton Borough Council.

5.4 THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

The following section presents the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF) against which the policy options taken from the SPD have been assessed. In accordance with Halton Borough Council's intentions, the objectives, targets and indicators that form the SAF within this document are broadly consistent with the SAF developed for the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. However, the SAF has been slightly refined to ensure that it is applicable to the SPD.

The objectives of the SAF have been derived from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive topics and SA themes, including: Biodiversity, Fauna and flora; Population and human health; Water and soil; Air; Climatic factors; Cultural heritage and landscape; Social inclusiveness; and Economic development. Documents such as the Community Strategy, the sub-regionally agreed Merseyside objectives and the regional sustainability framework – 'Action for Sustainability' have also influenced the content of the SAF objectives, indicators and targets.

It should be noted that the SAF objectives are distinct from objectives of the SPD, though they may in some cases overlap. The SAF objectives focus on outcomes (or ends), not on how the outcomes will be achieved (inputs or means).

As the SAF evolves there may be situations that require the framework to be reviewed. These situations could include:

- a) new baseline information emerging that better reflects the current objectives in the sustainability framework;
- b) changes to the objectives in the sustainability framework; and
- c) direction from a consultation body that information within the framework needs amending, such as through consultation on Scoping Reports.

The SAF incorporates changes made as a result of consultation on the Scoping Report (see Section 5.5 below). The full SAF is presented in Appendix B.

Table 5.2: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Runcorn Town Centre SPD

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
Economic		
To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population in employment and unemployment • Job Density
To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people? • Will it provide local employment opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent • % of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4
To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of VAT registered businesses • Percentage of business registrations and de-registrations
To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Value Added (GVA) per head

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide an improvement to one or more of the town centres? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footfall within the town centre Vacancy rates within the town centre
To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage inward investment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects).
Social		
To improve health and reduce health inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly? Will it support healthy lifestyles? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years of healthy life expectancy Number of people who have a long-term illness
To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage crime-sensitive design? Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime? Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded crimes per 1,000 population Number of people reporting fear of crime
To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide for affordable housing for local people? Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout? Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of different housing types and tenures The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria.
To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve transport provision and accessibility? Will it provide for local retail needs? Will it improve public access to services and amenities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre.
To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live? Will it improve access to natural greenspace? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accessibility of Halton's Natural Green spaces.
To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Index of Deprivation Average household income
Environmental		
To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the quality of controlled waters? Will it ensure that the amount of impermeable surfaces/new development within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase? Will it ensure that the amount of surface water runoff does not increase? Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality (chemical & biological) classification of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters and percentage lengths in different classes Amount of new development replacing greenfield land within Flood zones 2 and 3 Proportion of new developments over 1ha incorporating surface water

SA Objectives	SA Sub-Objectives	Indicators and Source
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attenuation and/or sustainable urban drainage systems Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on with flood defence grounds or water quality
To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites, habitats or species of nature conservation value? Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats and/or species? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites Condition of SSSIs - 95% of SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010. (Public Service Agreement (PSA) target) Number and area of Local Wildlife Sites, Wildlife Corridors and Action Areas for People and Nature Distribution of bluebells
To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level and % of household waste recycled Total annual amount of municipal waste generated and % recycled or composted.
To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it minimise the need to travel? Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport? Will it improve air quality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs Travel to work by mode
To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance? Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas Number of buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments 'at risk'.
To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings? Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy? Will it use water efficiently and with care? Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of housing built on previously developed land per (PDL) year Proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources

5.5 CONSULTATION ON THE SA SCOPING REPORT

The SA Scoping Report was issued for a five week consultation period in December 2008/January 2009. In accordance with the SEA Regulations the following statutory consultee bodies were consulted:

- Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency and English Nature)
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage

In addition, the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service was consulted. The following bodies responded to HBC as part of the scoping exercise:

- Environment Agency
- Natural England (re-issue of response to Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy Scoping Report)
- Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service

A summary of the consultation responses is set out in Appendix C and comments directly relating to the objectives or indicators are summarised below (Note: changes that were made as a result of Natural England's consultation response on the Regeneration Strategy have not been repeated below).

- **Objective 9** – An indicator was recommended that measures the environmental performance of new housing development within the SPD area against the Code for Sustainable Homes. For example: *'Proportion of homes assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes'*.
- **Objective 11** – With no LNR within the SPD area it was suggested that the indicator/target reporting loss of LNR is not applicable. A more general indicator such as *'the amount and quality of open space'* supported by a target which ensures no loss of open space was recommended.
- Merseyside EAS does not believe that the indicators 'Population of Skylark breeding pairs' and 'Population of Song Thrush pairs' are relevant to this SPD, as Runcorn Town Centre does not provide suitable habitats for these species and the regeneration proposed over the plan period is unlikely to change this situation appreciably. As such it is considered that the SPD would not be able to deliver these targets.
- In relation to Bluebell the SAF has not provided any data for native Bluebells species within Halton or the SPD area. Merseyside EAS suggested that consideration is given to a scheme of planting native Bluebells along road verges within the SPD area. The indicator and target can be amended accordingly.
- **Objective 13** – It was recommended that the indicator *'New development with sustainable drainage system installed'* should be replaced with *'Proportion of new development with sustainable drainage system installed'*. This would show developments both with and without SuDS installed.

6. THE INITIAL SA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

An Initial SA of the objectives and options for Runcorn Town Centre as set out within the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy was undertaken to inform the development of the Preferred Option. This comprised a review of the Objectives and Options against the SA Framework; recommendations were made for improvement, where appropriate. The SPD Objectives expand upon the Regeneration Strategy Objectives and therefore these revised Objectives were also tested against the SA Framework.

6.2 THE INITIAL SA OF OBJECTIVES

The Runcorn Town Centre SPD Objectives were mapped against the SAF Objectives to determine their compatibility. The majority of the SPD Objectives were seen to be compatible or have no link with the Sustainability Objectives. None of the Objectives were incompatible, however there were a number of cases where the outcome of the SA Objective will be dependent on how the particular Objective is implemented. In addition, a number of the SA Objectives were not covered at all within the Runcorn Town Centre Objectives. Whilst it is not necessary to ensure that every SA Objective is covered as a wider regeneration benefit is sought, it was recommended that an additional Objective be included. Recommendations that were made to improve the Runcorn Town Centre Objectives (either during the SA of the Regeneration Strategy or as a result of testing the revised Objectives set out within the Runcorn Town Centre SPD) to ensure compatibility with the SA Objectives are set out below.

Table 6.1: Initial SA of the Objectives

Changes to objectives recommended in the Initial SA Report	Change made in SPD Consultation Draft?
Recommended New Objective: <i>'Development should use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery of waste'</i> . [NB: this formed a priority objective of the Regeneration Strategy but had not been carried over into the Runcorn Town Centre SPD.]	✓ (New Objective 6)
Runcorn Objective 1 (largely the same as Regeneration Strategy Runcorn Objective 4): could refer to access routes being designed according to Secured by Design principles. This would help to meet SA Objective 8.	✓
Runcorn Objective 3 (largely the same as Regeneration Strategy Runcorn Objective 2): could include an addition that all development protects, enhances and manages the cultural and built and natural environment. This will help to meet SA Objectives 13 and 17.	✓
Runcorn Objective 5 (an expanded version of Regeneration Strategy Runcorn Objective 1): could be re-worded as 'Increase, and diversify, the housing offer within Runcorn, <i>providing resource efficient and affordable housing</i> – with a particular focus on developing sites with high potential in Runcorn Town Centre to meet forecast population expansion.' This will help to meet SA Objectives 9, 12 and 18.	✓

6.3 INITIAL SA OF THE OPTIONS

The Options for Runcorn Town Centre, as set out within the Regeneration Strategy Issues and Options report were appraised against the SA Framework (Appendix D). In terms of the overall appraisal of the Options, the effects on the economic and social SA Objectives were generally assessed as likely to be beneficial. However, the effect on a number of the environmental objectives was found to be either negative or uncertain due to the environmental effects inherent in redevelopment or a lack of information. It was recommended that the Preferred Option include reference to healthcare, a requirement for crime sensitive design, targets for affordable homes provision, a requirement to achieve environmental design standards eg BREEAM/Code for Sustainable Homes, reference to waste minimisation, and a requirement to assess the effects on the built environment, including archaeology. Specific findings are presented below and the appraisal against the full SA Framework is presented in Appendix D.

- Options 1 and 2 perform very similarly with both enhancing the economy through the development of new office and retail space; improving the vitality and viability of Runcorn Town Centre by making modifications to the 'Runcorn Loops' to increase accessibility; and creating new pedestrian routes and cycleways to improve access to the town centre and railway station;

- Option 2 may perform slightly better by providing more jobs. Option 2 also slightly improves accessibility into the centre of Runcorn Town Centre by changing the east bound slip road from the A533 into a two way road terminating at a new crossroad junction directly into the town centre; and
- Both Options involve demolition and construction leading to waste generation and resource use which will have a negative impact and the Preferred Option should consider methods to reduce waste generation such as requiring contractors to re-use and recycle waste and requiring environmental design standards to be achieved, eg Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM.

6.4 CONSULTATION AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED OPTION

As identified above, both options perform very similarly against the SA Framework with the only potential difference being that Option 2 may result in improved accessibility to the centre of Runcorn Town Centre. GVA Grimley and Halton Borough Council therefore used the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, together with the findings of public consultation, stakeholder dialogue and economic viability analysis to choose and refine the Preferred Option. The Preferred Option chosen was Option 2.

7. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This stage of the SA involves predicting the environmental, social and economic effects that are likely to result from the implementation of the Preferred Option, and then evaluating the significance of the predicted effects.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

7.2.1 Testing the Plan Objectives

The Runcorn Town Centre Objectives that had been revised following the Initial SA Stage, and which now form the SPD Objectives, were retested against the Sustainability Objectives to determine their compatibility. The results are shown in Appendix E. This shows that the majority of the SPD Objectives are either compatible or have no obvious relation with the Sustainability Objectives. There are no conflicts between the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and the Objectives of the SPD. A number of the SPD Objectives through being revised have improved in compatibility with the Sustainability Objectives. However, there are still a number of question marks where it is unclear how the Objectives of the SPD will impact on the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives, as there is not enough information to assess the impact. For example, whilst SPD Objective 3 aims to improve community facilities, there is no specific information on the types of facilities that may be provided. The effect on SA Objectives 2 and 4 (health and education) is therefore uncertain.

7.2.2 Testing the Initial draft SPD Preferred Option

The assessment was carried out by assessing the initial draft SPD policies against the SA Objectives. A number of recommendations were made to improve the draft SPD including:

- Require SuDS to be incorporated into new developments where appropriate;
- Require measures to be adopted to enhance biodiversity;
- Require developers to undertake an archaeological assessment where necessary and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide; and
- Require commercial developments to achieve a BREEAM rating of Very Good and encourage renewable energy generation (a requirement to achieve a minimum of a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 was already included in the draft SPD).

All of the above recommendations have been incorporated into the consultation draft SPD.

7.2.3 Testing the Consultation Draft SPD Preferred Option

Following amendments to the Initial Draft SPD as a result of internal consultation within Halton Borough Council and the SA, the Consultation Draft was retested against the SA Framework. The assessment table is included in full in Appendix F with Section 7.3 below summarising the significant positive and negative effects, as well as where the effects are uncertain. The assessment table in Appendix F provides commentary on the scale and timing of the effect with a brief justification for the assessment. The assessment considers potential cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects of the policies within the plan as a whole as this was considered more beneficial than assessing each individual policy in isolation. The assessment was undertaken using professional judgement and by comparing the potential effects to the baseline situation.

Based on the assessment tables, the performance of the policies against the SA sub-objectives has been summarised in Section 7.3 below.

7.3 SUMMARY OF THE APPRAISAL

Significant Positive Effects

A number of sites will be redeveloped for commercial uses and access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through the removal of Runcorn Loops. This will have a significant positive effect on the competitiveness and productivity of businesses (Objective SA4) as they will be able to reach wider markets and customers and there will be greater access to basic goods, services and amenities for local residents (Objective SA10). Access to goods and services will also be improved through provision of new convenience shops and improvements to the public realm, pedestrian and cycle routes and signage within the Town Centre.

The vitality and viability of Runcorn Town Centre (Objective SA5) and the overall image of the Borough (Objective SA6) will be improved and promoted through provision of new and enhanced retail, leisure and cultural facilities, public realm improvements and enhanced accessibility. This will also have a significant positive effect on objective SA11 to ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace.

The regeneration of the area together with the requirement to incorporate Secured by Design principles and provision for a neighbourhood centre should help to reduce crime and the fear of crime (SA8).

Significant Negative Effects

No negative effects have been identified.

Uncertainties

The provision of new health and education facilities falls outside of the scope of the SPD although improved access will be created, particularly to Riverside College, and new pedestrian and cycle facilities should result in more active lifestyles. However, there is uncertainty with regard to the capacity of the existing facilities given the increase in population resulting from new residential development (Objectives SA 2 and SA7).

The use of renewable energy is encouraged to minimise resource use but no specific targets have been set (Objective SA18). The implementation of these elements of the SPD will therefore determine the nature of the effect.

7.4 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

There remain a number of uncertainties in the assessment due to the strategic nature of the SPD, which means that specific effects cannot be determined at this stage. The timeframe for development also leads to uncertainties as it is difficult to determine the future baseline scenario. Nevertheless, the

recommendations made together with other Council policies to control future development should ensure that the effects of the SPD are positive.

The assessment assumes that the General Development Principles will be implemented and effective.

8. MONITORING PROPOSALS

The SEA Directive explicitly requires monitoring of the significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the SPD. A monitoring system is being designed which will help to fulfil the following requirements:

- To provide baseline data for the next SA and to provide a picture of how the environment / sustainability criteria of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD Area is evolving;
- To monitor the significant effects or uncertainties of the SPD; and
- To ensure that action can be taken to reduce / offset the significant effects of the SPD.

Monitoring already plays a large role in the performance management of Halton Borough Council, and monitoring is being undertaken for the Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs), which have been introduced to track the performance of the Local Development Scheme and associated documents. There is also considerable monitoring activity being carried out for other plans and programmes (e.g. the Local Transport Plan) and by bodies such as the Environment Agency.

Where relevant, use will be made of these existing monitoring processes for the monitoring proposed as part of this SA to avoid duplication of effort.




The monitoring measures proposed in this section relate to the significant positive and negative effects that have been predicted to result from implementation of the SPD, as well as any areas where there was significant uncertainty in the prediction.

The significant effects of the SPD will be monitored on an annual basis through the AMR unless otherwise stated. However, it is noted that the monitoring requirements may change as a result of changes to the SPD following consultation or due to other external influences on the baseline situation (the AMR will be revised on a yearly basis).

