

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 March 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Leader's and Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Plan

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the draft Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Plan 2017-2027 ('Mersey Gateway Plus') to Members for consideration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) Members approve the draft 'Mersey Gateway Plus' Regeneration Plan;**
- 2) Members agree the priorities and proposed actions outlined in the report and accompanying documentation;**
- 3) The Council uses the Plan as a vehicle for prioritising resources in respect of Economic Regeneration opportunities; and**
- 4) The Plan is formally launched in late May 2017.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A 'Mersey Gateway Plus' Regeneration Plan (referred to as the Plan in this report) 2017-2027 has been produced which seeks to maximise the economic benefits of the Mersey Gateway Project beyond its construction period (Autumn 2017).

The purpose of the Plan is to facilitate the development of a steady pipeline of regeneration and development opportunities over a 10-15 year period. The project pipeline will seek to use the Mersey Gateway branding as a way of packaging a series of interrelated projects and programmes in a coherent and consistent way.

It should serve as a framework and provide focus for the Council and its partners to make effective investment decisions relating to a wide range of potential economic regeneration opportunities in the Borough.

This will ultimately make it easier to promote the Borough's regeneration opportunities to potential future investors.

It should be noted, however, that the Plan is the first in a suite of documents which will form Halton’s Economic Growth Strategy. The other documents which are being developed comprise:

HALTON TOMORROW – a short but aspirational, ambitious and visionary document which sets out a longer term vision for the Borough in economic terms;

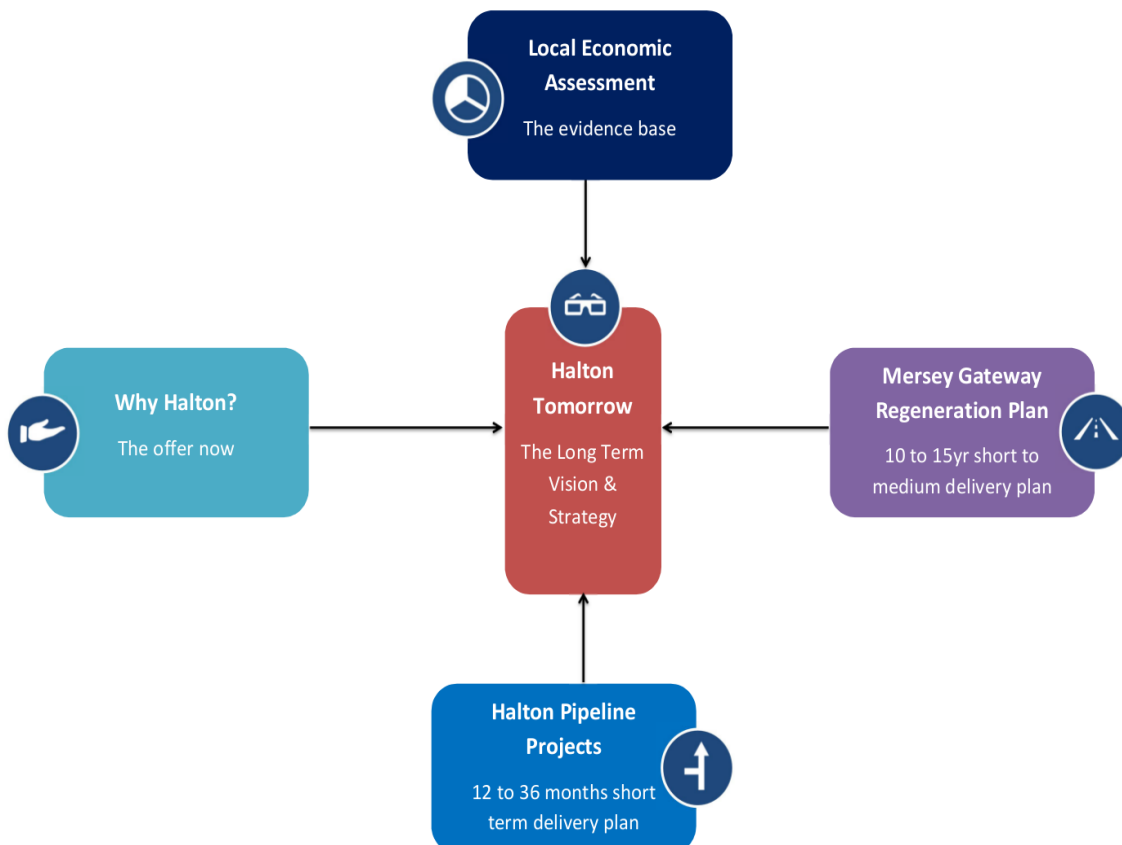
THE LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT – a document which provides a statistical overview of the Borough’s economic indicators and will set out the evidence for shaping and informing Halton’s future economic priorities and actions;

