

Public Document Pack



Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Wednesday, 15 November 2006 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Ron Hignett (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Dave Leadbetter (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor Keith Morley	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Paul Nolan	Labour
Councillor Dave Thompson	Labour
Councillor Tim Sly	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Pamela Wallace	Labour
Councillor Ian Whittaker	Conservative
Councillor Philip Worrall	Liberal Democrat

*Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 24 January 2007*

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

Part I

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
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 (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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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: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 33(5).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(11) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows: -
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be submitted by 4.00 pm on the day prior to the meeting. At any meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter, which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bare in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note that public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

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

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 15 November 2006
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes
WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Urban Renewal Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board, Executive Board Sub and Executive Board (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 None.

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

- 7.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 7th SEPTEMBER 2006

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB 32 Liverpool John Lennon Airport - Draft Masterplan Consultation

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment responding to the invitation from Peel Airports Ltd for the Council to comment on the Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) Draft Masterplan that had now been published for public consultation.

It was noted that the Department for Transport had asked airports to prepare Masterplans to 2030 showing how proposals for airport expansion could be achieved. The implications of this Masterplan for Halton were outlined in the report for consideration. In addition, Mr Peter Nears and Mr Robin Tudor, representatives of LJLA, attended the meeting to discuss the implications and answer Board Members' queries.

Issues discussed included the following:

- the significant growth in services to Europe and America;
- the significant growth in the catchment area of people using the airport;
- implications in terms of access, the plan for an Eastern access transport corridor and the impact of this in terms of the second Mersey crossing;
- the expansion of the coastal park;
- actions taken in respect of carbon off-setting;
- increased noise and pollution;
- possible expansion of the Sound Insulation Grant Scheme;
- confirmation that risk assessment work had been undertaken by an external body;
- the increase in the volume of approaching aircraft, which had led to a perception that flight paths had changed, and the fact that this could not be re-aligned; and
- workforce numbers and the anticipated impact on the

economic infrastructure of the area; for example by the introduction of new hotels and car parking facilities.

Mr Nears confirmed that the second Mersey Crossing could be made a more prominent part of the access strategy. In addition, it was stated that developments taking place in the Wirral would not result in the re-routing of flight paths over Halton.

Mr Nears and Mr Tudor were thanked for attending the meeting, and a slightly amended recommended Council response was tabled for consideration:

RESOLVED: That the following Recommended Response to the Draft Masterplan consultation be agreed and conveyed to Peel Airports Ltd:

1. The Council welcomes the increased job opportunities and business development opportunities that will be brought to Halton and the wider sub region as a result of the proposed expansion of the Airport.
2. If highway capacity studies show a need for the construction of an Eastern Access Transport Corridor, and this is essential to the expansion of the airport, then such a solution is supported in principle. However, although the shortest (and cheapest) Option SA2 is supported, Option SA3 would be preferred as it has advantages for creating a direct link between the proposed Mersey Multi Modal Gateway (rail freight park at Ditton) and the strategic road networks. Option SA4, although also creating such a link to the strategic road network, is opposed on the basis that the route would severely restrict development of the rail freight park by cutting across land allocated for it in the Halton Unitary Development Plan.
3. The Council is concerned about the predicted increase in noise levels shown by the 'low community annoyance' noise contour extending over parts of Runcorn, and the 'moderate levels of annoyance' contour extending over Hale Village and the Primary School, and would wish to discuss how this can be mitigated against with the Airport Company before the final Masterplan is produced.
4. The Council is also concerned about the potential for increased night-time air noise, and the airport is urged to calculate night-time noise contours and share with this Authority so that the impact of aircraft movements at night can

be measured before the final Masterplan is produced.

5. The airport is urged to do all it can to ensure that the operation of aircraft using the airport during approach, take off and landing minimises the noise levels expected and to offer noise mitigation grants to a wider number of affected properties including those affected by 'low community annoyance'.
6. The Council accepts the case for an extension to the runway on land within Halton in the direction of Hale as necessary for the expansion of the airport to encourage more routes and cargo business. It also accepts that Dungeon Lane will have to be diverted to allow for this extension. As this is currently open countryside and protected by Green Belt policy, then the boundary treatment and landscaping will have to be carefully considered to minimise visual impact, reduce noise and ensure airport security.
7. The Council welcomes the extension of the coastal park into Halton, but wishes to ensure that the airport contributes to an enhancement of the Mersey Way and Trans-Pennine Trail onwards around the coast of Widnes, to complement the coastal park works.
8. The Council is concerned about the possible extension of the Public Safety Zone (PSZ) over Hale, as a result of the runway extension and increase in flights, as it would restrict development and thereby blight parts of the village. It is also concerned about any increase in risk to businesses that are classified as 'hazardous installations' from increased aircraft movements. The airport is therefore urged to complete the full risk assessments as soon as possible so that the impact on the PSZ extent and any increased risk to hazardous installations can be assessed, before the final Masterplan is produced.
9. The Council supports the proposals to increase public transport trips to the airport, and the parking strategy that would prevent privately operated airport car parks in order to encourage public transport use. However, the bus links to both Widnes and Runcorn must be considered for improvement, not just for passengers but for new employees as a result of the forecast expanded job opportunities.
10. The recognition in the Masterplan that rail passenger services using the Halton Curve should be re-introduced to

enable direct rail connections to Chester and North Wales is also supported.

11. The Masterplan's acknowledgment of the benefits of improved road linkages, which will arise as a consequence of the construction of the Mersey Gateway, is noted. Peel Holdings Ltd is requested to enter into a dialogue with Halton Borough Council regarding a financial contribution towards the planning and procurement of the Mersey Gateway.
12. The Airport Company should enter into a legal agreement with the Council to ensure that any adverse impacts upon the Borough's environment are adequately mitigated against.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2006

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

EXB11 Local Development Scheme 2006/7

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was a public statement of Halton's three year work programme for producing of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

All Councils were required by the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an LDS. This LDS formed the third LDS that had been prepared by Halton and moved the preparation of the LDS forward six months from the 2006 – 2009 period of the last LDS. The LDS had been reviewed at this stage due to the need to incorporate the new joint working arrangements for the Waste Development Plan document. Once adopted, the LDS would provide a publicly available work programme for the Planning and Policy Division, providing timescales for any work started over the next three years. The LDS would come into effect four weeks after being submitted to the GONW, unless the Secretary of State intervenes in this period or requests more time.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revision to the Local Development Scheme, appended to the report, shall come into effect from 15th November 2006 or from the date on which the Council received notification from the SoS in accordance with Regulation 11 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, which ever is earlier;

- (2) the Operational Director (Environmental and Regulatory Services) in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, be authorised to make any changes to this document as required by the Planning Inspectorate or the Government Office for the North West or as a consequence of alterations to the Joint Working Arrangements in relation to the Waste Development Plan document; and
- (3) further editorial and technical changes and/or correction of printing errors that do not affect the content be agreed by the Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, before the document is published.

EXB12 Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document

The Board considered a report which sought approval for Halton's inclusion in the preparation of a Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan document in collaboration with other Merseyside authorities. The Waste Development Plan document would allocate sites for waste related development as well as providing detailed policies.

The report also sought agreement that Halton contributes to the stages of the preparation of the Waste Plan Document for a three-year period and that delegated authority be granted to the Operational Director Environmental and Regulatory Services to determine certain states of the document's production.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended that subject to the prior adoption of the revised Halton Local Development Scheme 2006/07:

- (1) Halton's formal inclusion in the preparation of the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document (to be known as the Halton Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St. Helens Borough Council and Wirral Borough Council Joint Waste Development Plan Document) be approved;
- (2) the necessary financial arrangements be put in place to fund Halton's contribution to the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document for the next three financial year, commencing with the current financial year 2006/07; and
- (3) the Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory

Services (ODERS) be given delegated authority to determine all matters as indicated in column 1 of the table below in accordance with column 2 of the same table (other than those matters indicated to be determined by full Council).

Article	Decision Maker
Agreement to join, fund and progress joint Waste DPD	Full Council
SEA Scoping Report	OD – ERS
Interim SEA	OD – ERS
Approval Issues and Options for public consultation	OD – ERS
SEA Report to accompany Preferred Options	OD – ERS
Approval of Preferred Options for public consultation	Full Council
Submission of Waste DPD	Full Council
Final Adoption of Waste DPD	Full Council

EXB13 Adoption of Halebank Regeneration Area Supplementary Planning Document and Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park Supplementary Planning Document

The Board received a report which outlined the public consultation that had taken place on the above draft Supplementary Planning Document and the proposed responses to representations made and amendments to the text of the SPD's to accommodate these representations, where appropriate. The report also sought approval for adoption of the two Supplementary Planning Documents named above.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Statement of Public Participation attached to the report be

approved;

(2) the amendments proposed to the text of the Halebank Regeneration Action Area SPD and the Ditton Strategic Railfreight Park SPD in response to the representations received, and the recommendations of the sustainability appraisal, be agreed;

(3) the Halebank Regeneration Action Area SPD and the Ditton Strategic Railfreight Park SPD be adopted as a Local Development Document and the procedures for adoption, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, be carried out; and

(4) further editorial and technical changes that do not materially affect the content or intended purposes of the SPD be agreed by the Operational Director Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal if necessary, before the document is published.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7th SEPTEMBER 2006

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

ES34 New Term Contract for Surface Treatments - April 2007 to March 2012

The Sub-Committee considered a request for the preparation of an ad-hoc select list of suitable contractors for a new highway surface treatments contract to replace the existing contract that expires on 31st March 2007. The new contract needed to be in place before this date to ensure continuity and a smooth transition of work to the successor of contractor.