In light of the changes that may arise prior to plan adoption, the monitoring proposals presented below should therefore be viewed as provisional.

Table 8.1 sets out the indicators that are proposed to monitor the significant effects and uncertainties that have been predicted to arise on the implementation of the SPD.

The following key is used to identify the type of effect to be monitored.

-  Significant Positive Effect
-  Negative Effect
-  Uncertain Effect

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Table 8.1: Monitoring Proposals to Assess Significant Effects and Major Uncertainties

Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁸
SA2 – To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment				
The new residential development could put some pressure on existing education services.	?	School class sizes/capacity	No	
SA4 – To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business				
The preferred option will redevelop and provide a number of new sites for business development. This will include the provision of high quality office and light industrial units.	✓✓	Amount of completed office, retail and leisure development	Yes	Core
		Amount of floor space developed for employment by type in employment or regeneration areas	Yes	Core
		GVA per head	Yes	Contextual
SA5 - To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes)				
The preferred option for Runcorn will regenerate the town centre through the provision of new development providing employment and leisure uses. Access will be enhanced through improvements to the road network and pedestrian and cyclepath provision.	✓✓	Footfall within town centres	Yes	SA
		Vacancy rates within the Town Centres	Yes	SA
SA6 – To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment				
The preferred option will encourage inward investment through the provision of a greater range of land uses and employment opportunities.	✓✓	Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development	Yes	Core

⁸ The type of indicator has been identified based on the criteria given in the Annual Monitoring Report.

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Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁸
The landscaping and improvement of the public realm will help to enhance the image of the area.		Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects)	No	
		Visitor numbers to Halton	No	
SA7 – To improve health and reduce health inequalities				
The proposals do not include any specific enhancements to health facilities and an increased population as a result of new residential development could put pressure on existing local health facilities.	?	GP list sizes	No	
SA8 - To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime				
Regeneration of the area should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. The SPD requires reference to be made to Secured by Design in the development of new housing.	✔✔	Recorded crimes per 1,000 population	Yes	National
		Number of people reporting fear of crime	No	
SA10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities				
The preferred option will alter the layout of the existing road system so access to Runcorn Town Centre is simplified. Pedestrian and cycle routes will also be created and new convenience stores developed.	✔✔	Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP, a hospital, a primary school, secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre(s)	Yes	Core
		Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle	Yes	National

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Significant Effect/ Uncertain Effect	Effect	Monitoring Proposal	Included in AMR 2007 or national datasets?	Type of indicator ⁸
<i>SA11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace</i>				
A number of sites will be promoted for leisure uses and there will be pedestrian and cycle routes linking these spaces with the town centre and residential areas. There is also potential for the Bridgewater Canal to be extended to the Manchester Ship Canal (Policy HS2) which would provide new and improved leisure opportunities.	✓✓	The accessibility of Halton's Natural Green spaces.	No	Will be included in future.
<i>SA18 To use land, energy and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources</i>				
The preferred option will make efficient use of land by using brownfield sites. However new construction will increase energy and resource use.	?	The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria.	No	Will be included in future AMRs
		Renewable energy capacity installed by type	Yes	Core

9. CONSULTATION ON THE SA REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

The consultation draft SPD and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal report will be issued for public consultation in February/March 2009. Comments made on the SPD will be reviewed and where necessary, amendments will be made to the SPD. Any significant changes will be subject to further Sustainability Appraisal. The SPD will then be finalised and adopted by the Council. An Adoption Statement will be prepared to summarise the SA process and provide final monitoring proposals for the SPD.

Runcorn Town Centre SPD
**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
REPORT APPENDICES**

Runcorn Town Centre
SPD

**SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL REPORT
APPENDICES**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Plans, Policies and Programmes Reviewed

Appendix B: Baseline Data

Appendix C: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Appendix D: Consultation Responses on the SA Scoping Report

Appendix E: Testing the Options

Appendix F: Testing the Revised Plan Objectives

Appendix G: Testing the Preferred Option

APPENDIX A – ASSESSMENT OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The following Plans, Policies and Programmes have been reviewed as part of this Sustainability Appraisal. Applicable targets have been selected and incorporated into the SA Framework in Appendix B.

International PPPs

- Johannesburg Declaration
- Kyoto Protocol
- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)
- EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan
- Habitats Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Birds Directive
- Air Quality Directive
- Waste Framework Directive
- Directive to Promote Electricity from Renewable Energy
- Aarhus Convention

National PPPs

- Securing the Future - UK Government sustainable development strategy
- Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation
- Energy White Paper: Our Energy Future
- Urban White Paper
- The Future of Transport: a network for 2030. White Paper
- The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Working together for clean air (DETR, 2000)
- Water Resources for the Future – A Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2001)
- Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 2006
- Biodiversity Duty
- UK BAP
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 – Creating Sustainable Communities
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) Climate Change- Supplement to PPS 1 document on Climate Change
- Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 2 – Green Belt
- PPS 3 – Housing
- PPG 4 – Industrial, commercial development and small firms
- PPS 6 – Planning for Town Centres
- PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks
- PPG 13 – Transport

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- PPG 14 – Development on Unstable Land
- PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG 16 – Archaeology and Planning
- PPG 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPG 20 – Coastal Planning
- PPG 21 – Tourism
- PPS 22 – Renewable Energy
- PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control
- PPG 24 – Planning and Noise
- PPS 25 – Development and Flood Risk
- UK Climate Change Programme
- A Space for Nature (Natural England)
- Waste Strategy for England, 2007

Regional PPPs

- North West of England Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021.
- Regional Economic Strategy
- The Cultural Strategy for England's North West 2001
- Advancing Sustainable Energy – A Sustainable Energy Strategy for the North West
- North West Regional Freight Strategy
- Regional Waste Strategy for the North West – September 2004
- Regional Housing Strategy for the North West
- Investment for Health A Plan For North West England 2003
- Action for Sustainability
- Rising to the Challenge: A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest
- North West Best Practice Design Guide (2006)
- Draft Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West (2006)

Local PPPs

- Halton Unitary Development Plan
- Core Strategy- Issues and Options Consultation Document 1
- Corporate Plan for Halton Borough Council
- Community Strategy, 2006-2011
- Local Transport Plan (LTP2)
- Halton Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2007
- Housing Strategy
- Halton's Natural Assets Strategy
- 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- Sports Strategy 2006 - 2009
- Safer Halton Partnership
- Strategy 2005-2008

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- Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Waterside Development Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- LA 21 Strategy Action Plan for Halton

APPENDIX B SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Economic	1. To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	Social inclusiveness Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs? 	Population in employment and unemployment	To bring employment and unemployment rates in line with England and Wales rate by 2021.	<p>By 2001, Halton borough was ranked as the 18th most deprived English local authority area overall, with complex problems of poverty and social exclusion. Eight of Halton's 21 wards rank in the lowest 10% for employment, and unemployment among under-25s was the second highest in England. Nevertheless, in recent years the borough has shown some of the strongest improvements in the region in this area and economic activity rates in Halton are now similar to the rest of the North West but slightly lower than Great Britain as a whole.</p> <p>72.1% people aged 16-59/64 within the Mersey Ward are economically active (<i>Source: Census, 2001</i>). This compares to 76.2% of people aged 16-59/64 in Halton are economically active and in full time employment, whilst 23.8% are economically inactive and unemployed. In the North West 76.8% of people aged 16-59/64 are economically active and in full time employment with 23.2% economically inactive and unemployed. In Great Britain as a whole 78.6% are economically active and 21.4% are economically inactive (<i>Source: Office of National Statistics, January 2007 – December 2007</i>)</p>
				Job Density	To bring Halton's job density in line with England and Wales densities by 2016.	<p>The 2003 job density (the ratio between total jobs to working age people), in Halton (0.76) is lower than the regional (0.81) and national average (0.83).</p> <p>The 2005 job density in Halton (0.80) is the same as the regional figure but still lower than the national (0.84) average (<i>Source: Nomis, 2005</i>)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	2. To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	Social inclusiveness Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people? • Will it provide training opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses? 	% of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent	Increase proportions achieving five or more GCSE's at Grades A*-C to 60% by 2010. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	<p>Parts of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area fall within the 20% most deprived in terms of Education, Skills and Training (<i>Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007</i>). However, the Mersey Ward as a whole has similar levels of Education and Skills to that of Halton Borough Council as a whole.</p> <p>The proportion of students achieving GCSE's at grades A-C is as follows:</p> <p>2005 - 49.2% (does not have to include Maths and English)</p> <p>2006 - 52.6% (does not have to include Maths and English)</p> <p>2006 - 33.3% (including Maths and English)</p> <p>(<i>Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families</i>)</p>
				% of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4	<p>Increase the % of adults qualified to Level 3 to 70% by 2010.</p> <p>Reduce the number of adults with no qualifications to 10% by 2010.</p> <p>(Community Strategy, 2006-2011)</p>	<p>The % of adults with no qualifications: Halton – 22.5%, GB – 22.25%, NW – 20.64%, Greater Merseyside – 20.49%</p> <p>The % of adults qualified to NVQ4 and above: Halton – 16.8%, GB – 26.6%, NW - 24.8%, Greater Merseyside – 21.3%.</p> <p>(<i>Source: State of the Borough 2008, Halton Borough Council</i>)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Economic	3. To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses? 	Total number of VAT registered businesses	To increase the number of VAT registered businesses by 15% by 2010. (Community Strategy 2006-2011)	Traditionally, employment in Halton was concentrated within a small number of large, mostly manufacturing, companies. Like many other parts of the North of England with a similar historical dependence on the manufacturing sector, Halton has typically suffered from low rates of business starts ups and low business densities. However, VAT registered businesses have been increasing year on year as follows: 2,185 (2004) 2,305 (2005) 2,415 (2006) (Source: Nomis)
				Percentage of business registrations and de-registrations	To increase the % of VAT registrations whilst decreasing the % of de-registrations	% of VAT Registrations: 2004 - 10.8 % VAT registrations and 9.8% de-registrations (Source: InterDepartmental Business Register (IDBR), Nomis, 2004) 2005 - 10.8 % VAT registrations and 7.4% de-registrations 2006 - 9.7% VAT registrations and 7.5% de-registrations. The figure for the North West is 9.6% VAT registrations and 7.3% deregistrations. In Great Britain the figure is 9.4% VAT registrations and 7.4% de-registrations. (Source: DTI Small Business Service – VAT registrations/deregistrations by industry, Nomis 2006)
	4. To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness? 	Gross Value Added (GVA) per head	Sustain levels of GVA at above the regional norm. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	GVA per head for Halton and Warrington was £19,766. This compares to a GVA per head for Merseyside of £12,488. Gross weekly pay full-time in Halton is £427 compared to £430 in the North West and £460 in Great Britain. (Source: Merseyside Economic Review, 2007)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	5. To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes)	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide an improvement to one or more of the town centres? 	Footfall within the town centre	Increase footfall through each town centre by 25% by 2010. (Community Strategy)	<p>There are 3 town centres in Halton: Halton Lea, Widnes and Runcorn Town Centre. Runcorn Town Centre is the smallest of the three. Runcorn was designated a New Town in 1964. Whilst this resulted in new jobs and population growth it also led to the decline and neglect of the old town centre. Whilst funding was received in 1996 to tackle the historic legacy of industrial decline and the negative effects of the New Town, significant regeneration and investment is still required. Runcorn Town Centre lacks the usual high street nationals but has over 180 shop units and almost 145,000 Sq ft (13,500m2) of retail floor space, with streets with a unique character and a reasonable quality of external environment. However, poor access – served by a convoluted route off the expressway has had an impact upon the town's visibility, which detracts from the experience for visitors, workers, and shoppers, and undermines the town's role as a convenience centre. The Town centre also has a swimming pool, entertainment venues, clubs, pubs, and cultural and educational facilities (including the award winning Brindley Arts Centre) and a range of residential property arranged around the centre.</p> <p>Average weekly footfall within Halton Lea of 292,605</p> <p>Average monthly footfall for Widnes 595,747 (July – Nov 2005)</p> <p>Average monthly footfall for Runcorn Town Centre 187,207 (July – Nov 2005)</p> <p><i>(Source: Halton Lea – Brandspace, Runcorn and Widnes – Halton Borough Council Footfall Counters)</i></p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Economic				Vacancy rates within the town centre	Decrease vacancy levels year on year.	The % of vacant units in Halton Lea and Widnes has increased whilst the % in Runcorn Town Centre has decreased since 1995. Number of vacant units in 2005 Halton Lea – 35 Widnes – 4 Runcorn Town Centre – 41 <i>(Source: Town Centre Survey 2005, Halton Borough Council)</i>
	6. To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage inward investment? 	Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects).	To increase the number of investment enquiries and the number of conversions.	In 2003 the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. It discovered that there is limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas, in some instances, almost complete lack of awareness of Halton and what it has to offer <i>(Source: Halton Gateway to Prosperity 2005-2008)</i> . Investment enquiries 2004/5: 317 enquiries 42 conversions <i>(Source: Economic Development, Halton Borough Council)</i>
Social	7. To improve health and reduce health inequalities	Population and human health, Social inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly? Will it support healthy lifestyles? 	Years of healthy life expectancy	Narrow the gap between life expectancy, in Halton and the national average by at least 10% by 2010. (Community Strategy)	Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country with low standards of life expectancy. Although life expectancy rates have been improving, these have not kept pace with other local authorities. Halton: Males – 74.3 years; Females – 78.4 years North West: Males – 75.7 years; Females – 80.3 years UK: Males – 76 years; females – 81 years <i>(Source: North West Public Health Observatory, 2008)</i>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Social				Number of people who have a long-term illness	To reduce the % of residents with a long-term illness to within 1.5% of the England & Wales %.	<p>41% of Halton's households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness, in comparison to 38.4% of households in the North West and 34.1% in England. (<i>Source: 2001 Census</i>).</p> <p>21.5% of residents in Halton considered themselves to have a limiting long-term illness, compared to 18.2% for England and Wales as a whole (<i>Source: 2001 Census</i>)</p> <p>Parts of Runcorn Town Centre fall within the 5% most deprived in terms of Health (<i>Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007</i>).</p>
	8. To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	Social inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage crime-sensitive design? • Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime? • Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour? 	Recorded crimes per 1,000 population	To reduce number of offences per 1,000 population.	<p>Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high: By 2006-07, the total crime score in Halton had risen from 103.6 to 114.0 a figure just below the regional average, but 14% above that for England and Wales. In 2006-07 Halton's rank was 79th out of 376 in terms of total offences per 1000 population. This is compared to 140th for 2003-04 ie a worsening of crime levels (<i>Source: The State of the Borough, 2008</i>).</p> <p>Part of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD Area fall within the 5% most deprived in terms of Crime and Disorder (<i>Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007</i>).</p>
					Number of people reporting fear of crime	Reduce levels of expressed fear of crime and anti-social behaviour by 25% by 2010. (Community Strategy)