THE MERSEY GATEWAY PLUS REGENERATION PLAN – (as outlined in this report)

HALTON’S SINGLE INVESTMENT FUND (SIF) PIPELINE – this is a list of short to medium projects which has already been to maximise the opportunities arising from the launch of the Combined Authority’s SIF prospectus.

WHY HALTON? – this will be an inward investment prospectus/brochure which focuses on Halton’s Unique Selling Point highlighting the strengths, benefits and opportunities the Borough has to offer.

The diagram below illustrates how it is proposed that the respective documents will fit together.



Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Plan

A more in depth detailed Plan (100 pages +) has been produced which provides a large amount of technical information relating to potential sites being brought forward for development. The larger document will be used as an internal document to assist officers in developing project plan for the respective 'Impact Areas' identified.

However, for ease of reference a shorter, more 'user friendly' fold out glossy document (Appendix 1) has been developed to support this report and engage wider audiences.

In preparing the Plan, a significant amount of work was undertaken. This included:

1. Developing masterplans and delivery strategies for specific regeneration programmes and investigate feasibility of key enabling projects which form part of the Regeneration Plan;
2. Identify a steady pipeline of development and investments opportunities comprising residual land from the Mersey Gateway Project and adjoining areas within the project envelope;
3. Engaging across the organisation, but particularly with the Planning, Policy and Transport Dept., to ensure future continuity and support for delivery;
4. Align and integrate key projects with future funding opportunities such as the Liverpool City Region Single Investment Fund (SIF) - Transport and Development Pipelines.

The fold out glossy document follows the structure of the detailed Regeneration Plan, and is in three parts:

Part 1 - Strategic Context to Regeneration in Halton

This section outlines that during the past five years, thousands of new jobs have been created in Halton within our expanding Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Service Industries and the Borough has seen investment in excess of £1 billion. As a result, Halton is currently on the front foot. This period of transformation and economic growth looks set to continue, as the Mersey Gateway Project further boosts commercial confidence in our area.

The aim of this strategic document is simple - to identify some of the tremendous development opportunities that the Gateway will create and to maximise those opportunities for the long term economic benefits of the area.

The Gateway Project is a significant catalyst for change in Halton and underpins an ambition to move the area forward. Halton has a strong economy that punches well above its weight. The Plan gives an overview of some of the activity being planned

and delivered in a location that could claim to be establishing itself as the region's innovation hub.

The Plan explains that Borough has enviable physical connectivity and our transportation links are second to none. Approximately a third of the UK's residential population and around a half of all British manufacturing businesses is located within a two hour drive. Whilst being part of the Liverpool City Region, we are strategically situated within the economic triangle formed by Liverpool, Manchester and Chester. Halton is ideally located between both Manchester International and Liverpool's John Lennon Airport. It offers direct access to The West Coast Mainline for both rail freight and passengers and to the ports of Liverpool, offering ferries to the Isle of Man and Ireland and shipping across the world, and also at Runcorn, via the Manchester Ship Canal. These locational advantages as well some of Halton's other assets and strengths are illustrated on the 'connected Halton' diagram provided within the fold out glossy.

It goes onto to demonstrate that 'connected Halton' is not just about physical connectivity but extends to access to: our business innovation networks; high class digital infrastructure, workforce and skills; and lifestyle, retail and leisure opportunities. The new crossing adds value to our existing physical connectivity and provides a brand in which to market and promote 'connected Halton' and our development and investment opportunities.

Part Two: Mersey Gateway Eight Impact Areas

This Plan identifies eight key 'Impact areas' that will be either accessed or enhanced as a result of the Mersey Gateway project. It explains how we will utilise all our assets and build upon our strengths to encourage development and create jobs for local people. We will achieve this by combining these elements in a cohesive way, establishing the Borough with a much stronger investment proposal both nationally and internationally.