The contract would be for an initial five years and included an option to extend by up to a further five years by agreement of the parties and subject to quality thresholds that must be met for the employer to consider the desirability of extending the contract.

The estimated value of the work covered by the Contract was an average of £225,000 for each of the initial five years of the contract. A further report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee to approve the award of the contract.

RESOLVED: That an ad-hoc select list of suitable contractors be prepared and used to procure a new highway surface treatments contract in the form of a partnering arrangement based on a schedule of rates to run from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2012, with an option to extend the contract by a further five years by agreement of the parties.

**ES35 Approval of publication of House Extensions
Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the publication of a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); House Extensions for the Purposes of Statutory Public Consultation.

The purpose of the House Extensions SPD was to complement the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), by providing additional guidance for anyone intending to extend or alter their house or erect a garage or other outbuilding to ensure that all developments:

- (i) were of exemplary design quality and that any extensions did not spoil the character of the original dwelling, but related closely to it and harmonised with the existing house in its scale, proportions, materials and appearance;
- (ii) protect residential amenity of neighbouring properties;
- (iii) protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- (iv) preserve the essential character of the street and surrounding areas;
- (v) avoid the creation of dangerous highway conditions; and
- (vi) safeguard the provision of a reasonable private garden space.

The consultation that had taken place regarding the SPD was outlined in the report for consideration. In addition, a scoping exercise had been undertaken to determine whether or not a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) was required to assess the environmental effects of the SPD. The conclusion was that an SEA was not required.

In addition, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was in the process of being produced and would be consulted upon at the same time as the draft revision of House Extensions SPD. Once the formal public consultation exercise had been conducted, the responses would be recorded and taken into account. It was intended that a further report

would be submitted to the Executive Board, seeking formal adoption of the House Extension Supplementary Planning Document.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): House Extensions, be approved for the purposes of Statutory Public Consultation;
- (2) the comments received at the Partnership Consultation Stage as set out in the Statement of Consultation and responses to them are noted;
- (3) further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect content of the SPD be agreed by the Operational Director – Environment and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, if 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 SPD be reported back to the Executive Board for resolution to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document.

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Performance Monitoring Reports for the 2nd quarter (2006/07)

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The departmental service plans set out what the services are planning to achieve and demonstrate how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. The service plans are central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.
- 1.2 The 2nd quarter monitoring reports for the services that come within the remit of this Policy & Performance Board are available in both electronic and hard copy formats. These reports enable Board Members to scrutinise progress towards achieving the service objectives, milestones and performance targets contained in the 2006/07-service plans for the following:

Environment Directorate

1. Highways & Transportation
2. Environment & Regulatory Services
3. Economic Regeneration
4. Major Projects

Health & Community Directorate

5. Culture & Leisure

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy & Performance Board

- 1) **Scrutinise service performance and progress towards achieving objectives and targets and raise any questions or points for clarification in respect of the information contained in the quarterly monitoring reports; and**
- 2) **Highlight areas of interest and/or concern that require further information or action to be reported at a future meeting of the Policy and Performance Board where appropriate.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the last meeting the Board received a performance briefing paper that was intended to highlight aspects contained in the full versions of the monitoring reports (that were available electronically) that Members might wish to consider further. Although performance briefing papers will continue to be provided, the Board decided that hard copies of the quarterly monitoring

reports be made available to Members prior to the meeting. The performance briefing paper for the 2nd quarter is attached (*See Appendix 1*)

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Any policy implications arising from emerging issues or key developments that will impact upon the service or any action required to address performance issues, will be identified in the respective quarterly monitoring report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Any other implications associated with issues connected with the service will be identified in the respective quarterly monitoring report.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The risk control measures associated with the service objectives that were initially assessed as having 'HIGH' risks are summarised in the quarterly monitoring reports to monitor their implementation.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The actions identified arising from the Equality impact/needs assessments that are regarded as 'HIGH' priority for each service are in the Equality Action Plans and progress on their implementation is included in the respective quarterly monitoring reports.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Quarterly monitoring reports for:		
1. Highways & Transportation	Municipal Building 2 nd floor	Martin Holland Performance Management Officer
2. Economic Regeneration		
3. Major Projects		
4. Environmental & Regulatory Services		
5. Culture & Leisure Services		

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

(2nd Quarter 2006/07)

SERVICE: Highways & Transportation (*excluding Road Safety*)

Overview

The half-yearly report comments on the progress towards achieving the set of objectives, milestones and performance targets set out in the service plan that fall within the remit of this PPB. All 5 key objectives are on course to be achieved and therefore, the prospects are very good. There are no quarterly figures reported for the majority of performance indicators and therefore, an overall assessment of progress towards achieving the performance targets by the year-end is not available. (*See box below*)

Areas of Further Consideration

- The monitoring report comments that it will not be known if the performance targets have been achieved until the annual figures have been provided for the performance indicators referred to above. However, the Board might welcome a provisional assessment before the year-end on whether the performance trends in particular areas are going in the right direction or if there are potential risks that targets maybe missed.

SERVICE: Economic Regeneration (*excluding Enterprise & Employment and Adult Learning*)

Overview

The half-yearly report comments on the progress towards achieving the set of objectives, milestones and performance targets set out in the service plan that fall within the remit of this PPB. 3 of the 4 key objectives and the 2 performance indicators are all reported to be on course to achieve their targets and have been given 'green' traffic lights. Only 1 key objective has been given an 'amber' traffic light and therefore, the prospects for the year are very good. While the monitoring report does not indicate that there are any serious issues of concern associated with any key developments and the emerging issues, there are a couple points that the Board may wish consider further that are highlighted in the box below.

Areas of Further Consideration

- The BE Group (Consultants) has completed the first draft of the Halton Property Study and intends to present the results to a future meeting. The monitoring report does not state when this will happen and therefore, the Board may welcome an indication of when they can expect to receive the findings.
- A survey of Widnes and Runcorn traders to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) revealed little support from them to contribute to town centre activities that would improve the environment and image of the borough in particular, the town centres (*Key Objective ER 07*). The support is presently too low to proceed toward a formal vote to establish a BID and therefore, what happens now and the prospects for creating a BID in the future maybe of interest to the Board.

- Achieving *Key Objective ER 07* also requires the completion of the Victoria Sq. night time plan by the end of June and an annual footfall statement by the end of September 2006. These have experienced delays and the prospects for achieving the key objective are uncertain. Therefore, an 'Amber' traffic light has been assigned and an update on progress maybe appropriate for the Board to receive.
- Consultants have been appointed to consider a future model for Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise. This will influence the delivery of services to businesses in Halton and therefore, the Board may wish to know when the consultants are expected to present their findings and recommendations.
- Early consideration is being given to the 2007 fireworks display due to the Manchester Ship Canal Co. plans to move its cranes and lifting equipment from Runcorn Docks. This is likely to increase the cost of the display although there is no indication in the monitoring report regarding the possible scale of the increase. Therefore, it maybe advisable at the appropriate time to consider if there are other possible options to offset some or all of the expected cost increases.

SERVICE: Major Projects

Overview

The half-yearly report comments on the progress towards achieving the full set of objectives, milestones and performance targets set out in the service plan. All 14 objectives and all 9 performance indicators are reported to be on course to achieving their targets. Therefore, the prospects for the year appear to be very good.

Areas of Further Consideration

- There are emerging issues highlighted in the monitoring report regarding the availability of service supplies and connections, particularly electricity which is delaying development. The implications and threats this presents now and in the future will be of importance to the Council and the Strategic Director is taking the issue up regionally. Therefore, the Board may wish to be kept informed of developments.

SERVICE: Environmental & Regulatory Services (*Landscape Services, Planning Services and Building Control ONLY*)

Overview

This half-yearly report comments on the progress towards achieving the set of objectives, milestones and performance targets set out in the service plan that fall within the remit of this PPB. All the key objectives are on course to be achieved by the year-end and 6 of the 12 performance indicators look set to meet their targets. 5 of the 6 remaining performance indicators have been allocated 'Amber' traffic lights and 1 has been given a 'Red'.