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Social	9. To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	Social inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide for affordable housing for local people? Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout? Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing? 	<p>Proportion of different housing types and tenures</p> <p>The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria.</p>	To meet the requirements set out in the most up-to-date Housing Needs Survey.	<p>The Runcorn Town Centre SPD area has a very low percentage of detached housing and flats as seen across the borough as a whole. Social housing is also relatively high, again similar to the borough as a whole. The town's proximity to the Manchester Ship Canal and Mersey Estuary (with pockets of pleasant townscape) is a recognised asset, which is now beginning to be realised through the development of new residential apartments and waterside houses to the east (The Deck development) and west of the Old Town (at Dukesfield)</p> <p>Housing Type in Halton Borough 2001:</p> <p>Detached 19.2%</p> <p>Semi detached 33.0%</p> <p>Terraced 37.5%</p> <p>Other (flats etc.) 10.3%</p> <p>Housing Tenure in Halton Borough 2004:</p> <p>Private 71.9%</p> <p>Council 12.9%</p> <p>Housing Association 15.2%</p> <p><i>(Source: Halton Housing Strategy 2005 - 2008)</i></p> <p>The average house price in Halton is £120,300 compared to an average price in the North West of £133,600 and £177,000 in England and Wales. <i>(Source: Land Registry, House Price Index Halton, February 2007).</i></p> <p>The population level within the borough is shown to have fallen since a peak in 1989 until 2003 when positive figures have been achieved. Population is therefore predicted to grow until around 2022 <i>(Source: Nomisweb, 2007)</i>. This should drive future housing provision.</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	10. To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	Social inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve transport provision and accessibility? • Will it provide for local retail needs? • Will it improve public access to services and amenities? 	Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre.	To ensure that all new housing development is within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a town centre.	<p>Halton is ranked 138th out of 408 districts in Great Britain for accessibility and connectivity, down slightly from its 2002 rank of 120th (<i>State of the Borough 2008</i>).</p> <p>% of housing completions 2004/5 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 100% Hospital (Halton) – 48% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 100% Employment – 100% Town centre – 100%</p> <p>(<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005</i>)</p> <p>% of housing completions 2005/6 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 100% Hospital (Halton) – 21% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 92% Employment – 100% Town centre – 93%</p> <p>(<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006</i>)</p> <p>% of housing completions 2006/7 within 30 minutes public transport time of key services: GP – 99% Hospital (Halton) – 89% Primary School – 100% Secondary School – 99% Employment – 100% Town centre – 99%</p> <p>(<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>)</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	11. To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	Social inclusiveness Biodiversity, fauna and flora, Cultural heritage and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live? Will it improve access to natural greenspace? 	The accessibility of Halton's Natural Green spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accessible natural greenspace, of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; Statutory Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population. <p>(Natural England)</p>	<p>Overall the borough is well provided for in Natural & Semi Natural open space but there is a deficiency in all other types of open space within the borough. There is an overall surplus of outdoor sports facilities within the borough, but this is only due to a large supply in central Widnes. The other areas within the borough are all experiencing a shortfall in outdoor sports facilities.</p> <p>Open space types and areas within Halton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parks and Gardens 134.4 ha -Natural and semi natural greenspace 604.37 ha -Green Corridors 182.02 ha -Amenity Green Space 115.624 ha -Facilities for Young people and children 7.93 ha -Outdoor sports facilities 398.51 ha -Allotments and community gardens 8.86 ha -Cemeteries and churchyards 23.35 ha <p>(Source: Halton Borough Council, Survey of Open Space, 2005)</p> <p>The green flag award scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales. 9 parks in Halton have Green Flag Awards. However, there are none within the SPD boundary (Source: the Civic Trust – Green Flag Awards, 2008).</p> <p>Research carried out by Natural England shows that for every 1000 population, 1ha of Local Nature Reserve should be available. Using the estimated population at 2004, there is 1ha of LNR per 837 population within Halton.</p> <p>There are no LNRs within the SPD boundary (Source: Halton Borough Council, 2004).</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Social	12. To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	Social inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected? 	Index of Deprivation	For Halton to become less deprived and to move outside the 40 most deprived districts in England by 2010 (Community Strategy)	<p>In 2004, Halton was ranked 21st, out of 354, in the average of ward scores where rank 1 is the most deprived (<i>Source: Indices of Deprivation 2004</i>). It is now ranked 30th out of 354 (<i>Source: State of the Borough, 2008</i>).</p> <p>Parts of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area fall within the 10% most deprived Super Output Areas (<i>Source: Indices of Deprivation 2004</i>).</p>
				Average household income	To increase average household income in Halton to 90%+ of the national average by 2010 (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	The average household income in Halton is £27,898 which is 89.4% of the UK average (UK average salary is £31,200) (<i>Source: Merseyside Economic Review, 2006</i>).

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Environmental	13. To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	Water and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the quality of controlled waters? 	Water quality (chemical & biological) classification of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters and percentage lengths in different classes	To increase the % of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters that classified as either good or fair year on year.	<p>Information from the Environment Agency's web-site indicates that the majority of the West Bank Area is located in a groundwater Source Protection Zone III. This is the complete catchment area of a groundwater drinking water supply borehole within which some activities are controlled.</p> <p>The principal river in Halton Borough is the River Mersey and this forms the southern boundary to the West Bank SPD. Biological water quality within Halton is generally poor and chemical quality fair.</p> <p>Halton:</p> <p>Biology 2006 Good – 0% Fair – 13.18% Poor – 79.39% Bad – 7.43%</p> <p>Chemistry 2006 Good – 11.0% Fair – 54.6% Poor – 26.4% Bad – 8.0%</p> <p><i>(Source: Environment Agency Website)</i></p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that the impermeable surfaces/developed land within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase? 	Amount of new development replacing greenfield land within Flood zones 2 and 3	To ensure that the amount of impermeable land/developed land within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase.	None of Runcorn Town Centre falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3 <i>(Source: Halton Borough Council, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, October 2007).</i> However, the flood risks associated with the Manchester Ship Canal are unknown.

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that the amount of surface water runoff does not increase? 	Proportion of new developments over 1ha incorporating surface water attenuation and/or sustainable urban drainage systems	<p>Surface water run-off rates from previously developed sites should be restricted to existing rates or better.</p> <p>Surface water run-off rates from greenfield sites should be restricted to greenfield rates (including making allowances for climate change).</p>	Flood risk associated with surface water runoff can often be a more significant issue than fluvial or tidal flooding.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding? 	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on with flood defence grounds or water quality	To decrease the number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice	7 planning applications were objected to by the Environment Agency on Flood Risk grounds between 1/4/06 and 31/3/07 (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>).

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Environmental	14. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	Biodiversity, Fauna & Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites, habitats or species of nature conservation value? • Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats and species? 	Number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites	To maintain the number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites	<p>The Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Ramsar Site, which is located to the northwest of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD boundary, immediately to the west of the Silver Jubilee Bridge, is a wetland of international importance. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large and internationally important populations of waterfowl. During the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain. Species of international importance include the Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> and Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>.</p> <p>The Mersey Estuary is also designated as a site of national importance (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). It occupies an area of 1035ha of which 917.7ha is also designated as the Ramsar Site (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council 2007</i>).</p>
				Condition of SSSIs 95% of SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010. (Public Service Agreement (PSA) target)	All SSSIs in 100% favourable condition	<p>Flood Brook Clough SSSI- 100% favourable (13/03/06)</p> <p>Mersey Estuary SSSI - 99.95% favourable, 0.05% unfavourable recovering (Various 08/02- 03/04)</p> <p>Red Brow Cutting SSSI - 100% favourable (06/01)</p> <p>(<i>Source: Natural England</i>)</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
				Number and area of Local Wildlife Sites, Wildlife Corridors and Action Areas for People and Nature	Maintain number and area of Local Wildlife Sites	Of relevance to Runcorn Town Centre, Halton's BAP focuses on Wildlife Corridors and Action Areas for People and Nature. There are no reed beds, salt marshes, great crested newts, redshanks, reed buntings or purple hairstreaks recorded on the Local BAP within or near to the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area. 'Population of Skylark breeding pairs' and 'Population of Song Thrush pairs' are also not considered relevant to this SPD. Within Halton there are 61 Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as SINC's) with an area of 742.65ha. None are located within the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area (<i>Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007</i>).
				Distribution of bluebells	Promote a planting scheme for native bluebells within the SPD area.	There are 59 recorded sites in Halton. 7 sites are owned by HBC and managed for wildlife (<i>Source: Halton BAP, 2003</i>). Non native bluebell species have been recorded within the SPD boundary.
	15. To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	Water and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal? 	Level and % of household waste recycled	Waste Strategy 2007 set national recycling targets: 2010 – 40% 2015 – 45% 2020 – 50%	<p>During 2004/05, 8885.57 tonnes (13.65%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005)</i></p> <p>During 2005/06, 8,929.48 tonnes (13.66%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006)</i></p> <p>During 2006/07, 9,684.85 tonnes (14.57%) of household waste arising was sent for recycling. <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007)</i></p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Environmental				Total annual amount of municipal waste generated and % recycled or composted.	Ensure 30% of waste is recycled or composted by 2010. (Community Strategy, 2006-2011)	<p>Total municipal waste (04/05) – 65,083 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 8,885 (14%) Total municipal waste composted – 5,957 (9%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 50,240 (77%) <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2005)</i></p> <p>Total municipal waste (05/06) – 65,377 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 8,929 (14%) Total municipal waste composted – 6,318 (10%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 50,132 (77%) <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006)</i></p> <p>Total municipal waste (06/07) – 66,453 tonnes Total municipal waste recovered – 9,685 (14.6%) Total municipal waste composted – 6,931 (10.4%) Total municipal waste landfilled – 49,837 (75%) <i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2007)</i></p>
	16. To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air	Air, Human Health, Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it minimise the need to travel? • Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public 	Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs	To maintain 0 AQMAs	<p>The expansive elevated and 'loops' structures that link the Daresbury Expressway to the SJB impede movement from one local area to the next. In particular a number of unsatisfactory routes form low quality connections between the Railway Station, traditional residential areas (west of the railway) and also between the houses and Runcorn Basin. Pedestrian and cycle movement is also diverted along convoluted routes using subways and stairways to navigate the expressway.</p> <p>The road links to and from Widnes are confused and congested.</p>

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
Environmental	pollution from other sources		transport? • Will it improve air quality?	Travel to work by mode	To reduce the number of people travelling to work by car or van by 10% by 2011 and by 20% by 2021.	According to the local census 29% of households in Halton do not own a car or van although there are striking differences between wards. Percentage of people in Halton aged 16 - 74 in employment who usually: Work at or from home – 6.16% Travel to work by: Underground, metro, light rail, Tram or Train – 1.31% Bus, mini bus or coach – 7.12% Motorcycle, scooter or moped – 1.07% Driving a car or a van – 62.42% Passenger in a car or van – 9.06% Taxi – 0.65% Bicycle – 2.03% On foot – 9.78% Other – 0.41% (Source: 2001 Census)

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	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	17. To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast	Cultural heritage and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance? • Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage? 	Number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas	To maintain the number of Listed Buildings and Number and Area of Conservation Areas	<p>Runcorn Town Centre is not felt to be of sufficient historical or architectural interest to warrant being designated as a Conservation Area, probably because of the alterations that occurred in the 1960/70s. However the area is still of historic interest and there are a number of listed structures in the SPD area including the Old Police Station, the Royal Hotel, Church of the Holy Trinity, the Church of All Saints, a substation, formally the hearse house and the Aethelfleda Railway Bridge. The Silver Jubilee bridge is also listed (Grade II).</p> <p>The Area of Archaeological Potential defined by the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey covers much of the Town Centre Area. Buried boats, wharves and other riverine archaeological features are anticipated adjacent to the River Mersey.</p> <p>The town has a mixed character and is laid out around well-defined streets, with the changes of level giving the town its own sense of place. The buildings are predominantly small-scale even within the town centre. The town's transport infrastructure makes the area distinctive with the Silver Jubilee Bridge acting as a local 'iconic' structure.</p> <p>Runcorn Town Centre has the potential to develop as a 'market town' where its special historic location - on the banks of the River Mersey - can be used to create a vibrant place to live, shop or visit, defined by its waterway, rail and road networks.</p>
				Number of buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments 'at risk'.	To reduce the number of buildings 'at risk' to 0 by 2016.	<p>There are 2 buildings 'at risk' in Halton these are Daresbury Hall which is Grade II* Listed and the Undercroft of West Range at Norton Priory which is a scheduled monument. However, neither of these are within the Runcorn Town Centre area.</p> <p><i>(Source: English Heritage, Buildings 'at risk' Register, 2005 and 2007)</i></p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

	Objective	SEA Directive/ SA Guidance	Detailed Criteria	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data and Key Issues
	18. To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	Water and soil, Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings? • Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy? • Will it use water efficiently and with care? • Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy resources? 	Proportion of housing built on previously developed land per (PDL) year	PPG3 set a target of 60% of dwellings on PDL by 2008.	<p>Historic contamination from past chemical works and landfills (notably Old Quay Quarry, Victoria Road, Old Bridgewater Locks, Percival Lane, Dukesfield and the Runcorn and Weston Canal) is recognised as a potential issue for development. Between 1994 and 1998, over 180ha of derelict land were reclaimed in the borough but over 200ha – more than 3% of the borough land surface remain.</p> <p>88% of new and converted dwellings on PDL in 2006/07 46% in 2005/06 61% in 2004/2005 42% in 2003/2004 49% in 2002/2003 28% in 2001/2002</p> <p><i>(Source: Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council, 2006 and 2007)</i></p>
				Proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources	Energy White Paper 2003 set a national target that 10% of the UK's electricity supply comes from renewable sources by 2010, 15% by 2015 and 20% by 2020.	<p>The following renewables projects are currently on going in Halton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomass: PDM (2.10MW) • Co-firing of Biomass: Shell Green Generation Plant (4.20MW) and • Sewage Gas: Runcorn CHP (0.26MW) <p><i>(Source: Renewables Northwest from Annual Monitoring Report, Halton Borough Council 2007)</i></p>

APPENDIX C – CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO THE SA SCOPING REPORT

Runcorn Town Centre Open Space Appendices

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England	By email 15/08/07 in response to the Regeneration Strategy and Southern Widnes Scoping Report. These comments were re-iterated in a letter received 16/12/08 in relation to Runcorn Town Centre. Key comments applicable to Runcorn Town Centre have been outlined here.	<p><u>Habitats Regulations Assessment</u></p> <p>Amendments are being made to the Habitats Regulations to reflect recent clarification of the status of land-use plans as 'plans or projects' under Article 6(3) & 4 of the Habitats Directive. In general terms, this means that if a land-use plan is likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination, on one or more European sites (SACs, SPAs) it must be subject to an 'appropriate assessment'.</p>	Comment acknowledged. An appropriate assessment has been undertaken for the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy which covers Runcorn Town Centre.
		<p><u>Biodiversity Duty</u></p> <p>Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity, and has an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities. From 1 October 2006, all local authorities and other public authorities in England and Wales have a Duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.</p>	Comment acknowledged. Reference to the Biodiversity Duty has been included within the plans, policies and programmes section.
		<p>We acknowledge and welcome inclusion of Habitats Directive and Birds Directive: PPS1, PPS9, PPG17, PPG20 and PPS22; and Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan. We suggest that you consider inclusion of the following documents within the list of relevant plans/policies and programmes in the scoping report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 2006 • Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. • Other relevant Biodiversity Action Plans. • Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty. (Defra, 2007) • Rising to the Challenge: A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest (NWDA, 2006) • Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning – Incorporating the natural, built and historic environment, and rural issues in plans and strategies (2005). Countryside Agency/English Nature/Environment Agency. • Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities. (English Nature now Natural England) 	These documents have been reviewed as part of the plans, policies and programmes section, with the exception of Planning Policy Statement 7, Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty and Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning as they are not considered applicable to the SA.