The Plan focuses on how these eight regeneration and investment 'Impact Areas' are linked to the Mersey Gateway Project. These are places where the new crossing and wider project help unlock land for new development and reposition an area for growth. These Impact Areas are expressed on the overview plan and comprise:

- Productivity - Development opportunities for employment related activity, with a focus on the Liverpool City Region growth sectors
- Connectivity - Key road, rail and water based supporting infrastructure projects
- Place - Wider housing, retail, leisure and other opportunities to support balanced and sustainable growth

Whilst each impact area can be delivered as a standalone regeneration programme, this Plan becomes more significant when the eight impact areas are brought forward together as a portfolio.

This Plan has the potential to deliver:

- 200 hectares of new and repositioned employment land
- 20,000 jobs (created or safeguarded)
- 3,000 new homes

Clearly, the outputs and targets outlined are estimates and may be refined as sites are brought forward for development. This includes approximately 20 hectares of residual project land which will be handed back to the Council upon completion of the Mersey Gateway Project. There are also approximately 300 hectares of additional vacant or underutilised land within the envelope of the Mersey Gateway Project impact areas where there is potential for redevelopment.

The net developable areas will also be dependent upon ground levels, any easements and or other constraints. The assessment of residual project land is currently being undertaken in liaison with the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board.

Proposed Key Impact Areas

The proposed eight Key Impact Areas are:

- West Runcorn Employment Growth Area
- Halton Lea Healthy New Town Centre
- Astmoor Business Park
- West Bank
- Widnes Waterfront
- Southern Widnes (Moor Lane / Ashley Way)
- Ditton Corridor
- Runcorn Old Town Centre

Part 2 of the Plan aligns respective impact areas with Liverpool City Region key economic growth sectors and identifies respective development and investment opportunities with potential outputs and outcomes. The enabling connectivity and placemaking projects that would be required to help support growth across each impact area are also recognised.

To illustrate the scale and ambition of the Plan a number of standout place-shaping projects are summarised within the Plan. These projects have the potential to transform Halton and the wider place, beyond their immediate site or the impact areas they sit within. These place-shaping projects are:

- INOVYN World Class Chemical and Energy Hub
- Silver Jubilee Bridge Sustainable Transport Corridor
- ‘Destination Runcorn’ New Station Quarter Development
- The Mersey Multi Modal Gateway (3MG) Phase Three
- The Mid-Mersey Estuary Park

Whilst the Plan is focussed on the eight Impact Areas, wider development and investment opportunities in Halton are also promoted. These include Widnes Town Centre, and employment areas such as Manor Park and Whitehouse Vale. The internationally significant Sci-Tech Daresbury is also identified.

Part 3: Implementation and Delivery

The Plan states that the key to success in Halton is our culture and approach to regeneration and partnership working, particularly with private sector partners. We also understand regeneration doesn’t happen overnight or in isolation. The Council contribution is the leadership, governance and legitimacy we can bring to developing and realising a shared vision for a place; and how we can support investment through the contacts, resources and functions available to the Council. We also recognise the strengths of private sector partners and the dynamism and focus on viability and delivery that is brought to the table. This is why Halton has and will continue to have a strong track record in regeneration delivery. The Plan identifies that once the Mersey Gateway Project is completed approximately 20 hectares of residual project will be returned to the Council. This will be available as a resource to contribute to implementation.

The Plan emphasises that in Halton, regeneration is not just about building things and transforming places. It is also about promoting inclusive growth and changing lives. We always seek added value, by securing local employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities to improve local economic prosperity.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Plan is focused upon repositioning and physically restructuring parts of Halton; and whilst largely focused on brownfield urban renewal, it will include aspects of greenfield development. As such it will be important to ensure that the Plan proposals are consistent with future Council spatial planning policy. The current production of the Development and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) and its evidence base provides the opportunity to achieve integration. This is being progressed.

In respect of aligning transport policy, this is already being undertaken by formally identifying emerging connectivity projects from the Plan within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) transport pipeline process. This is an important positioning of these projects to ensure that they have a better chance of securing funding for further business case development and delivery. Broader alignment of other corporate policies will be considered as the Plan is finalised and published.