Areas of Further Consideration

- The emerging issue regarding the implications of the EC Directive on the conservation of natural habitats, wild fauna and flora was raised in the 1st quarter monitoring report and has been highlighted again in the latest monitoring report. The Directive will impact upon Halton's land use plans and therefore, continued scrutiny of this issue is advised.
- Updating character appraisals and management plans for all 10 of Halton's Conservation Areas has begun with Halton Village being the first. Therefore, an indication on when the exercise is expected to be completed would be appropriate for the Board to know.
- The applications for Green Flag Awards for Spike Island and the Town Hall Park were unsuccessful (*Performance Indicator: LI 03*) and therefore, the target of having 8 Green Flag awards by the end of this year will not be achieved. Part of the reason for this was the winding up of the Waterfront Team particularly in the case of Spike Island. However, the Board may wish to clarify whether there were other factors that affected the prospects of the bids being successful and whether it is the intention to re-submit the applications in respect of the two sites.
- For the second quarter running the monitoring reports have commented on the performance indicator relating to the score against the quality of planning services checklist (*BV: 205*). Although current performance is better compared to the same period last year and is still in the top 25% of authorities, it is still unclear if the target of 100% will be met. This indicator contains a comprehensive list of questions to assess the quality of Halton's planning services. Therefore, if there is anything that can be learned from the assessment process and findings that will help to maintain the high quality service currently provided maybe of interest to the Board.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is currently being undertaken to highlight all areas in the Borough where flooding issues could threaten regeneration development opportunities. Therefore, the date or period when the findings are expected to be available maybe of interest to the Board.

REPORT: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Traffic Issues, West Bank Area, Widnes

WARD(S): Riverside

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report receipt of a 34 name petition and separate letter from a resident, relating to traffic issues in West Bank, Widnes and to advise Members of actions proposed to be taken.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the report be noted;**
- (2) the Board support the conclusion of the report, in particular:**
 - (i) the traffic calming scheme in West Bank, be retained in its present form, subject to the enhancements detailed in the report;**
 - (ii) the existing waiting restriction be retained un-amended; and**
- (3) Petitioners be informed accordingly**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION – TRAFFIC CALMING

- 3.1 Following requests from residents, an area-wide traffic-calming scheme was undertaken in West Bank in 2002/3. During the planning stage the project was subject to extensive consultation and was referred to a consultation review panel for approval. Once construction started on site, the scheme was extended at the request of local people. The features used were not the most severe permitted under national regulations due to both the need to meet resident's access needs and to accommodate existing bus movements. Prior to the receipt of the petition, there were no recorded complaints about the effectiveness or intrusiveness of the completed scheme.
- 3.2 There was an identifiable accident history with 10 accidents on Mersey Road in the five complete years prior to the scheme being implemented. Since completion there were no accidents in 2003 and just two in 2004 (one involving alcohol/drugs and the other a stolen vehicle.)
- 3.3 The following summarises the issues raised in the petition and letter, reproduced in Appendix 'A', and provides comments and proposed actions to be taken:

(a) The calming “does not have the desired effect”

Speed readings taken immediately after construction of the scheme permitted the introduction of a 20mph speed limit over the whole West

Bank area, a limit which is required to be relatively self-enforcing. The reduction in accidents also indicates that the scheme is working effectively. It should be noted that the more severe the calming features are, the greater the risk of complaints about inconvenience, noise and vibration and alleged damage to vehicles. It is therefore considered that the balanced approach adopted has been successful and is appropriate to the needs of the area.

(b) “We suffer undue noise and vibrations from speeding vehicles”

The installed calming is relatively mild with gentle approach ramps to the table features at Mersey Road/Irwell Street and Mersey Road/Terrace Road. The general spacing of the ‘thumps’ and imprint markings is also designed to discourage the acceleration/braking cycle between features. National research and guidance documents on the subject of noise in relation to traffic calming states that “where vehicle flow predominantly consists of light vehicles, with very few large commercial vehicles, daytime traffic noise levels can be reduced by the introduction of traffic calming measures such as road humps”. (T.A.L.6/96).

The degree of vibration felt within a building is subject to a large number of variables including traffic speeds/volumes/types, ground conditions, feature design, building type/design/proximity and indeed individual resident’s perceptions and sensitivities. This makes each individual case complex and different.

To limit noise and vibration, compliance with nationally issued design standards is the best approach to adopt and this has been the case with the West Bank traffic calming scheme.

However, since receipt of the petition there has been an extensive dialogue with residents and local Members on the issues raised. It is now proposed to introduce additional ‘SLOW’ road markings, particularly on the approaches to the raised table at the junction of Mersey Road and Terrace Road, to encourage even slower speeds and reinforce the message that motorists must drive at appropriate speeds within the area.

(c) Drainage problems on the west side of the raised junction at Mersey Road/Terrace Road

The raised junction, which runs ‘kerb to kerb’ provides for the drainage of surface water through the fall on the road and a new gully, installed as part of the traffic calming scheme. Residents complain that this gully blocks, causing surface water to build up and run onto the pavement in front of their homes.

The blocked gully has now been cleared and improvements to the cross-fall of the footpath and other local alterations will aid the general drainage in the area. This work should be completed by the date of the PPB.

(d) Parking restriction complaint

The petition also requested a review of the existing ‘At Any Time’ parking

restrictions in Mersey Road north of Irwell Street that were implemented in 1974 and partly revoked in 1986.

These restrictions were introduced to ensure the free flow of traffic on Mersey Road. The Police have not had to carry out rigorous enforcement until quite recently when, due to increasing pressure on available parking space and thoughtless parking, buses have not been able to travel along Mersey Road. The Police have written requesting that the existing restrictions be retained un-amended. Given the problems of access experienced it is considered that the restrictions should be retained.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Estimates for the cost of implementing the additional road markings are in the region of £500 and the drainage improvements to the footway approximately £2,000.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

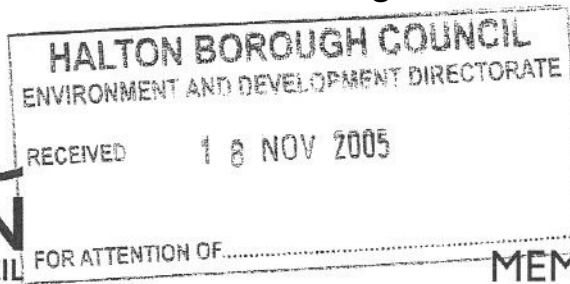
- 6.1 Examination of the collision history for the area appears to confirm that the traffic calming is successful and in order to maintain road safety, it is recommended that, subject to the minor amendments proposed, the scheme should remain in its present form. It is however considered appropriate to enhance the drainage of surface water in the area.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Background information held in the Traffic Section, Environmental Services, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn. Contact S.Johnson, ext. 3010.



MEMORANDUM

Will need reporting to meet PPB.

To	Steve Johnson	Date	16 th November 2005
Dept.	Highways	Ref.	
From	Mandy Davies		
Cc:			

PETITION – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT – WEST BANK, WIDNES

Mrs Yates has forwarded a petition containing 34 signatures, regarding the above.

The petition has been acknowledged and a copy has been forwarded to the Riverside Ward Member, for information.

I have attached a copy of all correspondence for your information, and would be grateful if you could investigate and advise the petitioner accordingly.

In accordance with normal procedure the local press have been informed of the petition but no names were released.

Many Thanks

Dear Councillor David Leadbetter

The residents and business premises operators, request you as our legally elected representative to act on our behalf regarding the traffic management in the West Bank area of Widnes.

We would like you to request an urgent review of the management of the flow of traffic entering and leaving the district of West Bank.

You are now doubt aware that the calming measures which are at present used by the Council do not have the desired effect. On the contrary we suffer undue noise and vibrations from speeding vehicles. The heavier the vehicle and the faster it travels the greater the problem.

We understand that the council has made attempts to tackle the problem, however we feel it is time for a review.

It would appear that a bus company has complained about residents parking in Mersey Road following, which, instant action was taken by, the Police Authority in issuing parking penalties.

We ask you to request a meeting of the relevant parties to bring about an agreed solution to this very serious situation

As a community we have given Mrs Kath Yates of 14 Mersey Rd permission to act as contact person to liase with you on our behalf

Yours sincerely

The Residents and Business Operators of West Bank

Signed as per attached.

The Borough Engineer
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF

J M Parker
10a Mersey Road
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 0DG
Tel 01514248784

2/11/2005

Dear Sir

Ref: Traffic Calming WA8 0DG

I write to you reference the Traffic Calming Measures at the junction of Mersey Road and Terrace Road post code as above.

At present the measures taken by Halton Council. Whilst being of good intent does not have the desired effect in controlling the speed of the traffic into and out of the West Bank area of Widnes.

Whilst the ramp at the above junction is pleasing on the eye, it does cause a number of problems for the residents and the Pharmacy from numbers 8-14 inclusive.