Runcorn Town Centre SPA SA Appendices

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England Continued	By email 15/08/07	National and Regional State of the Countryside Reports may help and are available via links on-line at www.naturalengland.org.uk . The State of the Countryside Reports provides facts and trends about the social, economic and environmental issues encountered in England's countryside. They present evidence against 20 key indicator themes, which include a number on environment and recreation.	Comment acknowledged, no change required.
		Countryside Quality Counts (CQC) may also be useful; the CQC project has developed an indicator of change in countryside quality based on landscape character, in response to the 2000 Rural White Paper call for monitoring of changes in the countryside. Information on CQC is available via www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk .	Comment acknowledged, no change required.
		We would welcome expansion of the supporting text to specifically mention the hierarchy of nature conservation sites, international, national, local, etc and particular reference made to the Mersey Estuary SPA and the reasons for its designation. Data should not be limited to the borough boundary as designated sites outside Halton can be just as important, and can be affected by plans, policies, strategies and development within Halton.	Additional information has been included to address these comments.
		We thank you for reference to our research (former English Nature) in relation to Local Nature Reserves. We also consider that our publication 'Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities' may also be helpful in the provision of green space in relation to residential development.	This document has been reviewed as part of the plans, policies and programmes section.
		Within the 'Water' subsection we would welcome reference to the relationship between Halton and the Mersey Estuary SPA.	Text has been included to show the relationship between Halton and the Mersey Estuary SPA.
		Green spaces and in particular green flag parks and the indicators are repeated in the cultural heritage and landscape section and biodiversity section. It may be appropriate to remove the 'parks' indicators from section the cultural heritage and landscape section.	The indicator relating to green flag parks has been removed from the cultural heritage and landscape section.
		<p><u>Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework</u></p> <p>We acknowledge and welcome inclusion of a range of objectives and criteria that relate to our environmental interests, and in particular 11, 14 and 17. We note that the objectives contained in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework are the original objectives from</p>	The SAF has been updated to reflect the SAF included in the Core Strategy Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006.

Runcorn Town Centre SPD SA Appendices

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
Janet Belfield Natural England	By email 15/08/07	the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal consultation from March 2006, rather than the amended objectives incorporating comments from the consultation and included in the Interim Sustainability Report of July 2006 and our most recent consultation replies. We therefore recommend that the most up-to-date objectives are used in this report incorporating changes as appropriate.	
		* Objective 11 – include an indicator for accessible natural greenspace based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. These standards could also provide a target for greenspace provision.	An indicator has been included as recommended.
		** Objective 14 – the criteria for this objective should be split to address both species and habitats, and a distinction should be made between statutory protected sites and species, and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species. An additional criterion should be included making reference to the biodiversity value of brownfield sites. Indicators should follow this format with reference to statutory and non-statutory sites and Biodiversity Action Plans for both habitats and species, with accompanying targets as appropriate.	Specific criteria / indicators have been included to address both species and habitats. It was not felt appropriate to include an additional criterion with regard to the biodiversity value of brownfield sites as this cannot currently be monitored.
Stephen Sayce Environment Agency	By post 09/01/09	While Objective 13 correctly identifies that none of Runcorn Town Centre falls within Flood Zone 3 (and Flood Zone 2) it should be noted that the flood risks associated with the Manchester Ship Canal are unknown. Any development in close proximity to the Manchester Ship Canal and the Mersey Estuary may require a flood risk assessment (taking into consideration climate change allowances). Additionally, new developments could be at risk from flooding from surface water sewers.	Baseline data amended accordingly.
		We would also advise that updated environmental baseline data is available from: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/policy/88313.aspx or by contacting our Business Planning Team at the address at the bottom of this letter.	Comment acknowledged. Revised baseline data included where appropriate.
Jermaine Daniels Merseyside Environmental Advisory Services	By email 09/01/09	Objective 9 – We suggest including an indicator that measures the environmental performance of new housing development within the SPD area against the Code for Sustainable Homes. For example: <i>'Proportion of homes assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes'</i> .	Whilst achieving Code for Sustainable Homes will be promoted through the Development Control process there is currently no mechanism to monitor its implementation. However, DCLG is promoting a new indicator comprising <i>'The</i>

Runcorn Town Centre SUDS Appendices

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
			<p><i>number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria.</i> Building for Life Criteria includes an assessment of whether the buildings have any features that would reduce their impact. This indicator has therefore been adopted.</p> <p>Objective 11 – With no LNR within the SPD area it would seem redundant to include an indicator/target reporting loss of LNR. We suggest using a more general indicator such as <i>‘the amount and quality of open space’</i> supported by a target which ensures no loss of open space.</p> <p>Objective 13 – <i>‘New development with sustainable drainage system installed’</i> will only identify new development with SUDS included but not new development without. This reduces the effectiveness of the indicator. We suggest revising the indicator to read: <i>‘Proportion of new development with sustainable drainage system installed.’</i></p> <p>Also, it would be helpful if the Council could clarify how the implementation of SUDS schemes for new development relates to changes in flood zone 2 and 3 as the target and indicator do not seem to complement each other.</p> <p>Objective 14 – Along with habitat and protected sites the Detailed Criteria should refer to species and should read: <i>‘Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites, habitats and <u>species</u> of nature conservation value’</i></p> <p>SINC is a local nature conservation site and should not be included within the list of international and national sites. However, if the intention is to cover local sites, then the indicator and target boxes should reflect this.</p>

Runcorn Town Centre SPD SA Appendices

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments on the SA Scoping Report	Response
		<p>More importantly, we do not believe that the indicators 'Population of Skylark breeding pairs' and 'Population of Song Thrush pairs' are relevant to this SPD, as Runcorn Town Centre does not provide suitable habitats for these species and the regeneration proposed over the plan period is unlikely to change this situation appreciably. As such it is considered that the SPD would not be able to deliver these targets.</p> <p>We note from the SPD boundary plan that there is no significant woodland present within the SPD area and therefore the targets proposed in relation to bluebells may not be measurable or relevant within the context of the SPD. Also, it is stated that no planting is proposed within the SPD area which would suggest that the target '<i>Establish a programme for new Bluebell planting areas within suitable woodlands</i>' is not deliverable within the scope of the SPD. We suggest that consideration is given to a scheme of planting native Bluebells along road verges within the SPD area. The indicator and target can be amended accordingly.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged. Indicators and targets in relation to these species have been removed.</p> <p>Target now amended to '<i>Promote a programme of native bluebell planting within the SPD boundary</i>'. Planting is now proposed within the SPD boundary and therefore there should be potential to incorporate native bluebell planting.</p>
		<p>Objective 15 – The Waste Strategy 2000 has been superseded by the Waste Strategy 2007 which sets out a new set of recycling targets that should be adopted as follows:</p> <p>2010 – 40%</p> <p>2015 – 45%</p> <p>2020 – 50%</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged. SAF updated accordingly.</p>

APPENDIX D - TESTING THE OPTIONS

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
<p>1) To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate – will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs?</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>The development of new office and retail space will help to address the balance between industrial, office and retail floor space.</p> <p>A number of sites will be redeveloped for potential office and/or commercial uses including the area around the existing station. There will be three flexible land use sites for a mix of residential, office and/or other commercial uses. Access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through modifications to the 'Runcorn Loops' – this includes the removal of the east bound slip road from the A533 which restricts access into the centre of Runcorn. Instead, the southern loop will be two-way and allow access either west or east-bound onto the A588. There will be a new junction which will improve access into the centre of Runcorn and to the new proposed development sites. Improved accessibility will help to encourage increased investment and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>The development of new office and retail space will help to address the balance between industrial, office and retail floor space.</p> <p>A number of sites will be redeveloped for potential office and/or commercial uses including the area around the existing station. There will be two flexible land use sites for a mix of residential, office and/or other commercial uses. Access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through the removal of the 'Runcorn Loops'. Instead the east slip road from the bridge will become a two way road with a crossroad junction with the A588 close to the railway station. Improved accessibility will help to encourage increased investment and employment opportunities. The removal of the loops will free up land around the station which can then be developed.</p>
<p>2) To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment – will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people? Will it provide local employment opportunities for local people by linking in to local businesses?</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Access to the existing Riverside College will be improved through the provision of new pedestrian and cycle paths linking the town centre and the railway station to the college. Accessibility to the railway station will be enhanced through the development of pedestrian and cycle routes providing greater opportunities to access education facilities further afield.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Access to the existing Riverside College will be improved through the provision of new pedestrian and cycle paths linking the town centre and the railway station to the college. Accessibility to the railway station will be enhanced through the development of pedestrian and cycle routes providing greater opportunities to access education facilities further afield.</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
3) To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development – will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses?	✓ There will be improved access which will widen the potential market and customer base helping to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses. New development sites will be freed up by modifications to the 'Runcorn Loops'.	✓ There will be improved access which will widen the potential market and customer base helping to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses. New development sites (increased amount from option 1) will be freed up by the removal of the 'Runcorn Loops'.
4) To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business – Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	✓✓ A number of sites will be redeveloped for potential office and/or commercial uses including the area around the existing station. Access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through modifications to the 'Runcorn Loops'. Improved accessibility will help to encourage increased investment and widen the potential market base.	✓✓ A number of sites will be redeveloped for potential office and/or commercial uses including the area around the existing station. Access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through the removal of the 'Runcorn Loops'. Improved accessibility will help to encourage increased investment and widen the potential market base.
5) To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes) – will it provide an improvement to one of more of the town centres?	✓✓ Runcorn Town Centre will be considerably enhanced. The removal of the east bound slip road will increase the permeability of the centre and it will no longer be divided by the road. New pedestrian, cycle and potential canal links would increase footfall and therefore vitality. New development sites including the Runcorn Station Gateway Opportunity and flexible land uses will increase investment and employment opportunities helping to enhance the viability and vitality of town the centre. There will also be several public realm improvements and improvement to some residential sites through refurbishment.	✓✓ The existing road network into Runcorn is confusing and the simplification of the road system will improve access. Option 2 allows direct access into the town centre from the A533 with enhanced visibility. New pedestrian, cycle and potential canal links would increase footfall and therefore vitality. New development sites including the Runcorn Station Gateway Opportunity and flexible land uses will increase investment and employment opportunities helping to enhance the viability and vitality of the centres. There will also be several public realm improvements and improvement to some residential sites through refurbishment.
6) To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment – will it encourage inward investment?	✓✓ Modifications to the Runcorn Loops will mean that the town centre is no longer cut in two and access will be greatly improved through the development of a new junction. Accessibility will be further enhanced through pedestrian and cycle ways and a potential canal link. Public realm improvements and increased visibility for the railway station will improve the overall image of Runcorn Town Centre.	✓✓ The removal of the Runcorn Loops will improve accessibility and increase the profile of the area rather than just being a place that is bypassed. Accessibility will be further enhanced through pedestrian and cycle ways and a potential canal link. Public realm improvements and increased visibility for the railway station will improve the overall image of Runcorn Town Centre.

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
7) To improve health and reduce health inequalities – will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly? Will it support healthy lifestyles?	✓ The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles. Promoting areas for leisure uses will provide valuable amenity space to further encourage active lifestyles. There could be potential negative impacts on health due to the proposed residential uses being adjacent to industrial uses on Runcorn Docks. Recommendation: Preferred option should include reference to the provision of or access to healthcare.	✓ The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes will encourage active lifestyles. Promoting areas for leisure uses will provide valuable amenity space to further encourage active lifestyles. There could be potential negative impacts on health due to the proposed residential uses being adjacent to industrial uses on Runcorn Docks. Recommendation: Preferred option should include reference to the provision of or access to healthcare.
8) To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime – will it encourage crime-sensitive design? Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime? Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour?	✓ The provision of greater employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. The Railway Station will be regenerated with a number of uses around it, increasing vitality which should have a positive impact on making the station and surrounding area safer. Recommendation: Include reference to Crime Sensitive Design in preferred option, for example following Secured by Design principles.	✓ The provision of greater employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. The Railway Station will be regenerated with a number of uses around it, increasing vitality which should have a positive impact on making the station and surrounding area safer. Recommendation: Include reference to Crime Sensitive Design in preferred options, for example following Secured by Design principles.