The importance of aligning and integrating the Plan with the emerging LCR policy arena has already been identified in respect of developing a Halton Single Investment Fund (SIF) list of potential pipeline projects. This will be particularly important when in the future; the Council will work with other Liverpool City Region partners on cross-boundary joint initiatives such as promoting the Speke Road Growth Corridor, within which the Ditton Corridor Impact Area sits.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Developing and delivering major regeneration programmes and transport projects can be resource intensive and some key decisions will need to be made in terms of prioritising impact area programmes and any individual projects and associated resources considerations.

In order to drive forward the Plan, resources will be required to undertake a wide range of studies including Site Investigations and Cost Benefit analyses. A development fund is being considered to support this work.

The programme manager role for the implementation of the Plan will be shared between the Council's two Regeneration Managers. Lead Officers for respective Impact Areas and individual projects outlined within the Plan will also be identified from within existing Council resources.

An Officer Mersey Gateway Regeneration Steering Group will be established. This will operate in a similar way to previous steering groups established for 3MG, and the Widnes Waterfront. The Steering Group will undertake the following:

- monitor progress on individual projects;
- consider where there are 'blockages' to delivery;
- prioritise and accelerate the development of the respective Key Impact Areas within the Plan;
- identify and direct resources the required to deliver initiatives outlined within the Plan
- ensure that links between respective projects are promoted and a programme based approach is maintained.

The Steering Group will be chaired by Strategic Director for Enterprise Resources and Communities, and will meet every 12 weeks to ensure that the pace of delivery is appropriate.

The Steering Group will comprise a multi-disciplinary team with membership from highways; planning; open spaces; regeneration; employment learning and skills; finance; communications and marketing. Formal governance, oversight and key decision-making will be via reports and recommendations to the Corporate Executive Board. Success will be measured against established outputs and outcomes for the whole programme as well as for individual Impact Areas.

The first key task is agreeing the Mersey Gateway Plus programme pipeline. A draft pipeline is set out in Appendix 2 to outline how the eight Impact Areas will be brought forward in cohesive and steady way over the next ten years. It provide a strategic framework to prioritise and align resources and engage strategic partners; but it also provides flexibility to be responsive to markets and enable individual opportunities to come forward. The pipeline is structured to secure quick wins such as within Widnes Waterfront and West Runcorn Impact Areas and allow time to undertake more detailed feasibility and masterplanning in some impact areas such as West Bank.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Identifying key employment growth sectors will enable local education providers to prepare and skill young people for local job opportunities.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Securing local employment, training and apprenticeships opportunities will form an important part of this project and the Halton Employment Partnership will be a key partner in its delivery.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Improving economic prosperity is a key factor in improving health and well-being. Working closely with the Public Health Team we will develop proposals which meet the Health Impact Assessment requirements.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Bringing underutilised and redundant land and buildings back into productive use, helps reduce crime and arson. Working closely with Community Safety and Cheshire's Architectural Liaison Officer we will create safer spaces and buildings which offer natural surveillance.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The work being undertaken will help shape the next generation of regeneration and investment in Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The main risk is that projects identified within the Plan are delivered in isolation and, therefore, the opportunities to package interrelated projects in a coordinated way will be missed.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Whilst there are no immediate Equality and Diversity issues associated with this report, as the Plan is finalised, and Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken which will focus on maximising the economic benefits of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, post completion and the opportunity to provide greater access to a wide range of employment opportunities for all our residents.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Adoption of the Plan has the potential to drive the continuing regeneration of the Borough for the next 10 years and this is likely to have a positive impact on the economic well-being of residents in Halton Borough.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

To adopt a project by project approach to maximising the regeneration benefits of the Mersey Gateway. However, this approach would result in a short-term piece-meal approach which would make it difficult to use the Mersey Gateway 'brand' in a productive way.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

1st April 2017.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
The Mersey Gateway Project Wider Economic Impact, AMION Consulting;	http://www.merseygateway.co.uk/publicinquirydocs/HBC_docs/Proofs/HBC-09-01P.pdf	Wesley Rourke Wesley.rourke@halton.gov.uk
Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, GVA Grimley (2008)	http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/Planning-Policies.aspx	