- If a vehicle approaches at 20 miles per hour the driver can experience a difference at road level, however if the driver approaches in excess of this speed little or effect is felt by driver or passengers. On the other hand we the residents can feel the difference, the heavier the vehicle the greater the effect on the property.
- The height of the ramp at the highest point is 25mm above the pavement level thus causing the surface water to flow towards the properties.
- Although there are grid outlets either side of the ramp for the drainage a drainage gully has been covered over allowing the surface water to flow into the properties that have cellars. Number 10a Mersey Road does not have a cellar. Therefore the possible damage to my property is not great as the **damage that is already occurring to my neighbours' property**. This does not mean that I am not concerned for the water seepage into my property because any attempt to improve the damp course will be of little use.

The residents of the above properties seek a meeting with a representative of the relevant department to discuss the problems we face, with a view to resolving the matter as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

[Handwritten signature]

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Business Improvement Districts - Survey

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the findings of a study undertaken in Widnes and Runcorn town centres, to determine the level of support, from traders and businesses, for developing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board supports the conclusions in the report

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 BIDs are a partnership between a local authority and the local business community that develops and takes forward projects and services that benefit the trading environment and the public realm. The BID is funded in whole or in part by a levy additional to the non-domestic rates.

3.2 A BID can be proposed by any non-domestic ratepayer, property owner, local authority or other key stakeholder with an interest in the BID area. The proposer develops a business plan describing the additional services and the cost to ratepayers. All ratepayers in the BID area have the opportunity to vote on the plan in a ballot. Approval of the plan has to meet two tests: Firstly a simple majority of those voting in the BID ballot must vote in favour. Secondly, those voting in favour must represent a majority by rateable value of the rateable properties (hereditaments) of those voting.

3.3 BIDs can provide sustainable funding for town centre management functions enabling them to build on the successes they have already achieved. They also provide equality in ensuring that everyone who benefits shares the cost.

3.4 To inform the decision regarding whether it would be practical to recommend the development of a town centre BID or BIDs in Halton, the Board requested that a study be undertaken to assess the priorities of businesses in the borough's town centres and the extent to which they would be willing to contribute financially to taking them forward.

4.0 THE SURVEY

4.1 The survey, was conducted using face to face interviews. In Widnes, 101 businesses were interviewed (44%) and in Runcorn old town, 81 (52%). Those businesses that were not interviewed comprised either businesses

that had closed down since the initial list was compiled; questionnaires sent to head offices, outside Halton, and not returned and; businesses that agreed to complete the questionnaire and return it by post, but failed to do so.

- 4.2 In Widnes, 57% of the businesses interviewed classified themselves as retailers and 20% professional. In Runcorn, 41% classified themselves as retailers and 30% professional. The remainder consisted of food outlets, leisure, entertainment and not for profit businesses
- 4.3 The survey focused on 3 key themes:-
- Events and town centre promotions
 - Environmental issues – eg street cleaning, rubbish removal, street furniture etc
 - Safer town centres
- 4.4 Based on best practice guidance, from the Association of Town Centre Management, a range of activities/initiatives were posed under each theme, first to assess the level of impact the activities would have on their business and second to assess whether the businesses would be willing to contribute, as part of a BID arrangement.

5.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

- 5.1 The following summarises the highlights from surveys conducted in both Widnes and Runcorn. The replies to the questions, under each of the themed questions, required interviewees to indicate which of the following responses represented how the activity would impact on their business:-
- Major positive impact
 - Some positive impact
 - No impact at all
 - Some negative impact
 - Major negative impact

Refer to Appendix I for the survey details, which covers the specific findings for each town centre.

5.2 Events and Town Centre Promotions

Christmas lights and entertainment were rated as having some positive impact by 55% of businesses in Widnes and 53% in Runcorn. Similarly, other seasonal events and entertainment were rated as having some positive impact by 51% in Widnes and 48% in Runcorn. In both Widnes and Runcorn, however, nearly 40% indicated that both Christmas lights and other seasonal entertainment have no impact at all.

- 5.3 Marketing and advertising campaigns were rated in both towns as the top activity that have a major positive impact – 21% Widnes and 26% in Runcorn. There was some support for farmers markets with 32% of

businesses in Widnes and 36% in Runcorn indicating that they would have some positive impact. Likewise with information boards, with 51% of businesses in Widnes and 48% of businesses in Runcorn indicating that they also have some positive impact.

- 5.4 Businesses in both town centres were asked whether they would be willing to contribute, as part of a BID arrangement, to events and town centre promotions activities. Table A illustrates the results.

Table A

WIDNES	Yes	No
Christmas Lights/entertainment	28.6	71.4
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	14.5	85.5
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	33.3	66.7
Farmers/Speciality Markets	4.3	95.7
Information Boards	22.9	77.1

RUNCORN	Yes	No
Christmas Lights/entertainment	23.8	76.2
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	25.8	74.2
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	30.2	69.8
Farmers/Speciality Markets	12.7	87.3
Information Boards	25.4	74.6

- 5.5 In both Widnes and Runcorn, around 30% of the businesses indicated they would be willing to contribute to advertising/marketing campaigns and just under 30% would be willing to contribute to Christmas lights and entertainment. In both cases, however, the percentages fall significantly below the 50% minimum, needed to develop a BID.

5.6 **Environmental Issues**

Chewing gum removal was rated as having some positive impact by 51% of businesses in Widnes and 37% in Runcorn. There was a broad consensus in both towns on more rubbish bins and response squads to remove litter, with around 40% (more rubbish bins) and 47% (litter response squads) of businesses in Widnes indicating that these activities would have some positive impact and 41% and 46% respectively, in Runcorn. Upgraded street furniture was considered to have no impact at all by 43% of businesses in Widnes and 40% in Runcorn.

- 5.7 Improved signage was rated by 31% of Widnes businesses as the top initiative that would have a major positive impact. Chewing gum removal was the top rated initiative in Runcorn at 29%. Planters and hanging baskets were rated in both towns as having no positive impact at all by 36% of businesses.
- 5.8 Businesses in both town centres were asked whether they would be willing to contribute, as part of a BID arrangement, to environmental activities/initiatives. Table B illustrates the results.

Table B

WIDNES	Yes	No
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	10.1	89.9
Having more rubbish bins	13	87
Rapid response squads to remove litter	7.2	92.8
Planters and hanging baskets	21.7	78.3
Upgraded street furniture	4.3	95.7
Improved Signage	18.8	81.2

RUNCORN	Yes	No
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	10.6	89.4
Having more rubbish bins	12.1	87.9
Rapid response squads to remove litter	9.1	90.9
Planters and hanging baskets	18.2	81.8
Upgraded street furniture	10.6	89.4
Improved Signage	9.1	90.9

- 5.9 The results from both town centres indicate there is little support from businesses, for them contributing to environmental activities. Anecdotal evidence from the survey team suggest that most businesses consider environmental issues to be the responsibility of the local authority and not something that they should be expected to contribute to.
- 5.10 **Safer Town Centres**

Extending the existing radio link to all retailers was rated as having some positive impact by 34% of businesses in Widnes and 47% of businesses in

Runcorn. Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires were rated broadly similar in both towns with 17% indicating that they have a major positive impact in both Widnes and Runcorn and 37% and 39% respectively, indicating that the prevention of trade waste fires initiatives have some positive impact.

- 5.11 More community wardens was the top rated issue that would have a major positive impact in both Widnes and Runcorn, with 37% in Widnes and 29% in Runcorn.
- 5.12 As with the two previous themes, businesses in both town centres were asked whether they would be willing to contribute to town centre safety initiatives. Table C illustrates the results.

Table C

WIDNES	Yes	No
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	23.9	76.1
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	10.3	89.7
More Community Wardens	19.7	80.3

RUNCORN	Yes	No
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	20.3	79.7
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	13.8	86.2
More Community Wardens	15.6	84.4

- 5.13 Whilst businesses in both town centres indicated that more community wardens would have a major positive impact on their business, there is little evidence that they would be willing to contribute to them at the level required for developing a BID. This applies to extending the radio link and actions to prevent trade waste fires.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Although there is evidence of some support from businesses for contributing to the various activities posed in the survey, it falls well short of the first criteria for a developing a successful BID, which requires a simple majority (over 50%) voting in favour in a ballot.
- 6.2 On balance, therefore, the survey indicates that any attempts to develop a BID in either Widnes or Runcorn town centre, would fail due to the lack of support from businesses.

7.0. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The BID would have supported the Council's Economic and Tourism Development Strategy policy on town centres that states that *'Halton will invest in the public realm and encourage the gradual regeneration of the two older town centres and their retail, office and leisure offer ...'*

7.2 The clear message from town centre businesses, at this time, is that they do not wish to contribute to a BID. Therefore, a potential source of funding that would have assisted in the ongoing regeneration of the town centres cannot now be accessed.