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
9) To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing – will it provide for affordable housing for local people? Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard of design and layout? Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing?	✓/?	✓/?
	<p>A number of new sites will be developed for residential use. This will provide a greater variety of housing types as the property type profile in Halton is skewed towards terraced and semi-detached houses at present. The stock of flats is low and the majority are in the social housing sector. (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006). There is a demand for new housing and the council must significantly increase its annual dwelling completion rates to meet with regional prescriptions, at present it is estimated that there will be a shortfall of 2,235 dwellings (Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy: Issues report).</p> <p>However, one of the residential area proposed is close to an existing industrial area – Runcorn Docks. This could reduce the quality of the residential areas.</p> <p>There is no information on whether the houses will be affordable, good quality and resource efficient.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should set a target for the % of affordable homes provided and contain design standards to encourage resource efficiency and quality design. There is an affordability issue with a need for an additional 176 affordable housing units per annum (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006).</p>	<p>A number of new sites will be developed for residential use. This will provide a greater variety of housing types and help to meet new housing demand – see option 1.</p> <p>However, one of the residential areas proposed is close to an existing industrial area – Runcorn Docks. This could reduce the quality of the residential areas.</p> <p>There is no information on whether the houses will be affordable, good quality and resource efficient.</p> <p>Recommendation: Preferred option should set a target for the % of affordable homes provided and contain design standards to encourage resource efficiency and quality design. There is an affordability issue with a need for an additional 176 affordable housing units per annum (Halton Housing Needs Study, 2006)</p>
10) To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities – Will it support transport provision and accessibility? Will it provide for local retail needs? Will it improve public access to services and amenities?	✓✓	✓✓
	<p>Access to existing services such as the Railway Station, Riverside College, employment sites, and the Public Library/Community Centre will be improved through the development of new pedestrian and cycleways. There will be a cycle and pedestrian route across the Silver Jubilee Bridge together with a bus priority lane. There will be modifications to the Runcorn Loops with the creation of a new junction to provide improved access into the town centre. New development will include shops.</p>	<p>Access to existing services such as the Railway Station, Riverside College, employment sites, and the Public Library/Community Centre will be improved through the development of new pedestrian and cycleways. There will be a cycle and pedestrian route across the Silver Jubilee Bridge together with a bus priority lane. The Runcorn Loops will be removed and access will be made simpler through the creation of a new junction at the end of the east-bound slip road into the town centre. New development will include shops.</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
11) To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace – Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live? Will it improve access to natural greenspace?	✓✓ A number of sites will be promoted for leisure uses providing important amenity space for the local community. There will be pedestrian and cycle routes linking these spaces with the town centre and residential areas. There is also potential for the Bridgewater Canal to be extended to the Manchester Ship Canal which would provide leisure opportunities.	✓✓ A number of sites will be promoted for leisure uses providing important amenity space for the local community. There will be pedestrian and cycle routes linking these spaces with the town centre and residential areas. There is also potential for the Bridgewater Canal to be extended to the Manchester Ship Canal which would provide leisure opportunities.
12) To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities – Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected?	✓ Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities. Potential increases in affordable housing would reduce social deprivation.	✓ Social exclusion and deprivation will be reduced through the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities. Potential increases in affordable housing would reduce social deprivation.
13) To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters – Will it improve the quality of controlled waters? Will it ensure that the area within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3 does not increase? Will it ensure that new developments are not at risk from flooding?	✓ The site is not in an area at risk of flooding. The majority of the developments will be located on areas of existing hardstanding or building cover and therefore no increase in surface water runoff are anticipated.	✓ The site is not in an area at risk of flooding. The majority of the developments will be located on areas of existing hardstanding or building cover and therefore no increase in surface water runoff are anticipated.
14) To protect, enhance and manage diversity – Will it protect or enhance statutory protected sites and habitats of nature conservation value? Will it protect or enhance statutory protected species? Will it protect or enhance BAP habitats? Will it protect or enhance BAP species?	? Whilst a number of open spaces are to be promoted for leisure uses, there is no information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity. Recommendation: Include targets for biodiversity improvements in the preferred option.	? Whilst a number of open spaces are to be promoted for leisure uses, there is no information on protecting or enhancing biodiversity. Recommendation: Include targets for biodiversity improvements in the preferred option.

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
15) To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates – Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal?	x	x
	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process.</p> <p>Recommendation: the preferred option should require implementation of Site Waste Management Plans, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>Reference should also be made to ensuring that there is sufficient space for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>	<p>There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process.</p> <p>Recommendation: the preferred option should require implementation of Site Waste Management Plans, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste.</p> <p>Reference should also be made to ensuring that there is sufficient space for recycling facilities to enable effective recycling during occupation of residential and commercial units.</p>
16) To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources – Will it minimise the need to travel? Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport? Will it improve air quality?	✓	✓
	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The regeneration of the Railway Station with increased access will help to encourage increased train travel as an alternative to private cars.</p>	<p>The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. The regeneration of the Railway Station with increased access will help to encourage increased train travel as an alternative to private cars.</p>
17) To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast – will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance? Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage?	✓	✓
	<p>The built environment of the town centre will be improved through regeneration of the area surrounding the Railway Station and also due to modifications to the Runcorn Loops. The removal of the east bound slip road will increase the permeability of the centre.</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require the developers to assess the townscape impacts of their developments; undertake an archaeological desk study; and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>	<p>The built environment of the town centre will be improved through regeneration of the area surrounding the Railway Station and also due to removal of the Runcorn Loops improving legibility.</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require the developers to assess the townscape impacts of their developments; undertake an archaeological desk study; and refer to the North West Best Practice Design Guide.</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Sustainability Objectives	Option 1	Option 2
18) To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources – Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings? Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of energy? Will it use water efficiently and with care? Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy resources?	✓/!	✓/!
	<p>The new development sites will make efficient use of land by using brownfield sites. Some existing buildings are being reused, this includes the remodelling of the existing Railway Station and the refurbishment of some of the existing residential development. However construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require specific environmental standards to be met. For example BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>	<p>The new development sites will make efficient use of land by using brownfield sites. Some existing buildings are being reused, this includes the remodelling of the existing Railway Station and the refurbishment of some of the existing residential development. However construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>Recommendation: The preferred option should require specific environmental standards to be met. For example BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>

APPENDIX E – TESTING THE REVISED PLAN OBJECTIVES

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

KEY

✓ - Compatible x - Incompatible ⊖ - No Links ? - Dependent on nature of implementation measures

Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic	
<p>1 - Enhance Employment Role: Initiate physical redevelopment of Runcorn Station Gateway for high value employment uses, following environmental and secured by design principles utilising the improved access and visibility, achieved through de-linking of A553 (and 'loops') infrastructure.</p>	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources			
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets			
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓		
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	?		
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity		⊖	
	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters		⊖	
	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities		⊖	
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace		⊖	
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities		✓	
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing		⊖	
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime		✓	
	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities		⊖	
	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.		✓	
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres		✓	
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business		✓	
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development		✓	
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment		⊖	
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate		✓	

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	?
		17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	?
		16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⊖
		15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	?
		14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
		13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖
	Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⊖
		11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖
		10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
		9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖
		8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	✓
		7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖
	Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
		5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
		4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓
		3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓
		2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖
		1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	✓
2 - Expand Specialist Retail & Leisure Role: Providing accommodation and development opportunities for the refocusing of the role of the Town Centre for specialist niche traders to complement the roles of the boroughs other town centres and capitalise on the 'market town' appeal. Initiate physical opportunities for the development of leisure uses in the Town Centre- particularly in the new Canal Quarter- to develop a vibrant, cultural and safe day and night-time economy building on the achievements at The Brindley.			

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Objective	Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	?
		17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	✓
		16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓
		15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	?
		14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
		13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	?
	Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⊖
		11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	✓
		10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
		9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖
		8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	✓
		7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	?
	Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
		5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
		4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	⊖
		3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	⊖
		2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	?
		1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	⊖
<p>3 - Improve Community Facilities: Provide opportunities for the development of improved services and public realm upgrades across the Town Centre. This should focus on protecting, managing and enhancing the cultural, built and natural environment and promoting cycle and walking facilities between the Station, Town Centre, surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the waterside. Re-open the closed section of the Bridgewater Canal to meet the Manchester Ship Canal for business and leisure travel uses. Utilise the Halton draft Parking & Access (2008) study to achieve improved parking and accessibility.</p>			

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	⊖
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	⊖
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖
Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⊖
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	⊖
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	?
	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖
Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	⊖
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	⊖
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	⊖
Objective	<p>4 – Enhance Public Transport: Rationalise the existing A553 road infrastructure through de-linking providing improved and simplified bus access to Runcorn Town Centre and Runcorn Rail Station via the Town Viaduct and High Street and new Station Gateway Quarter. Consider options to re-model the existing bus station to enhance circulation.</p>	

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	✓
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⊖
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	✓
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	✓
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	⊖
	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⊖
Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	✓
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⊖
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	✓
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	✓
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⊖
	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⊖
Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	✓
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	✓
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	✓
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	✓
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⊖
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	⊖
Objective	<p>5 – Increase & Diversify Housing Offer: Increase, and diversify, the housing offer within Runcorn, providing resource efficient and affordable housing – with a particular focus on developing sites made available through communications infrastructure removal in Runcorn Town Centre to meet forecast population expansion. Build on waterfront achievements at The Deck to encourage the appropriate and economically viable development of housing within the Canal Quarter. This would establish a north-south activity corridor that supports food, drink and complementary uses for the regeneration of the Town Centre and expand the user-base of the Town Centre's retail and leisure offer.</p>	

Runcorn Town Centre Spd Sa Appendices

Environmental	18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	✓
	17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets	⓪
	16 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes, whilst protecting, and where necessary, improving local air quality	⓪
	15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	✓
	14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	✓
	13 To minimise the risk of flooding whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	⓪
Social	12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	⓪
	11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace	⓪
	10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	⓪
	9 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	✓
	8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	⓪
	7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities	⓪
Economic	6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment.	⓪
	5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres	⓪
	4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	⓪
	3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	⓪
	2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment	⓪
	1 To continue towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate	⓪
Objective	6 - Sustainable Development: To use land, energy and water resources prudently, minimising the production of waste and increasing re-use, recycling and recovery of waste.	

APPENDIX F – TESTING THE PREFERRED OPTIONS

In carrying out the appraisal of the policies contained within the SPD, matrices have been used to document the predicted effects of the policy against the 18 Sustainability Objectives that have been developed in the earlier stages of the SA process.

For the purpose of this assessment, significant effects are defined as are those which have been identified as very sustainable (✓✓) or very unsustainable (xx) in the assessment.

The following key indicates the symbols and abbreviations that have been used in these matrices.

Abbreviation	Description
Scale of Effect	
L	Local
R	Regional
N	National
G	Global
Permanence of Effect	
T	Temporary
P	Permanent
Timescale	
S	0 – 10 years of the plan
M	10 – 20 years of the plan
L	After the life of the plan
Likelihood of Effect	
H	High
M	Medium
L	Low
Assessment of Effect	
✓✓	Very sustainable
✓	Sustainable
–	Neutral
?	Uncertain
x	Unsustainable
xx	Very unsustainable

Runcorn Town Centre Open Space Appendices

Runcorn Town Centre

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
ECONOMIC						
To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate (SA1)	L	P	S-L	H	✓	The development of new office and retail space will help to address the balance between industrial, office and retail floor space. A number of sites will be promoted for potential commercial uses particularly within the Canal Quarter (Policy CQ3), Bridge Street Area (Policy BS4) and Station Gateway Quarter (Policy SG1). This should generate additional employment opportunities.
To improve educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employment (SA2)	L	P	S-L	M	✓ ?	Access to the existing Riverside College will be improved through the provision of new pedestrian and cycle paths linking the town centre and the railway station to the college. However, the proposals do not include any specific education enhancements and new residential development could put pressure on existing educational establishments.
To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development (SA3)	L	P	S-M	M	✓	Improved access will widen the potential market and customer base helping to encourage the stability and growth of existing businesses. New development sites will be freed up by the removal of the 'Runcorn Loops'.
To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business (SA4)	L	P	S-M	H	✓✓	A number of sites will be redeveloped for potential commercial uses particularly within the Canal Quarter (Policy CQ3), Bridge Street Area (Policy BS4) and Station Gateway Quarter (Policy SG1). Access into Runcorn Town Centre will be improved through the removal of the 'Runcorn Loops'. Improved accessibility will help to encourage increased investment and widen the potential market base.
SOCIAL						
To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Halton Lea and Widnes) (SA5)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	The existing road network into Runcorn is confusing and the simplification of the road system will improve access. New pedestrian, cycle and potential canal links would increase footfall and therefore vitality. New development sites including the Runcorn Station Gateway Opportunity (Policy SG1), Canal Quarter Redevelopment (Policy CQ1) and redevelopment of existing underused sites such as Public Hall Street (Policy BS3) and Bridge Street/ Leiria Way (Policy BS4) and other targeted developments will increase investment and employment opportunities helping to enhance the viability and vitality of Runcorn Town Centre. Retail, leisure and cultural services particularly those not currently well catered for within Halton Lea and specialist or niche retailers are encouraged

Runcorn Town Centre Open Space Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
						<p>(Strategic Policies SP3, SP4 & SP5 and sub area policies CS2, BS2, CQ3). Public realm improvements are required by Policy CS3, CA4, BS7 and CQ3 and a high standard of development is required by Policy CS4 and CQ3. Gateway features are also encouraged through Strategic Policy SP16. These should create a positive image of the Town Centre.</p> <p>Opportunities for new leisure based activities around or on the Bridgewater canal will be supported (Strategic Policy SP6 and sub-area policy BS8).</p>
To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment (SA6)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	<p>The removal of the Runcorn Loops will improve accessibility which, together with the proposed leisure, retail and cultural investments and public realm improvements, should increase the profile of the area and overall image of the borough.</p> <p>Accessibility will be enhanced through provision of pedestrian and cycle ways and a potential canal link.</p> <p>Public art is encouraged through Strategic Policy SP14.</p>
To improve health and reduce health inequalities (SA7)	L	P	S-L	M	<p>✓</p> <p>?</p>	<p>The provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes (through Strategic Policy SP8) and safe, secure and covered cycle parking (through Strategic Policy SP17) will encourage active lifestyles. Promoting areas for leisure uses should further encourage active lifestyles.</p> <p>However, the proposals do not include any specific enhancements to health facilities and an increased population as a result of new residential development could put pressure on existing local health facilities.</p>
To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime (SA8)	L	P	S-M	M	✓✓	<p>The provision of greater employment opportunities will help to regenerate the area. This should have knock-on effects in improving issues associated with deprivation such as crime. The Railway Station and surrounding area will be regenerated, increasing vitality which should have a positive impact on making the station and surrounding area safer.</p> <p>Strategic Policy SP19 also requires new development likely to attract significant visitor numbers to enhance the town centre's CCTV security system.</p> <p>All new residential developments will be required to incorporate the principles of Secured by Design (refer to Development Control Matters section).</p>
To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing (SA9)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	<p>A number of new sites are promoted for residential use including within the Canal Quarter (Policy CQ3), and within the Regent Street sub-area (Policy RS1) and Portland Street sub area (Policy PS3) which together with the new Deck residential development in the northern part of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD area and promotion of improvements to the existing housing stock (Policies RS2 and PS4) will provide a greater variety of housing types and help to meet new housing demand. There is a general desire to increase the variety of housing available in the Town Centre</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Open Space Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
						including mixed tenure and type. The SPD Objectives require the houses to be affordable and resource efficient and a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes Level of 3 is required (see Development Control Matters) with a Level 4 required in the Canal Quarter (Policy CQ4).
To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities (SA10)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	Opportunities for additional convenience shop provision will be identified and promoted (Strategic Policy SP2). Church Street will remain the primary retail area for day-to-day goods (Policy CS1). Access to existing services such as the main shopping areas, bus station, Railway Station, Riverside College, employment sites, and the Public Library/Community Centre will be maintained and enhanced through the development of new and improved pedestrian routes and cycleways and a town centre shuttlebus (Policies CA6, RS5, RS6, BS1, CQ3, CQ5, SG5, SG9 & PS11). Pedestrian and cycle access to the Promenade, Waterfront and Bridgewater Canal are also promoted (Policies CQ5 and PD1 to PD5). There will be a cycle and pedestrian route across the Silver Jubilee Bridge together with a bus priority lane. The Runcorn Loops will be removed and access into the town will be made simpler through the creation of a new junction at the end of the east-bound slip road into the town centre. Signage within the town centre will be improved to enhance accessibility (strategic Policy SP18). The Council will support proposals to re-model the existing bus station (Policy CS7 & CA5) and public transport connections between the Station Gateway Quarter and town centre should be facilitated (Policy SG7).
To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural greenspace (SA11)	L	P	S-L	H	✓✓	A number of sites will be promoted for leisure uses providing important amenity space for the local community. There will be pedestrian and cycle routes linking these spaces with the town centre and residential areas. There is also potential for the Bridgewater Canal to be extended to the Manchester Ship Canal (Policy HS2) which would provide new and improved leisure opportunities. Proposals to utilise or enhance the canal will be supported (Policy HS1, HS4 and PS1). Developments adjacent to the waterfront should be set back to enable access to the waterfront (Policy PS8). The General Requirements for All Development Proposals includes a requirement to facilitate public access to greenspace and provide open space in accordance with the Council's Provision of Open Space SPD.
To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities (SA12)	L	P	S-M	M	✓	Social exclusion and deprivation should be reduced as a result of the economic regeneration of the area with increased employment opportunities. Potential increases in affordable housing would also help to reduce social deprivation.