8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Key Risks	Control Measures
Unwillingness by sufficient number of businesses to contribute financially to a BID	BID cannot proceed without a minimum of 50% of businesses voting in favour
Unwillingness by businesses to contribute time and effort needed to drive BID process	BID cannot proceed without significant involvement by businesses

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 All town centre businesses were given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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NONE

Questionnaire Results - Widnes

(Please note: All Figures are in percentages)

1. Which category best describes your business?

	Percentage
Entertainment	3.2
Leisure	4.3
Food Outlet	9.7
Retail	57
Professional	20.4
Not for Profit	2.2
Other	3.2

The following questions focus on three areas;

1. Events/Town Centre Promotions
2. Environment of the Town Centre
3. Safety of the Town Centre

2. Thinking about these areas in a broad sense, which one would you say has the greatest impact?

	Percentage
Events/Town Centre Promotions	22.1
Environment of Town Centre	54.4
Safety of Town Centre	23.5

Topic One – Events/Town Centre Promotions

3. Below is a list of activities in relation to Events/Town Centre Promotions. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact

Christmas Lights/entertainment	8.3	54.8	35.7	1.2	0
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	6	51.2	39.3	2.4	1.2
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	21.4	58.3	20.2	0	0
Farmers/Speciality Markets	9.5	32.1	54.8	2.4	1.2
Information Boards	13.1	51.2	34.5	0	1.2

4. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives

	Yes	No
Christmas Lights/entertainment	28.6	71.4
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	14.5	85.5
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	33.3	66.7
Farmers/Speciality Markets	4.3	95.7
Information Boards	22.9	77.1

Topic Two – Environment

5. Below is a list of activities in relation to Environmental Issues for Town Centres. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	19	51.2	29.8	0	0
Having more rubbish bins	21.4	40.5	38.1	0	0
Rapid response squads to remove litter	24.1	47	28.9	0	0
Planters and hanging baskets	15.5	45.2	36.9	0	2.4
Upgraded street furniture	14.6	40.2	42.7	1.2	0

Improved Signage	31	46.4	21.4	0	1.2
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6. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives.

	Yes	No
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	10.1	89.9
Having more rubbish bins	13	87
Rapid response squads to remove litter	7.2	92.8
Planters and hanging baskets	21.7	78.3
Upgraded street furniture	4.3	95.7
Improved Signage	18.8	81.2

Topic Three – Safety Issues

7. Below is a list of activities in relation to Safety Issues for Town Centres. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	28	34.1	36.6	1.2	0
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	16.7	36.9	46.4	0	0
More Community Wardens	37	34.6	28.4	0	0

8. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives

	Yes	No
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	23.9	76.1
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	10.3	89.7

More Community Wardens	19.7	80.3
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Questionnaire Results - Runcorn

(Please Note: All figures are in percentages)

1. Which category best describes your business?

	Percentage
Entertainment	1.3
Leisure	10.5
Food Outlet	10.5
Retail	40.8
Professional	30.3
Not for Profit	5.2
Other	1.3

The following questions will focus on three areas;

1. Events/Town Centre Promotions
2. Environment of Town Centre
3. Safety of Town Centre

2. Thinking about these areas in a broad sense, which one would you say has the greatest impact?

	Percentage
Events/Town Centre Promotions	45.3
Environment of Town Centre	45.3
Safety of Town Centre	9.4

Topic One – Events/Town Centre Promotions

3. Below is a list of activities in relation to Events/Town Centre Promotions. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact

Christmas Lights/entertainment	5.9	52.9	41.2	0	0
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	10.3	48.5	38.2	2.9	0
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	26.1	42	31.9	0	0
Farmers/Speciality Markets	21.7	36.2	39.1	2.9	0
Information Boards	16.2	48.5	35.3	0	0

4. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives

	Yes	No
Christmas Lights/entertainment	23.8	76.2
Other Seasonal events/entertainment	25.8	74.2
Marketing/Advertising campaigns	30.2	69.8
Farmers/Speciality Markets	12.7	87.3
Information Boards	25.4	74.6

Topic Two – Environment

5. Below is a list of activities in relation to Environmental Issues for Town Centres. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	29.4	36.8	33.8	0	0
Having more rubbish bins	26.1	40.6	33.3	0	0
Rapid response squads to remove litter	23.5	45.6	29.4	1.5	0
Planters and hanging baskets	21.7	42	36.2	0	0
Upgraded street furniture	13.2	47.1	39.7	0	0
Improved Signage	26.5	51.5	22.1	0	0

6. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives.

	Yes	No
Chewing gum removal / Street washing	10.6	89.4
Having more rubbish bins	12.1	87.9
Rapid response squads to remove litter	9.1	90.9
Planters and hanging baskets	18.2	81.8
Upgraded street furniture	10.6	89.4
Improved Signage	9.1	90.9

Topic Three – Safety Issues

7. Below is a list of activities in relation to Safety Issues for Town Centres. From the options please say how you think each activity would impact on your business.

	Major Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact at all	Some Negative Impact	Major Negative Impact
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	22.1	47.1	30.9	0	0
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	17.4	39.1	40.6	1.4	1.4
More Community Wardens	29	36.2	33.3	0	1.4

8. Please say if you would be prepared to contribute to each of the initiatives

	Yes	No
Extended Radio Link to all retailers	20.3	79.7
Initiatives to prevent trade waste fires	13.8	86.2
More Community Wardens	15.6	84.4

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health and Community

SUBJECT: Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report sets out proposed changes to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, both to reflect recent legislative change and to amend the different forms of financial assistance provided to clients. The views of the Board are sought prior to undertaking stakeholder consultation and presentation to Executive Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) the views of the Board be received in relation to the proposed changes; and

(2) subject to any required changes being made, the document be approved for consultation purposes prior to being submitted to Executive Board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In 2002 Government announced its intention to give Councils increased freedoms in setting local policies to tackle poor housing conditions in the private sector, and subsequently repealed much of the legislation related to renovation grants and other forms of financial assistance. Halton responded by introducing its Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy in 2003.

3.2 A number of factors now make it necessary to revise this strategy, including -

- Increased Government focus on tackling none decent housing in the private sector that is occupied by vulnerable households.
- The need to provide incentives to promote membership of the recently introduced Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
- The need to provide assistance to reduce the number of long-term empty properties, as this is a Best Value Performance Indicator.

- A new requirement under the Housing Act 2004 to license certain houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
- Also under the Housing Act 2004, the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, replacing the “fitness” standard which for several decades was the yardstick for measuring housing conditions.

3.3 Appendix 1 summarises the principal changes being recommended in terms of the range of financial assistance to be offered to individuals, and the rationale for them. Appendix 2 is the full strategy which includes a new enforcement policy, HMO licensing policy, detailed eligibility criteria /conditions for financial assistance, and a policy dealing with applications for the reduction or waiver of requirements to repay assistance.

3.4 Subject to any views expressed by the Board, the intention is to undertake a consultation exercise on the new strategy through the press, Council web site, Landlord Forum, and directly with other stakeholder organisations. The strategy will then be presented to Board for formal approval.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The strategy contains new or revised policies for dealing with financial assistance, waiver or reduction of repayment conditions, enforcement procedures and HMO licensing.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposed enforcement and HMO licensing policies will ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duties, and changes to financial assistance should enable improved outcomes in terms of performance indicators. Improved housing conditions for vulnerable households will also contribute to the objectives within the Community and Corporate Plans.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are always risks of fraud or misuse of funds when financial assistance is provided, but the strategy seeks to minimise these risks through clear eligibility criteria and conditions, backed up by on-site inspections. The risk of challenge to policy and practise is minimised by following Government guidance and best practise where possible.

6.2 There is a risk that changes to the financial assistance policy will result in demand exceeding the available budget. This will be monitored closely and if necessary a further report will be brought to Board to amend aspects of the policy.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Many of the policies within the strategy relating to financial assistance positively discriminate in favour of the most vulnerable households.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Housing Act 2004	Grosvenor House	Housing Strategy Manager

PROPOSED CHANGES TO RENEWAL POLICY

CURRENT POLICY	PROPOSED CHANGE	RATIONALE
Renovation Grant	Major Works Assistance	
Discretionary grant/loan available to owner-occupiers of pre 1964 property in Council Tax bands A, B and C.	Property to be 40+ years old rather than pre 1964. Remove Council Tax band criteria.	The 40+ age criteria will allow further properties to be eligible for consideration as they become older. Experience has revealed that few enquiries are received for properties in the higher tax bands, but when they are, the cases often merit assistance anyway.
Property must be deemed unfit for occupation.	Property must contain Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), or multiple Category 2 hazards that together constitute a danger to the health and safety of the occupier.	Under the 2004 Housing Act the fitness standard has now been replaced by the HHSRS.
Eligible works are those necessary to make the property fit.	Eligible works to include any necessary to make the property meet the decent homes standard.	Government expects LAs to target renewal resources on properties failing the decent homes standard that are occupied by vulnerable households (PSA7).