Runcorn Town Centre Open Space Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
ENVIRONMENTAL						
To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development whilst protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters (SA13)	L	P	S-L	M	-	The site is not in an area at high risk of flooding although the flood risk associated with the Manchester Ship Canal is unknown. Flood Risk Assessments will be required to accompany planning applications where relevant, in accordance with PPS25. The majority of the developments will be located on areas of existing hardstanding or building cover. However, the SPD requires that, wherever possible, appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed which should include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to restrict run-off to existing rates or better.
To protect, enhance and manage diversity (SA 14)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	A number of open spaces are to be promoted for leisure uses and Strategic Policy SP22 aims to protect and enhance ecological and biodiversity features, where possible. Tree and woodland planting is required in accordance with the objectives of Mersey Forest (see General Development Requirements Section).
To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates (SA15)	L	T	S-M	M	-	There will be an increased production of waste during the construction process. However, the SPD requires Site Waste Management Plans to be prepared, to maximise the reuse and recycling of construction waste. Strategic Policy SP20 requires community recycling facilities to be rationalised and/or improved and as part of any scheme, provision should be included for recycling facilities (see General Development Requirements Section).
To improve air quality by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources (SA16)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	The provision of cycle and pedestrian routes (through Strategic Policy SP8), implementation of Halton's greenway network, where appropriate (through Strategic Policy SP9) and provision of covered, safe and secure cycle parking (through Strategic Policy SP17) will encourage the use of sustainable transport modes helping to reduce the use of private cars and associated air pollution. However, the supply of parking (through Strategic Policy SP10 and sub area policy CQ3) will need to be carefully managed to ensure that it does not prejudice the use of more sustainable forms of transport. The regeneration of the Railway Station with increased access will help to encourage increased train travel as an alternative to private cars. Similarly, re-modelling of the bus station should make use of buses more attractive.

Runcorn Town Centre SPD SA Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets (SA17)	L	P	S-L	M	✓	<p>Shop fronts and the built environment within Runcorn Town Centre are generally very good. The built environment of the town centre will be improved by building on existing shop frontage and environmental improvements (Strategic Policy SP12) together with management of street furniture (Strategic Policy SP13), redevelopment of currently underused or vacant sites and removal of the Runcorn Loops.</p> <p>The SPD requires buildings within the Regent Street sub-area and Portland Street sub area to be restricted to three storeys to preserve the suburban residential character of the area (Policy RS4 and PS6), whilst buildings within the Station Gateway Quarter Area are required to retain existing residential amenity and protect views of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (Policy SG4). Development within the Portland Street sub-area should seek to enhance the views of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (PS7) and buildings within the Canal Quarter redevelopment area should be of the highest standard of design (Policy CQ3). However, the impact of the SPD on cultural heritage will be dependent upon the final design proposals for each development.</p> <p>The SPD requires environmental constraints associated with development, including landscape and visual impacts, to be identified and mitigated (see General Development Requirements Section).</p> <p>There is potential for archaeological remains, particularly adjacent to the river and an archaeological assessment is required for all planning applications affecting known or potential areas of archaeological interest. Where potential impacts are identified, appropriate measures should be proposed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.</p>
To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources (SA18)	L	P	S-L	H	<p>✓</p> <p>?</p>	<p>The new development sites will make efficient use of land by using brownfield sites. The Council supports where appropriate the re-use of existing buildings, the remodelling of the existing Railway Station and bus station, and the refurbishment of some of the existing residential development. However, construction of new buildings will involve energy and resource use.</p> <p>However, Strategic Policy SP7 requires applications for change of use and those supported by a Design and Access Statement to contribute positively towards the aims of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the SPD requires new residential development to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. Policy CQ4 requires all residential units within the Canal Quarter to achieve Code level 4 or above.</p> <p>The general development control matters section requires commercial development to achieve a BREEAM rating of Very Good.</p>

Runcorn Town Centre Opportunity Appendices

SA Objective (abridged)	Nature of effect					Justification for the Assessment and Recommendations for Mitigation
	Scale	Permanence	Timescale	Likelihood	Assessment	
Conclusions	<p>The preferred option should have a significant positive impact in improving the competitiveness and productivity of business (SA4) and enhancing the vitality and viability of Runcorn town centre (SA5) and the borough as a whole (SA6) as a number of new sites will be developed, existing vacant or underused sites should be re-used or redeveloped and changes to the road layout will improve accessibility. The Preferred Option should also result in significant beneficial effects on the safety, reducing crime and the fear of crime, and improve access to basic goods, amenities and public open space.</p> <p>Uncertainties arise as a result of new residential development which could put pressure on existing educational and health facilities.</p> <p>The environmental effects should largely be positive providing appropriate assessment and mitigation measures are put in place during the planning approvals process.</p> <p>The Appraisal presented above, is an assessment of the completed proposals. However, the proposals are intended to be developed in three broad phases. Phase 1 comprises downgrading of existing infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge resulting in a sites being made available for development, principally the Station Quarter. Regeneration of the majority of opportunity sites, resulting from the down grading of infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge is anticipated to occur in Phase 2, with the remaining opportunities developed in Phase 3. Each phase will therefore result in cumulative sustainability benefits as outlined above.</p>					

Halton Borough Council

Runcorn Town Centre

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Statement of Consultation

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February 2009

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it is a requirement to prepare and publish a Consultation Statement for a range of planning policy documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This is a reflection of Government's desire to "strengthen community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities".
- 1.2 This Consultation Statement is being made available during the formal period of public consultation, alongside the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report, in accordance with Regulation 17 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

2 Stakeholder Consultation

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation
Waterman Environmental were appointed by Halton Borough Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. As Runcorn Town Centre was recognised as one of the key focal points for regeneration and development within the Regeneration Strategy, it was considered that the SA Framework developed for the Regeneration Strategy remained applicable to the SA of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD.
- 2.2 Key issues and SA objectives for Runcorn Town Centre that emerged from both the existing context and the proposals of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy were consulted upon in December 2008/January 2009. English Heritage, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service were invited to confirm that they were in agreement with the findings of the initial stages, and to provide an opportunity to suggest changes to the assessment. The comments and responses can be found in Appendix D of the Runcorn Town Centre SA.
- 2.3 Stakeholder consultation
The stakeholder consultation took place between 17th December 2008 and 12th January 2009. During this time key stakeholders in the purpose of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the document's content prior to the formal consultation process. A summary list of consultees can be found at the end of this report.
- 2.5 Comments received and the resulting responses and the amendments to the draft SPD are contained in the following table:

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Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Fig 1	This should include Riverside College and Homebase.	Included Riverside College plan - not the Bridge Retail Park as this is not subject to future development opportunity.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.2	Should be 'latter half of 19th century'.	Accepted - text amended.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.4	The original population proposed for the Runcorn New Town, including older area was 70,000. This was later increased to about 90,000.	Accepted - text amended.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.5 3rd bullet point	The Spur Road, which was opened shortly after the SJB, bypassed the Town Centre. The Bridgewater Expressway follows the line of the Bridgewater Canal and did not cut off any roads but reinforced the canal barrier. (see also para 2.23 3rd bullet point).	Accepted - text amended.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.8	The improved vehicular access is via Leira Way.	Accepted - text added.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.11	The term 'shatter' zones is emotive, especially as the speed limit of the main roads shown on fig 2.7 is 40mph. What term should be used to describe the central expressway route which has a 60mph limit will carry more traffic and is likely to retain the existing 60mph speed limit?.	Accepted - text amended.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.23 5th bullet point.	The railway arches do not significantly impede movement. The pedestrian routes under the expressway are primarily shared with vehicles and preferable to subways. An improvement to pedestrian routes would be welcome but at grade crossings of major roads have their dangers.	Text amended to address initial point. Point regarding at grade crossings is an opinion and not a recommendation.

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Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 2.26	Existing roads are described as redundant without any evidence being provided to support this view. A traffic model is available to test different scenarios and should be used. This would give guidance on distances and journey times which will highlight any congestion hotspots. Motorists are rarely mentioned in these documents but there is regular reference to easy access for cyclists. An increase in cycling would certainly be beneficial to health and reduce traffic congestion but unless the cycle lanes are linked to a wider network, their impact would be limited. In any case, cars and buses will remain the main mode of transport for most journeys over half a mile and the proposals and these proposals must reflect this reality.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para's 2.31 and 2.32	It is the A533 flyover Comments above apply. The demolition of the Runcorn loops would remove the direct link between the SJB and the Weston Expressway which leads to Runcorn Docks and the major industrial area in West Runcorn. This demolition would also divert significant volumes of traffic along a longer route via the Mersey Gateway. Traffic would then follow either the Bridgewater Expressway through an at-grade junction (which would also serve as the gateway to both the Town Centre and Runcorn Railway Station) or the Central Expressway, which is a long diversion for traffic from West Widnes. The retention of the loops would retain the direct link between the SJB and the Weston Expressway and permit a direct link to be provided from the SJB approach via a signal-controlled junction to the Railway Station. The loop crosses the proposed extension of the Bridgewater Canal but this is not an insurmountable barrier.	Text amended to address initial point. The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 4.4	The loops are primarily at ground level and follow the line of the railway. Where they cross Picow Farm Road, they are at the same level as the railway. It could be argued that the original access to the SJB is more intrusive as it is wholly on viaduct, is closer to the Town Centre and crosses an area which could be developed more effectively.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para's 4.8 and 4.10	The congestion in the Town Centre car parks between 9am and 3pm is recognised. The introduction of parking management measures and restrictions near the shops, which only effect long term parking, will benefit the shopping area. This is emphasised in Strategic Policy SP10.	Text amended from '10am' to '9am'
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 4.16 Objective 5.	This suggests the Council builds on the achievements at the Deck in the Canal Quarter. The flats in the Deck have proved difficult to let and sell and we are doubtful whether a similar development in the Canal quarter will be successful in the current economic climate.	Text amended
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 5.5 Strategic Policy SP5.	The number of takeaways needs to be reduced. Some are not viable and, as the Police will confirm, are simply fronts for crime.	Noted - the type of food establishments acceptable within the town centre will need to be justified as part of any planning application submission.

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Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 5.10	We support the reinstatement of the Bridgewater Canal, but the removal of current highway links that blocks the route must not result in unsatisfactory approach routes to the SJB. The alternative proposed in our comment on para 6.77 is a viable alternative.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 5.14 Strategic policy SP8	Cycle routes in the Town Centre must link with other routes leading to the Town Centre to be effective. Our Group considers that the proposed cycle routes in the Town Centre are too extensive. Runcorn is not Holland.	Additional bullet point added.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Fig 5.1	There are benefits in providing a new junction at the location shown on this plan. However, there are major dangers in routing so many routes through one at grade junction. Any accident at this point would result in serious congestion in this area. It is on the direct route between the proposed Ineos Incinerator and Randle Island and would provide the only vehicular access to the SJB.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para's 5.30 & 5.31	Strategic Policy SP14 Increasing the quantity and quality of art needs to be justified financially and should not conflict with SP14.	No further action required.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.58	The use of the 'old 'Town Viaduct as the only access the SJB has not been justified. Retaining the Loop may be significantly cheaper, is less dependant on one critical junction and provides the opportunity to construct a direct access to the Railway Station off the SJB.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para's 6.64 -6.70	<p>Existing major roads near the SJB inevitably focus on the SJB and are barriers. The arguments in these paragraphs can be applied even more strongly to the upgraded Central Expressway. Some delinking of the SJB approaches should be beneficial but the description of the A557 approach to the SJB as redundant infrastructure needs to be demonstrated. The de-linking proposals for both the Runcorn and Widnes approaches to SJB will not provide sufficient capacity for even 2 lanes on the SJB to be fully utilised if the Mersey Gateway had to be closed due to an accident or major roadwork's. There is currently little congestion on the SJB outside peak periods and in the future people will be paying tolls at all times simply to remove peak hour delays. If the SJB will be unable to take a significant diversion of traffic when there are major problems on the Mersey Gateway, the advantage of having two bridges will be lost. A traffic model is available to test different scenarios and should be used. This would give guidance on distances and journey times which will highlight any congestion hotspots.</p> <p>We are concerned that benefits to through traffic seem to be at the expense of local people wishing to travel between West Runcorn and the A562 to Liverpool, for example. The traffic model needs to provide information on journey times which may alleviate these concerns. Alternatively the information provided from the traffic model may suggest different options for de-linking the SJB. The model also needs to test the impact of proposals to build 4,000 dwellings in the Runcorn Dock area, for example.</p>	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.73	The downgrading of the Queensway Expressway to a residential road will prevent it acting as a local route between Widnes and West Runcorn and worsen their connectivity.	The document does not refer to Queensway Expressway as a residential road.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cllr Hodgkinson Deputy Leader Liberal Democrat Group	07/01/09	Para 6.77	The current highway approach to the SJB blocks the extension of the Bridgwater Canal, but it could pass under the loop if it was raised by about 1 metre. The link from the Weston Expressway provides a bigger problem to the extension of the Bridgwater Canal where it passes under the arch, but the Loop junction with the Bridgewater Expressway could be altered to accommodate a right turn from the west for SJB bound traffic.	The proposals described in this Supplementary Planning Document are based on the preferred de-linking option as expressed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy agreed by the Council's Executive Board on 19 th June 2008. The preferred option for road, pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a result of the preferred de-linking proposals is now described in more detail in Section 3: The Mersey Gateway Project, Paragraphs 3.9-3.18 and illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Pg 6 Para 2.2	This paragraph states that the Manchester Ship Canal was constructed in the latter half of the 17 th Century. The Manchester Ship Canal was actually constructed relatively late, opening in 1894. However there was a precursor to the Manchester Ship Canal, the Runcorn to Latchford Canal, which was part of the Mersey and Irwell Navigation and is dated to the early 19 th century.	Accepted - text amended.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	History & Context Section (Pg 6)	The section on the history of Runcorn could be more detailed and we suggest that the Runcorn and Halton Archaeological Assessment in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey is used as an information source and referenced in the document. This document provides a detailed history of Runcorn and the surrounding area, and can be found on Cheshire County Council's website at: http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/Planning/Regenerationresources/Historic/NHE_Historic_Halton.htm	Adding additional historical context would not necessarily add anything further to this document, in its role as a Supplementary Planning Document for planning purposes.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	History & Context Section (Pg 6)	Some of the information included in the history and context section of the document, would be better suited under a separate heading. The 'context' that is being set out here is the context for the need for redevelopment of the town, and an outline of previous schemes which have the same objective, rather than setting an area within its wider locality and associated history. As this detail does not form part of the history of the area, it would be more appropriate under a different heading.	Section titles amended.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Characteristics of Runcorn Town Centre (Pg 11)	This section of the document does not define all elements of the character of Runcorn Town Centre. Much of the information included outlines schemes and development that have occurred in the vicinity; however this does not define the character of the town, only providing information on the current situation in the town. For example, information on the developer competition held in 2005 is important information, but does not define the character of the area and therefore is not relevant under this heading. The English Heritage document 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006) provides guidance on how to define the character of an area and could be used as a template for this section.	Section titles amended.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Local Policy (Pg 21)	The policies in the Unitary Development Plan which relate to Listed Buildings and Archaeology have not been included in the local policy section of the document. As there are a number of Listed structures within Runcorn Town Centre which need to be protected and an Area of Archaeological Potential, it is important that the relevant policies are included.	Accepted - additional UDP policies added to appendix.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	4. Vision & Objectives (4.2)	As the character of the town has not been fully established in section 2.10 ff , it is perhaps not appropriate to state that Runcorn has the 'character to develop as a market town'. Rather it has the 'potential' to develop as a market town specialising in local retailers and produce.	Accepted - text amended.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Strategic Policies	Runcorn Town Centre is not felt to be of sufficient historical or architectural interest to warrant being designated as a Conservation Area, probably because of the alterations that occurred in the 1960/70s. However the area is still of historic interest and there are a number of listed structures in the vicinity. As such a policy should be included which states that the historic interest of the area will be considered in any development scheme, and where appropriate, preserved or enhanced. Also special regard should be paid to the desirability of preserving the setting of a Listed Building.	Addressed through inclusion of relevant UDP policies above. Any proposals within the SPD boundary will still be subject to the policy provisions of Halton UDP.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Strategic Policies (Cont...)	The Area of Archaeological Potential defined by the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey covers much of the Town Centre Area. This designation is based on the fact that the area includes sites that were occupied before the industrialisation of the area during the 19th century. In addition, the area contains a variety of industrial remains, evidence for which survives both above and below ground. Any such remains could be damaged or destroyed by new development and we note the requirement in Paragraph 6.31 of the Widnes Draft Supplementary Planning Document for the preparation of an archaeological assessment to accompany planning applications that affect areas of archaeological interest and the implementation of appropriate mitigation strategies, where required, prior to the start of development work.	Accepted - Added requirement for an archaeological assessment to accompany any planning application in section 8.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Strategic Policies (Cont...)	This represents an appropriate strategy which should also be included as a strategic policy in the Runcorn document. The completion of an archaeological assessment and, if appropriate, a programme of field evaluation prior to the determination of a planning application is important as it allows the need, if any, for further archaeological mitigation to be established at any early stage. Any further archaeological mitigation (excavation, watching brief, etc) may then be secured by an appropriately-worded condition. It is, of course, possible that pre-determination assessment and evaluation will demonstrate that further archaeological mitigation would not be appropriate, in which case this will have been established at an early stage in the development process and no further work will be required.	Expanded on above.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Strategic Policies (Cont...)	This advice is in line with that contained in <i>PPG16: archaeology and planning</i> (DoE 1990) and is also in accordance with Policies BE5 (sites of archaeological importance) and BE6 (archaeological evaluations) in the Borough's Unitary Development Plan.	No further action required.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Sub-area policies	The numbers of the sub-areas as shown on the maps do not correspond with the order in which the sub areas are approached in the document. It would be clearer if either the sub areas were renumbered to match the order of the document, or the document was reordered.	Agree - document re-arranged into a meaningful order.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Regent Street and Western Approaches (Pg 57 6.25)	6.25 states that new development could occur through selective demolition of vacant buildings. If these buildings are historic, then demolition should not be recommended and the document should state this.	Reference made in text
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Bridge Street and Eastern Approaches (Pg 60)	Within the Bridge Street sub area there are a number of Listed Buildings: The Old Police Station, the Royal Hotel and Church of the Holy Trinity. These buildings should be identified as being part of the character of the area and it should be stated that their setting should be preserved or enhanced.	Text added to paragraph.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Bridge Street and Eastern Approaches (Pg 60)	This area also retains historic street patterns. Roads such as Thomas Street, Bold Street, Stanley Street and Parker Street are all visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps. These street forms should be identified and protected.	Accepted - additional text added.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Promenade & The Desk Sub-area, (Pg 69)	The description of the Promenade and the Deck sub-area does not identify the two listed buildings in the area: the Church of All Saints, Grade II* and a substation, formally the hearse house, which is grade II.	Accepted - reference added.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	Promenade & The Desk Sub-area, (Pg 69)	The Church is an important site and building within Runcorn, and is one of the strongest links back to Runcorn's early history and is known to have been in existence from at least the 12th century. The importance of the church and its site needs to be identified in the document as it could form the focal point for improvements to the area.	Accepted - additional text added.
Cheshire County Council	09/01/2009	General	<p>The opportunity should be taken during the regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre to ensure that the heritage of the area makes a significant contribution to future redevelopment.</p> <p>Runcorn Town Centre is not designated as a Conservation Area, however it is still of historic interest and character. This character needs to be more firmly identified and policies and aims included in the document in order to protect the historic elements of the area. It is evident from numerous other schemes that heritage-led regeneration can be very successful and the potential of some of the buildings in Runcorn Town Centre should not be underestimated.</p> <p>The archaeological potential of Runcorn Town Centre has been demonstrated by the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey and this potential should be taken into consideration at an early stage in the regeneration process.</p>	No further action is considered necessary as the existing policies of the Unitary Development Plan adequately deal with the protection and enhancement of the historic built environment.
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Planning Policy Context	We welcome reference to PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. However, due to the number of historic landfill sites (notably Old Quay Quarry, Victoria Road, Old Bridgewater Locks, Percival Lane, Dukesfield and the Runcorn and Weston Canal) and possible historic contaminative land-use of the SPD area, that reference be made to PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control. We would also suggest that reference is made to Policy PR14 Contaminated Land, of the Halton UDP.	Accepted - additional reference added to text.
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Planning Policy Context	We welcome inclusion of reference to Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan and the requirement that development proposals will be required to have regards to these policy provisions.	No further action required.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Flood Risk	We note that flood risk is briefly mentioned within paragraph 2.23, as a constraint in 7.10 and reference made to PPS 25 in paragraph 7.20. We would advise that flood risks associated with the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC) are currently unknown. We are currently undertaking investigations into the flood risk associated with the MSC. However, these finding will not be available until the later part of 2009 at the earliest. Any development adjacent to the MSC (and Mersey Estuary) may require a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).	Accepted -Text added
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Flood Risk	We recommend that paragraph 7.10 is expanded to explain that development proposals greater than 1 hectare within flood zone 1 will require a site specific FRA. Additionally it should be stated that surface water run-off rates from greenfield sites should be restricted to greenfield rates (including making allowances for climate change). Additionally, any development adjacent to canals may require a site specific FRA as the flood risks from these waterways is currently unknown.	Accepted - additional text added.
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Strategic Policies	Providing that developments comply with PPS9 and PPS25, we welcome the Strategic Policies detailed within the SPD, specifically utilising waterside frontages and establishing better links between the Canal Quarter and the Deck / Promenade and enhancement of the Bridgewater Canal. Indeed, proposals to link and improve waterside locations provides an opportunity to enhance / provide green networks (as detailed in SP9).	No further action required.
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Objectives	We welcome the inclusion of ' <i>...enhancing the cultural, built and natural environment...</i> '. We would recommend that greater emphasis to be placed on the natural environment as a greenspace and the ecological and recreational benefits that appropriate landscaping can achieve (such as the creation green networks and the expansion and improvement of existing green spaces).	Any proposals will be required to conform to the policies of the UDP. Inclusion of additional UDP policies will become close to re-iterating the UDP.

Draft

Consultee	Date of response	Reference	Comments	Response
Environment Agency	12/01/2009	Objectives	We would recommend that an objective to ' <i>... provide appropriate development that fully mitigates all environmental constraints including landscaping, contamination, noise, air quality, water quality, flooding, and visual impacts...</i> ' be considered for inclusion within the document.	This is covered by the policies of the UDP, and various other policies in the SPD. It is not considered necessary to include an additional policy covering these matters.

- 2.6 A summary list of those consulted as part of the stakeholder consultation for the draft Runcorn Town Centre SPD is given below.

Runcorn Town Centre SPD Consultees
Arriva North West & Wales
Bridgewater Canal
British Waterways
C/O St Modwens Developments Ltd
Cheshire Area Health Authority
Cheshire Police
Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Chester & Halton Community NHS Trust
DLA Piper
English Partnerships
English Partnerships Regional Office
Environment Agency
Fire Officer (Warrington)
Giffords
Government Office North West
Groundwork Mersey Valley
Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust
Halton Borough Council Councillors
Halton Borough Transport
Halton Chamber of Commerce
Halton Community Transport
Halton General Hospital Trust
Halton Housing Trust
Halton LSP
Health & Safety Executive
Home Builders Federation
M Farrow - Conservation Officer (CCC)
M Leah - Archaeological Officer (CCC)
Merseytravel
Natural England
Network Rail
North West Water Ltd
Peel Holdings Ltd
Runcorn Locks Restoration Society
Runcorn Police Station
Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd
Taylor Young
The Brindley Arts Centre
The Inland Waterways Association
Urban Splash

- 2.7 In addition to the stakeholders listed above, relevant Halton Borough Council Officers were also consulted. These comments have been

taken into consideration in the drafting of the Runcorn Town Centre SPD. Officer's comments and responses are available upon request.

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Extension of Term Contract for Highway Maintenance

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the extension of the current Highway Maintenance Term Contract with Amey LG beyond 2010, as conceived in the original tender documents.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The Highway Term Maintenance Contract 2005 to 2010 with Amey LG (formerly Amey Infrastructure Services Ltd.) is extended for a period of three years to 31 March 2013 with the option to extend the contract for up to a further two-year period by agreement and subject to continuing satisfactory performance.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Introduction

At its meeting of 24th January 2005, the Executive Board Sub Committee resolved to award the Highway Maintenance Term Contract (HMTC) for an initial period of five years to Amey Infrastructure Services Ltd. (now Amey LG). The report noted that the tender documents had identified the option to extend the duration of the Contract by five years by agreement of the parties. This procurement strategy was identified in the original European Journal OJEU notice and was designed to maximise value for money from the contract by offering a reasonable term over which contract set-up, overhead and operational costs could be recovered.

The HMTC has now operated for four years and a decision is now required on whether the contract is extended in accordance with the original strategy or whether a new contract is procured. Amey LG have written to us formally, confirming their desire to extend the current contract and to continue to develop the partnership with the Council. This report considers the extension of the contract and other options, which have been explored.

3.2 Contract Background

The HMTC is based upon the Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC), one of the modern forms of contracts and takes the form of a schedule of rates covering most typical highway operations, principally:

- Reactive maintenance and repair of all highway features
- Gully emptying and drainage repairs;
- Footway and carriageway structural reconstruction.
- The winter maintenance function.

The 'indicative' value of the contract is £1.6m per annum, although typically around £2.5m worth of work is undertaken by Amey LG each year. The HMTC is designed to ensure that the Contractor can sustain sufficient resources to deliver not only the core highway maintenance operations but also an emergency response facility 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Rates contained in the contract are reviewed and adjusted annually to allow for inflation using standardised construction price and cost indices published by the Government (BERR Department). This mechanism ensures that variations of prices used across the Contract term are applied fairly and reflect actual cost changes in the industry.

3.3 Amey's Contract Performance

The HMTC contains a number of performance indicators against which the contractor is measured on a monthly basis:

- Speed of response to emergency calls is a Local Performance Indicator monitored against the service plan. This indicator consistently achieves 98% of emergency repairs carried out within 24 hours.
- The percentage of works completed on time has improved over the course of the contract and for the last quarter has exceeded 90%
- A system of defaults is in operation, relating to poor performance in terms of response & delay, adherence to specification, courtesy and health & safety. The Department has rarely needed to invoke these defaults.

Amey LG provide a workforce comprising approximately 25 operatives plus administrative and support staff operating from a dedicated depot located in Widnes. They are a national company with resources that can deliver all necessary labour, plant and equipment. Health and safety performance is reviewed monthly by the Contract Administrator as part of the Contract progress meeting. Amey's performance has been excellent in terms of reportable accidents and a continual programme of training and updating of operatives skills aims to continue the trend.

3.4 Option Analysis

If the option to extend the current contract were not taken up, then the Council would have to find an alternative way of delivering the highway maintenance service. A number of options have been considered:

3.4.1 Collaboration with neighbouring Authorities

Neighbouring Authorities on Merseyside have similar term contracts for highway maintenance functions within their areas. All six authorities use different contractors operating from dedicated depots within their boundaries. Collaboration with one or more of our neighbours is feasible but would require either:

- Negotiating a 'geographical' extension of an existing contract to include works in Halton. This route is likely to be fraught with legal and operational difficulties and has therefore been discounted.
- Collaboration with neighbours on a newly prepared term contract designed to provide highway maintenance services across highway authority boundaries. Unfortunately, none of the Merseyside authorities have contracts whose duration and commencement date currently coincides with that of Halton's and of course it is of prime importance that we ensure continuity of provision of vital highway services. It would be possible to extend the current contract for a period that would enable a collaborative, cross boundary approach in the future and this option is discussed further in 3.5 below.

3.4.2 Inviting 'Spot' Tenders

It would in theory be possible to deliver programmed structural maintenance works by means of spot tenders for individual schemes. This would require repetitive annual procurement processes involving the preparation of tender documentation, tender list selection and tender evaluation / contract award. This method of procurement would be an inefficient use of resources and would be unlikely to produce a financial saving.