CURRENT POLICY	PROPOSED CHANGE	RATIONALE
Grants are means tested as under the previous statutory scheme.	Applicant must be in receipt of one of the following benefits - Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, or War Disablement Pension. For those on low income but not in receipt of one of the benefits, eligibility will be determined by the existing means test provided the calculated client contribution does not exceed £1,000.	This will target resources on those within the “vulnerable” category set out in the Governments decent homes target, retain a safety net for those on low incomes but not receiving the specified benefits, and simplify the application/administrative process.
Requirement for applicant to have lived in property for 3 years before application, but waived for those buying properties that have been empty for 12 months or more.	Remove provision for purchasers of empty property.	Only 1 application has been dealt with in last 3 years, so clearly not effective in getting empty properties re-occupied.
Assistance is 75% grant and 25% loan. Present policy requires grant/loan to be recalculated if unforeseen works arise after work has commenced.	Necessary unforeseen works that only become apparent after the grant and loan have been approved will be funded by additional grant.	This will enable the client at application stage to have some certainty about the amount of loan they are taking on, will avoid multiple loans being set up, and simplify the administrative process.
Early transfer of ownership triggers grant repayment, subject to adequate equity existing (except for certain exempt disposals).	List of repayment exemptions extended. (see Appendix 4 within strategy)	The revised list of exemptions reflects Government guidance in this area.

CURRENT POLICY	PROPOSED CHANGE	RATIONALE
Second grants for similar works will only be considered after 15 years.	Reduce period to 10 years in case of central heating boilers, fixed heating appliances and flat roofs.	It is considered that 10 years is a more realistic lifespan for those particular types of appliance/structure.
In exceptional cases of financial hardship (e.g. where unfit rented property is inherited and new landlord/owner has no resources) an application may be considered.	Withdraw this form of assistance.	Seldom used and future requests can be dealt with under discretionary powers.
Grants for Landlords - HMO fire safety works to satisfy fire safety requirements in HMOs (60% of costs up to £12,000 max.).	Withdraw this form of assistance.	No applications have been received for this form of assistance since it's introduction.
Home Repair Assistance Grant	Minor Works Assistance	
Discretionary grant for minor works that are a risk to the health/safety of the occupier, or minor works related to a DFG application. Max. £5,000 grant.	Property must contain Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), or multiple Category 2 hazards that together constitute a danger to the health and safety of the occupier, or minor works related to a DFG application. Works subject to mortgage retention provisions will not be eligible. Max. grant raised to £6,000.	The proposed criteria broadly mirrors the existing ones but updated to reflect the HHSRS. It is proposed to continue to offer assistance by way of grant, as it is not considered cost effective to administer loans for this value of work. Increased max. grant to reflect inflation.

CURRENT POLICY	PROPOSED CHANGE	RATIONALE
New condition.	Where the house inspection reveals multiple defects exceeding £6,000 the applicant will be required to apply for Major Works Assistance to have the works undertaken at the same time.	This will prevent having to process multiple applications for the same property, and evasion of the loan element of Major Works Assistance.
Available to owner occupiers where property is over 10 years old and in Council Tax band A, B or C.	Remove Council Tax band criteria, otherwise as existing.	Recent experience has revealed that few enquiries are received for properties in the higher tax bands, but when they are, the cases often merit assistance anyway.
Applicant must be on income related benefit. Preference given to over 60s.	Applicant must be in receipt of one of the benefits listed above under Major Works Assistance.	This will target resources on those within the “vulnerable” category set out in the Governments decent homes target.
Requirement for owner to occupy property for 3 years before and 1 year after grant.	Reduce prior residence requirement to 1 year.	This will extend the range of vulnerable clients that can be assisted.
Second grants for similar works will only be considered after 15 years.	Reduce period to 10 years in case of central heating boilers, fixed heating appliances and flat roofs.	It is considered that 10 years is a more realistic lifespan for those particular types of appliance/structure.
Accredited Landlord Loan Assistance	Accredited Landlord Loan Assistance	
Interest free loan for Accredited landlords (50% of cost of eligible works subject to £10,000 max. loan) to improve long-term empty property purchased for letting out. Assistance will be given to meet the decent homes standard.	No change.	This new form of assistance was only approved in June 2006 by Executive Board as part of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, and therefore no changes are proposed at this time.

CURRENT POLICY	PROPOSED CHANGE	RATIONALE
Group Repair	Block Repair Assistance	
Discretionary grant for the repair of the external fabric of a group of dwellings where this approach is deemed the most appropriate. Available to owner-occupiers and Landlords of pre 1964 property in Council Tax bands A, B and C.	Property to be 40+ years old rather than pre 1964. Remove Council Tax band criteria.	Same rationale as for Major Works Assistance.
Grant is means tested but owner's contribution limited to max. 50%, or 25% in Renewal Areas.	Owner-occupiers and Landlords both to be offered 75% grant and 25% loan.	Should the Council wish to proceed with such a scheme there needs to be a large incentive in order to get all owners signed up.
	Disabled Facilities Grant	
If it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt a property, and the occupier cannot afford a more suitable property in the locality, assistance may be provided to enable a move to a more suitable home. Up to £3,000 relocation expenses, and up to £5,000 to help with purchase costs.	Increase assistance to an overall sum of £10,000 max.	With house price inflation there is a need to increase the assistance available.



Health and Community Directorate

DRAFT
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING
RENEWAL STRATEGY

2006 - 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Councils have a general duty to periodically assess housing provision and conditions within their boundaries, and to make plans for meeting needs and improving unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- 1.2 For many years the powers available to local authorities to improve housing conditions in the private sector were heavily regulated. In recognition that housing conditions and problems varied significantly across the country, and that a “one size fits all” approach was no longer appropriate, in 2003 Government repealed much of the legislation that governed what local authorities could do in terms of providing assistance, and authorities were given much wider discretion to provide locally determined assistance within the framework of a locally adopted strategy.
- 1.3 Halton introduced its first local strategy in 2003 and this new document builds on the lessons learned, and emerging good practise, in the intervening period. It also seeks to reflect important new changes introduced by the Housing Act 2004, Government priorities, and new Council initiatives. These include –
 - A requirement to license certain types of housing in multiple occupation (HMOs).
 - The introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to replace the old fitness standard, which was the yardstick by which housing conditions were measured.
 - A Government target to reduce the number of owner occupied dwellings occupied by vulnerable households that fail the decent homes standard.
 - The development of a Landlord Forum in Halton.
 - The introduction of a Halton Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
 - An end to financial means testing for children/young people requiring adaptations under the Disabled Facilities Grant regime.
- 1.5 This document sets out the aims and objectives of the Council in seeking to improve private sector housing conditions within the Borough. It starts by describing the problems that exist, and identifies the measures that the Council will use to make the best use of the limited resources that are available. It also sets out the policies that the Council will implement when using its enforcement powers.
- 1.6 The strategy will remain in force until 2009, when it will be reviewed, and any significant changes that prove necessary in the interim will only be implemented after consulting stakeholders, advertising in the local press and adoption by the Council.

2. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

- 2.1 Whilst some of the services described in this strategy are delivered under statutory powers or duties, others are discretionary. As Councils strive to secure efficiencies to deliver services within budget and secure value for money, services need to demonstrate their relevance to the organisation's strategic aims and objectives. This section establishes those links.
- 2.2 Although Halton has much to be proud of in terms of the achievements it has made over the last 30 years, it still suffers levels of deprivation significantly above the national average. In particular it is ranked 16th on the Government Index of Deprivation (out of 354 English authorities) and 4th in the North West. It has higher than average unemployment, a relatively low wage economy, and some of the worst health statistics in the country.
- 2.3 The Council's Corporate Plan and the Halton Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy have identified key priorities that seek to address these inequalities, and this plan and the actions contained within it have a particular relevance to two of these strategic priorities - Health Improvement and Urban Renewal.

Health Improvement – Key Target “To remove the barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health, through ensuring that people have ready access to a wide range of social, community and housing services, and cultural and sporting activities that enhance their quality of life.”

- 2.4 The links between poor health and poor housing conditions are now well documented and widely acknowledged, and with Halton's poor health statistics it is particularly important that resources are targeted at improving that housing which is in the worst condition and which is occupied by the most vulnerable.
- 2.5 Given the significant levels of poverty in the Borough, and the forecast of significant growth in the percentage of elderly households, inevitably some residents in Halton will struggle to maintain their homes and increasing numbers will, due to ill health or disability, require their homes adapting to enable them to continue living within the community. The assistance available through this strategy will therefore directly contribute to this key priority.

Urban Renewal - Key Target “To support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods and open spaces that meet peoples expectations and add to their enjoyment of life.”

- 2.6 Under the priority of Urban Renewal there is an aspiration to make Halton a place where people are proud to live, in sustainable thriving neighbourhoods. It is generally acknowledged that without financial assistance some properties occupied by the most vulnerable will simply not be maintained and will deteriorate. Dilapidated and poor quality housing can be a highly visible sign of, and a contributor to, the decline

of neighbourhoods and affect their long-term sustainability. Through this strategy the tools are available, subject to resources, to assist those that need help to maintain their homes and to utilise enforcement powers if necessary.

3. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING IN HALTON

3.1 The Council's Housing Strategy describes in some detail the operation of the housing market in Halton and the main problems that exist. The following points summarise the key issues from that document and supplement them with information derived from a private sector housing condition survey undertaken in Autumn 2002 (before the introduction of the HHSRS and decent homes target, but updated where possible).

- The private sector stock in Halton has a higher proportion of terraced properties than the North West and national averages.
- Approximately 2.5% of properties are unfit, a much lower proportion than both the regional and national average (7%).
- The bulk of poorer housing tends to be in the older terraced areas surrounding the town centres of Widnes and Runcorn.
- The proportion of private rented properties is low (7% of private sector dwellings in the district) but the sector contains nearly three times the proportion of unfit dwellings than the Halton average.
- The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation within the Borough is relatively small (see Appendix 3 for definition).
- 82% of private sector properties have central heating.
- The average SAP value (a measure of energy efficiency on a scale of 1 to 120) is, at 48, better than the national average of 44 but there is scope to make improvement as one third of properties do not have cylinder jackets, and three quarters do not have cavity wall insulation.
- The overall level of private sector empty properties in Halton in 2005 was 3.31%, comparable to the England average of 3.29% and well below the North West average of 4.47%.
- Numbers of those aged over 65 and over 75 are predicted to increase by 40% and 11% respectively by 2013, and 21.5% of the population describe themselves as having a limiting long term illness. This points to an increase in the already high levels of demand for housing adaptation works in the future.

3.2 The following tables summarise the findings from the 2002 survey in terms of housing conditions.

Table 1. Dwelling Stock Age Profile

Area Name	Pre-1919	% of Area Total	1919-1944	% of Area Total	1945-1964	% of Area Total	Post-1964	% of Area Total	Area Total
Widnes	2,509	8%	3,263	10%	3,137	9%	9,367	28%	18,277
Runcorn	1,953	6%	2,868	9%	1,875	6%	8,119	25%	14,815
Totals	4,462	13%	6,131	19%	5,012	15%	17,486	53%	33,092

Table 2. Dwelling Stock Type Profile

Type	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Purpose Built Flats	Converted Flats	Temporary	Total
Number	6,319	11,355	13,816	1,221	267	114	33,092
% of Stock	19%	34%	42%	4%	1%	0%	100%

Table 3. Unfitness by Age band

Age Bands	Total Stock by Age Band	No of Unfit Dwellings	Percentage of the Whole Stock	Percentage Within Each Age Band	Percentage of Total Number of Unfit Dwellings
Pre-1919	4,462	377	1.14%	8.44%	46.26%
1919-1944	6,132	296	0.89%	4.83%	36.34%
1945-1964	5,012	27	0.08%	0.54%	3.35%
Post-1964	17,486	114	0.35%	0.65%	14.05% *but see 3.4 below
Totals	33,092	814			100%

Table 4. Unfitness by Property Type

Property Type	Number	Percentage of the whole stock	Percentage of unfits
Houses - Terraced	422	1.28%	51.85%
Houses - Semi-Detached	356	1.08%	43.73%
Houses - Detached	36	0.11%	4.42%
Total	814	2.47%	100%

Table 5. Unfitness by Tenure

Tenure	No of Dwellings Unfit-	No of Dwellings Tenure type-	Percentage Unfit by Total of Tenure Type
Owner Occupied	650	30,383	2.14%
Private Landlord	164	2,709	6.05%
Total	814	33,092	2.46%

Table 6. Unfitness by Area

Area	No of Dwellings Unfit	Percentage of Total Unfit
Widnes	470	58%
Runcorn	344	42%
	814	100%

Table 7. Reasons for Unfitness

Unfitness	No of Occurrences	Percentage of 814 Unfit
Disrepair	373	46%
Food Preparation	235	29%
Bath Shower	226	28%
Water Closet	200	25%
Heating	151	19%
Dampness	92	11%
Ventilation	58	7%
Drainage	34	4%
Water Supply	34	4%
Lighting	29	4%
Total	1,432	

Table 8. Combined Unfit and Borderline Unfit Dwellings by Area

Area Ref	No of Dwellings Unfit	Percentage of Dwellings Unfit in Area	No of Borderline Unfit Dwellings	Dwellings in Area	Percentage of Dwellings Borderline Unfit
Widnes	470	2.57%	1,509	18,277	8.3%
Runcorn	344	2.32%	1,206	14,815	8.1%
Total	814		2,715	33,092	

- 3.3 The preceding tables show that the number of unfit dwellings in the Borough is equally distributed between Runcorn and Widnes as a percentage of each town's stock.
- 3.4 The extrapolated figure (*) for unfitness in the post 1964 age band must be treated with caution, however, as it results from just one surveyed property being unfit. The true level of unfitness for this group is probably much smaller, and consequently the predominant dwelling types suffering unfitness are terraced and semi-detached types in the pre-1919 and 1919-1964 age bands.
- 3.5 Whilst the percentage of unfit dwellings is relatively low at 2.5% of the stock, the potential for this figure to rapidly increase to about 11% is shown in the number of borderline unfit properties (2,715) identified by the condition survey. Borderline properties are those that are likely to become unfit in the next five years unless repaired or improved by their owners.

- 3.6 The Government is committed to reducing the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes and authorities are required to monitor progress at the local level. Halton's private sector house condition survey was undertaken in 2002, prior to the introduction of this requirement, and consequently has no detailed information on how many households fall into this category in Halton.
- 3.7 Recognising this as a problem facing many authorities the Government has developed a model based on the findings of the English House Condition Survey that will produce an approximation of the numbers in each authority area. For Halton the model suggests that 65.7% of the homes occupied by vulnerable households currently meet the decent homes standard, which matches the 65% target set by Government for achievement by 2006. This figure will be used as the baseline for future monitoring until the next housing condition survey can provide more accurate data.
- 3.8 As a result of emerging concerns about the West Bank area of Widnes, with higher than average vacancy levels, a slow resale market, and a high proportion of privately rented stock, a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment was commissioned. Whilst the findings are not available at the time of this strategy being prepared, they will be used to inform future revisions of this document.
- 3.9 Although a large part of the Council's private sector housing functions is related to improving housing conditions in owner occupied property, it also has an important role to play in regulating Houses in Multiple Occupation, licensing residential caravan sites, and assisting private tenants to enforce their tenancy rights, particularly in liaising with Landlords to get repairs done.
- 3.10 Whilst the private rented stock is not large in Halton, it nevertheless generates about 120 complaints each year from tenants, and the stock condition survey showed that a significant proportion of this accommodation was unfit. If the recent trend of developers building apartments continues, then there is potential for the private sector rental market to steadily grow as investors buy to let. Appendix 2 of this strategy sets out the Council's enforcement policies for dealing with this area of Council activity, and Appendix 3 sets out the HMO licensing requirements.

4. THE STRATEGY

Aims and objectives

- 4.1 The overall aim of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy is to secure an improvement in the housing conditions of the Borough through the targeting of advice and resources at those most in need.
- 4.2 This overall aim then translates into a number of individual objectives relating to several different elements of the market, which have been developed as a result of the assessment of the problems identified earlier. They are -
- To regularly undertake an assessment of housing conditions in the Borough, in order to monitor changes and the effectiveness of this policy.
 - To secure the improvement of housing conditions and in particular to seek to reduce the percentage of owner occupied non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households.
 - To improve standards in the private rented sector, and ensure that conditions within licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation are satisfactory, and that those that need to be, are licensed.
 - To advise of, and enforce, private tenants rights in relation to disrepair and harassment / illegal eviction, and through improved working relationships with Landlords to contribute to the Council's wider strategy of preventing homelessness.
 - To promote membership of the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
 - To offer advice to individuals on potential sources of finance for those ineligible for Council assistance.
 - To provide a service for those needing help to maintain or adapt their homes, with the option of using the Council's Care and Repair Agency.
 - To reduce the number of long-term empty properties.
 - To help vulnerable people undertake smaller scale works that pose a risk to their health and safety.
 - To promote energy efficiency.
- 4.3 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy comprises two distinct parts. On the one hand there is the provision of financial assistance and advice to help improve or adapt the housing stock and improve

energy efficiency, and on the other hand the use of enforcement and regulatory powers to require individuals to take action to improve unsatisfactory housing conditions or comply with statutory requirements.