In addition, this method of contract delivery does not suit non standard and emergency works, which are a vital part of the highways service. Minor highway repairs and patching are not normally elements that deliver profit margins sufficient to be attractive to contractors and it may prove difficult to obtain sufficient numbers of tenderers interested in this type of work alone.

3.4.3 Procure a new Term Contract

The procurement of a new highways term maintenance contract would involve several stages including the drafting of fresh tender documentation, tender selection and vetting process (which due to the contract value would mean advertisement in the European Journal), invitation of tenders and administration of the tender process, adjudication (financial and quality) of tenders and the contract award and mobilisation process. Each of these stages are time consuming and costly and it is for this reason, that the current contract was tendered on the basis of a five year term with an option to extend.

On the basis of past experience, it is estimated that the full procurement process, from pre tender qualification to award, would take around seven months and would require the combined efforts of between two and three members of staff to prepare and administer the tender process. The timetable to have a new contract in place and a contractor mobilised by April 2010 is extremely tight.

In the current financial climate it is difficult to predict whether any real financial benefit would accrue as no guarantees can be made as to the new rates being more attractive than those already in the current contract. However, the Council would be in a position where it would have to accept the tenders received, in order to have a contractor in place by April 2010, regardless of value for money or that current quality would be maintained. In addition, there would be time required to build a working relationship with the new contractors staff and operatives.

3.5 Extension of current Contract:

In 2005 when the current HMTG was awarded, the rationale of a 5 year term with option to extend for a further 5 years was considered to offer the most effective method of procuring highway maintenance services. Over a four-year period, the current contract has successfully delivered the operational result that the Council requires. Amey's contract management staff and operatives are familiar with the operational requirements of the contract and have established a successful working relationship with Halton. They currently employ a significant number of staff and operatives locally and the contract is underwritten by a supply chain of goods and services much of it locally sourced. A new contract would see these relationships severely disrupted until new arrangements were fully established.

In confirming that they would like to extend the current contract beyond 2010, Amey LG have offered to explore with us, further efficiency savings that might be delivered through the Contract. Potential areas include joint development of a highway works noticing procedure – a requirement of the New Roads and Street Works Act, the promotion of an apprenticeship scheme, and improvements to the ordering / payment process that would involve switching to a valuation method of payment rather than the current invoicing system. Nothing in these potential changes would require a fundamental review of the current contract terms and conditions and could be implemented through agreement.

The period of contract extension has also been considered. The original rationale for a five-year contract with a five-year extension is still valid, however, there are significant advantages in restricting the extension to an initial term of three years (to March 2013) with an option to extend for a further period of up to two years:

- Builds a degree of flexibility into the completion date of the Contract. This would enable discussions with neighbouring

authorities on a collaborative approach to delivery of highway maintenance services in the future beyond 2013;

- Enables a review to be carried out in 2012 of whether the HMTc continues to offer 'Best Value'. The five-year forecast of construction price indices anticipates an initial period of deflation with prices slowly increasing again from 2012.
- Allows for revisions to the highway network consequent on progress of construction of the Mersey Gateway project from 2012.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current contract was awarded for an initial period of five years with a view to extension for a further period. There are no policy implications in relation to the recommended extension.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

The mechanism for dealing with variations of price described in paragraph 3.1 would continue to apply to the three-year period of contract extension, with the schedule of rates adjusted in line with the BERR construction price indices. This provides both the Council and the Contractor with assurance that costs are controlled within the effects of inflation / deflation.

Extending the current contract would save the manpower and financial resources which would otherwise be required to prepare and procure an alternative form of contract for the delivery of highway maintenance services.

5.2 Sustainability

It is vital that the provision of highway services, in particular emergency cover and repairs are continuous. Extending the current contract provides the greatest certainty of ensuring continuity of service.

5.3 Best Value

The contract was awarded to Amey Infrastructure Services Ltd. in 2005 on the basis of them offering the most economically advantageous tender. Amey submitted the lowest tender value and achieved the highest overall score for their quality submission. No significant contractual claims or variations to the contract have occurred during the four years of operation and the variation of price adjustment have resulted in the contract costs keeping pace with construction inflation. Amey have confirmed a reduction to Contractors Fee percentage applied to rates for non-scheduled items to 25%, which has the effect of enabling more work to be carried out. When compared with similar contract rates

and prices, the schedule of rates offers good value for money. It is considered therefore that the contract would continue to offer best value for the delivery of highway maintenance services.

5.4 Legal Implications

A legal 'Form of Agreement' for the proposed extension of the current five-year term contract with Amey LG would be required.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendation.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

As stated in paragraph 3.2 Amey LG operate from a depot in Widnes. They employ a significant proportion of local labour, and have a supply chain of goods and services much of which is sourced locally. The potential for an apprenticeship scheme is being explored with Amey LG, which could generate training and employment for local young people.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendation

6.4 A Safer Halton

As stated in paragraph 3.2, generally Amey LG have an excellent safety record with few blemishes. The issues that have arisen have been actively pursued to eliminate potential for further incidents.

The proposed contract extension offers the most secure option for continuity of highway services, including emergency response to incidents and reactive repairs.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The standard of highway works undertaken by Amey LG is good and this contributes positively to the overall condition and appearance of the highway infrastructure and public realm throughout Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Escalating Contract costs.

As stated in paragraph 3.1 the mechanism for adjusting rates and prices is regulated using the BERR construction price indices and the schedule of rates is updated annually to take account of inflation or deflation. Highway maintenance works are ordered under the contract throughout the year and the volume and value of work ordered is constantly monitored against available budget allocations to achieve a balanced budget at year-end.

The contract is based upon one of the modern forms of New Engineering

Contracts (NEC) with a 'partnering' approach to delivering highway maintenance services. Amey LG have provided the service for four years under the current contract and during that time there have been no significant or serious contractual claims or other issues which have required resolution through the contract dispute mechanisms.

Extending the current contract therefore presents a low risk of contract costs increasing beyond budgets.

7.2 Reducing Quality

Amey have consistently delivered work to a good standard with few occasions where work has been challenged on a qualitative basis and there is no reason to believe that this would change. The notification process and completion of works on time and the management of contract payments are both areas where improvements can be delivered within the current contract as described in paragraph 3.4 and therefore there is significant potential for improvements in quality in these areas.

7.3 Contractor Stability

In the current business climate, the stability of the company providing Halton's essential and emergency highway services is of high importance. At least one neighbouring authority's term contractor has gone into liquidation and we know ourselves from recent experience, the difficulties caused when prospective suppliers and contractors cease trading.

A financial reference and assessment has been provided by Internal Audit as part of the process of contract review. This has detailed no issues of concern in relation to Amey LG and indicates that the company is of sufficient financial standing to continue to undertake the contract. It should however be noted that the assessment is based on historic financial data and may therefore not fully reflect the current financial standing of this company. Therefore measures to minimise potential risk to the Council have been advised that would be acted upon before entering into a contract extension.

Amey LG are a well established company with a demonstrable sound financial record. There would therefore appear to be significant advantages in extending the current contract with Amey for the financial stability this would deliver.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Amey have in place a fully documented Equality and Diversity policy that was examined during the initial tender evaluation stage of the current contract. This has been reviewed by the company at intervals throughout the initial four-year period of the contract and it fully meets all current standards and legislation.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Highway Maintenance Term Contract April 2005 to March 2010	Highways Transportation and Logistics Department Highways Division	Colin Dutton Section Leader Highway Management
HMTC Tender Information Pack	Rutland House Halton Lea Runcorn	
HMTC Progress Meeting Minutes File		
BERR Building Cost Information Service Price Indices reports		
Amey LG Equality and Diversity Policy		
Amey LG Health and Safety Policy		
Amey LG Business Continuity Plan		
Letter Amey LG dated 30 January Halton Term Maintenance Contract		

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 2nd April 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment
SUBJECT: Waste Management and Recycling Contract
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to update Members regarding the procurement of a Waste Management and Recycling Contract (WMRC) for Merseyside and Halton.

2. RECOMMENDED: That:

2.1 Members note the progress made with the procurement of a Waste Management and Recycling Contract for Merseyside and Halton, and

2.2 Members note that the MWDA Board, at their meeting of 15th April 2009, are expected to determine the bidder which has submitted the most economically advantageous tender in response to MWDA's Call for Final Tenders in the WMRC procurement and will enter into the WMRC with that bidder on behalf of itself and Halton.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At their meeting of 29th March 2007, the Executive Board approved a Contract Procurement Strategy with Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) for the provision of services and facilities for the recycling and treatment of waste for Merseyside and Halton (minute EXB106/2007 refers).

3.2 In order to secure Halton's involvement in contractual arrangements required to meet recycling and waste diversion targets, Executive Board Members, at their meeting of 19th July 2007, approved the delegation of defined aspects of the Council's waste disposal functions to allow the MWDA to procure two principal waste contracts on behalf of itself and Halton; a Waste Management and Recycling Contract and a Resource Recovery Contract (minute EXB20/2007).

3.3 The arrangement approved by the Executive Board authorised the MWDA to enter into both contracts on behalf of Halton Borough

Council and the purpose of this report is to advise members of the current stage of the procurement process in relation to the Waste Management and Recycling Contract.

4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Waste Management and Recycling Contract (WMRC) includes the operation and management of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's), the provision and management of Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF's), the management of Waste Transfer Stations and the option for the provision of facilities for the treatment of kitchen waste. The contract is for a period of 20 years.

4.2 For Halton, this contract will provide for the management of the two Household Waste Recycling Centres at Picow Farm Road in Runcorn and Johnson's Lane in Widnes, together with the Haddocks Wood composting facility for the receipt and composting of green waste. It will also see the provision of Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) services for the receipt and processing of recyclable materials collected through Halton's kerbside recycling services. Halton will have opportunities to deliver other waste streams to this contract, such as street cleansing waste, by agreement with the MWDA and the appointed contractor.

4.3 The procurement of the WMRC has been through a competitive dialogue process and has involved the following steps:

- Pre qualification (PQQ)
- Invitation to submit outline solutions (ISOS)
- Invitation to submit detailed solutions (ISDS)
- Call for final tenders (CFT)

4.4 From a provisional list of 45 potential bidders, 9 companies returned Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for the Waste Management and Recycling Contract. Following an Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions (ISOS) evaluation, four companies were selected to go forwards to the next stage and were issued with an Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS). These were:

- Shanks
- SITA UK
- Veolia
- Waste Recycling Group

4.5 Only three companies (SITA, Veolia and Waste Recycling Group) responded to the ISDS. Following further evaluation, Sita and Veolia were identified as the final two bidders and both have both completed the Call for Final Tender stage.

4.6 Following final evaluation of technical, legal and financial submissions a preferred bidder will be announced following consideration of a report by the MWDA. The forecasted timetable is as follows:

- MWDA Board meeting 15th April 2009
- Preferred bidder announced 16th April 2009 (estimated)
- Contract award 1st May 2009 (estimated)
- Operational start date 1st June 2009

4.7 As stated in paragraph 3.3 above, the MWDA have delegated authority to enter into the WMRC on behalf of Halton Borough Council and the decision made by MWDA Board Members on 15th April 2009 will secure Halton's inclusion in that contract for a period of 20 years.

4.8 A further report, outlining the specific service delivery plans for Halton, together with financial and other information, will be provided to Members following the contract award.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Previous financial forecasts predicted the future costs of the WMRC. Members are advised that, following an evaluation of the final bids received from both Sita and Veolia, the actual cost of the WMRC are within those previously forecasted and demonstrates that Halton has achieved an economy of scale from being involved in the procurement of contracts with the MWDA.

5.2 The bids from both Sita and Veolia include proposals for the enhancement and refurbishment of Halton's HWRC sites and this will require capital investment in year one of the contract. The two proposals vary and the specific capital investment will be known once the preferred bidder has been identified.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No direct impact

8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

No direct impact

8.3 A Healthy Halton

No direct impact

8.4 A Safer Halton

No direct impact

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No direct impact

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 There is a significant risk that, failure to procure contracts for waste treatment services and facilities will leave the authority vulnerable to the significant financial and other risks associated with failing to meet future waste management targets.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 There are no equality and diversity issues as a result of this report.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

11.1 There are no background papers within the meaning of the Act

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

TITLE: Widnes Markets – Stall Charges

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to consider a request from the Widnes Market Traders' Association to reduce stall rental at the market for 2009/10, in the light of current trading trends.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That:

- (1) no inflationary uplift be applied to 2009/10 rents; and**
- (2) a 10% rent reduction be applied for 2009/10 and be subject to a further review before being applied beyond 2009/10.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council has received a formal request from the Widnes Market Traders' Association for stall rentals to be reduced at the market for 2009/10, given the current trading trends. The Traders' Association have asked that the Council consider reducing rents by 50%, given as what they describe as "extraordinary" times.

3.2 The market is experiencing its first decrease in occupancy levels since it opened in 1995. The concern is that if more stall holders are forced to leave the market, then its overall viability is threatened. Whilst some new traders have tried to establish a business in recent times, three have had to cease trading within a six month period.

3.3 The market, as a business, has made a significant financial contribution to the Council over many years and plays an important part in the shopping offer within the Borough, employing many local people and attracting visitors from nearby towns.

3.4 There is a fine balance to be struck in circumstances such as this and rent levels are already a key component of running a commercial operation such as a market. If they are too high for traders to sustain a healthy business and they therefore move on, this has an impact on the view potential users of the market have and can lead to a downward spiral. However, any reduction has to be viewed against the overall financial picture the Council is facing. Reducing rents in turn

reduces income to the Council at a time when other sources of income are also reducing. Overall reductions in income require further efficiencies/savings to be found from elsewhere in the Council's budget.

- 3.5 In view of the above it is considered that a 50% reduction, as requested, is too great a level to support at the current time, given that it would lead to a significant reduction in income to the Council, taking into account the wider responsibilities of the Council. However, the situation faced by traders is real and is recognised and the potential impact in the long term on the market is fully appreciated. In all the circumstances it is suggested that a 10% reduction be introduced for 2009/10 and the inflationary rise that was due to be applied for that year no longer be applied.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is considered that retaining a vibrant market is important for the town centre shopping offer and therefore efforts should be made to help traders to continue to operate within the Borough.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Based on full indoor market occupancy and the existing occupancy levels on the open market, the proposals contained in this report would represent a £7,000 reduction in monthly income for the Council.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No direct implications.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The market provides employment for many local people.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

No direct implications.

6.4 A Safer Halton

No direct implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The market plays a key role in the shopping offer of the Borough, providing choice for local people.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There is a risk that if no help is provided for traders, the overall long term viability of the market will be affected.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Letter from Widnes Market Traders Association	Ian Leivesley's Office Municipal Building	Ian Leivesley

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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