- 4.4 This part of the document describes in broad terms the different forms of financial assistance that will be made available, and the other ways in which the Council will work in partnership to achieve its objectives. It also provides further detail about the changes introduced by the Housing Act 2004. Further detail about eligibility criteria for financial assistance and the enforcement approach is contained in the appendices.

Financial Assistance

- 4.5 By bringing together the results of the stock condition survey, Government guidance, and the aims and objectives set out above, a clearer picture emerges of how the Council should focus its financial assistance.

This includes a need to -

- reflect the Government target to reduce the number of non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households.
- reflect the replacement of the fitness standard by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- maintain the mix of grant/loan assistance to “stretch” resources.
- focus on property 40 years or more old, as this sector exhibits the greatest incidence of poor conditions.
- maintain financial assistance limits to keep expenditure within budget.
- provide an incentive for Landlords to join the Accreditation Scheme.

The following range of assistance is therefore provided by the Council.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- 4.6 There is a well-established statutory framework for the provision of these mandatory, means tested grants and for determining eligibility. The only recent change has been the removal of means testing for applications relating to children and young people. Halton will continue to fund eligible works up to the statutory maximum (currently £25,000) that is eligible for Government subsidy.

Major Works Assistance

- 4.7 This is discretionary assistance in the form of a 75% grant and 25% loan (interest free) for properties that contain a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS, or multiple Category 2 hazards that together constitute a risk to the health or safety of the occupier. The property must be more than 40 years old, and eligibility is further restricted to those who have occupied the property for a minimum of 3 years, are in receipt of certain state benefits, or who qualify by a financial test of resources.
- 4.8 All works needed to meet the decent homes standard will be eligible subject to a maximum of £35,000. Beyond this limit the Council will do a value for money assessment to determine whether assistance should be granted.
- 4.9 Breach of grant conditions during the first 3 years may result in grant having to be repaid on a decreasing scale, with the loan element secured as a charge against the property until its future sale. Loans repaid in the future will be added to resources available for new assistance.

Minor Works Assistance

- 4.10 This is discretionary assistance in the form of a grant for properties that contain a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS, or multiple Category 2 hazards that together constitute an imminent risk to the health or safety of the occupier, or minor works related to a DFG application. The property must be more than 10 years old, and eligibility is further restricted to those in receipt of certain state benefits. The maximum grant is £6,000.
- 4.11 Typically this grant is offered for smaller scale works such as badly leaking roofs, and faulty gas or electrical installations where the property may not qualify for, or it may not be cost effective to offer, major works assistance, and where harm to the occupier may result from the works not being undertaken.

Accredited Landlord Loan Assistance

- 4.12 This is discretionary assistance for accredited landlords who wish to acquire property that has been vacant for more than 1 year, which they intend to let out subsequently for a minimum of 5 years. Eligible works include those necessary to meet the decent homes standard. Maximum eligible costs are £20,000 and assistance is in the form of an interest free loan for 50% of the cost of eligible works.
- 4.13 This is intended to act as an incentive for the Accreditation Scheme, to help reduce the numbers of long-term empty property in the Borough, and to increase the supply of well managed private rented accommodation.

Block Repair Assistance

- 4.14 In some instances it is more beneficial, both economically and in terms of the outcome, to repair the external parts of a whole terrace of properties where they share common problems and visually detract from the appearance of an area. Although Block Repair has not been used in Halton for many years it is considered appropriate to retain the power to offer assistance bearing in mind their potential role.
- 4.15 Property must be over 40 years old and assistance will be in the form of a 75% grant and 25% interest free loan. All owners must agree to participate in the scheme, the Council will organise the works, and all schemes will be subject to approval by the Council's Executive Board Sub given the significant resources this type of scheme requires.

Relocation Assistance

- 4.16 At its discretion, the Council may offer grant assistance to help an owner-occupier move to and/or adapt a different property if it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt the present home. The Council, in circumstances where it is satisfied that the applicant cannot afford a suitable alternative property within the locality, may offer a grant of up to £10,000 to assist with relocation and purchase of a more suitable home. This will not prevent an application being made to carry out essential works to adapt the new home if necessary.

Partnership Working

- 4.17 Much of what local authorities do involves partnership working, and housing is no exception. The following describes the initiatives developed in partnership to achieve the Council's objectives and those of its partners.

Energy Efficiency

- 4.18 The Council works closely with, and partly funds, the work of the Cheshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (CHEEAC) for the provision of a free phone energy advice service to all Halton residents. The organisation has expertise in all energy related matters and signposts clients to the various grants that are available to assist householders with energy efficiency improvements, and in particular it refers eligible clients to the Government funded Warm Front scheme. It also plays a vital role in raising awareness of energy matters in the Borough through promotional activity.
- 4.19 CHEEAC also manages two grant aid schemes funded by the Council, known as Energy Zone and the Hearth Scheme, which provide discounted energy efficiency measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation and central heating.

Halton Care and Repair Agency

- 4.20 In partnership with the client, the Private Sector Housing Team provides a full agency service to private sector housing clients accessing Disabled Facilities Grants, Major and Minor Works Assistance. This ranges from initial help and advice to complete the application forms to a full architectural design and contract administration service.
- 4.21 Based on a 60% questionnaire return rate satisfaction levels with the service are very high, with 93% reporting the service as “good” or “very good”, rising to 100% when “satisfactory” is included. The client’s main concerns are the length of time they have to wait.

Landlord Forum

- 4.22 Over the last two years significant effort has been put into establishing a Landlord Forum, to improve communication and relationships with private sector landlords. An established group has now developed that meets three times a year, and the events are a useful means of addressing the concerns of the various parties, and for cascading information about Council initiatives and legislative change.

Landlord Accreditation Scheme

- 4.23 One direct benefit of the Landlord Forum has been joint working to develop a mutually acceptable Halton Landlord Accreditation Scheme. The scheme offers a number of benefits to members in return for adherence to certain minimum management standards. Initial signs are promising and the Council will endeavour to maximise the number of landlords registering for the scheme over the coming years.

Handy Person Scheme

- 4.24 The Council and Age Concern jointly developed this scheme, originally with the help of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) resources and now Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, to provide a service where elderly vulnerable residents could apply to have minor repairs done. Now managed by Halton Age Concern, it provides a service where the applicant pays for the materials and the scheme provides the labour.

Resources

- 4.25 In the 3 years since the last strategy was implemented (2003/04 to 2005/06) the Council has invested £3.2m in private sector renewal assistance as follows –

Renovation/ Home Repair Assistance Grants	£1,488,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	£1,584,000
Energy Efficiency Promotion	£ 152,000
Total	£3,224,000

This has enabled the Council to make fit 160 properties, provide adaptations in 172 properties, and secure energy efficiency improvements to approximately 1,000 properties.

- 4.26 Subject to there being no significant change in the pattern of financial settlement given to the Council, resources for the years 2006/07 to 2008/09 are forecast as follows –

Major/Minor Works/Accredited Landlord Assistance	£1,452,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	£1,980,000
Energy Efficiency Promotion	£ 210,000
Total	£3,642,000

- 4.27 This reflects both an increase in resources, and a slight shift from Major and Minor Works Assistance to Disabled Facilities Grants to reflect the significant backlog of applications for adaptation works. Even so clients applying for assistance, and for DFGs in particular, may experience delays due to inadequate levels of resources.

Action Plan

- 4.28 The action plan on the following page sets out what the Council intends to do over the next 3 years to meet or contribute to the objectives set out at the start of section 4.

Action Plan

Desired Outcome	Action	Timescale	Funding Implications	Dependencies
Updated house condition data to inform strategy and provide baseline for decent homes monitoring.	Undertake house condition survey.	Complete by December 2008.	One off revenue growth bid for 2008/09.	Resources. Officer time.
Secure annual reduction in non-decent owner occupied homes occupied by vulnerable households.	Target financial assistance on relevant households by advertising in Press twice per year, and distributing leaflets to Contact Centres.	Ongoing.	Funded from existing operational budgets.	Take up of assistance by clients.
Ensure all relevant HMOs are licensed.	Identify HMOs, inspect premises, and ensure requisite standards are met, through enforcement action if needs be. Establish future inspection programme.	Complete by April 2007.	Costs covered by agreed scale fees.	Officer time. Ability to identify premises.
An increase in the number of private lets covered by the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.	Promote LAS to all Landlords, review satisfaction with scheme annually.	First review April 2008.	Funded from existing operational budgets.	Take up by Landlords and their agents.
Agency services are available to individual owner occupiers accessing all forms of housing financial assistance	Extend access to Care and Repair services to Major and Minor Works Assistance clients.	By April 2007.	Funded by additional Supporting People finance.	Officer time and client take up.

Desired Outcome	Action	Timescale	Funding Implications	Dependencies
Increased supply of experienced contractors to undertake housing works.	Develop approved contractor list.	By April 2007.	Funded from existing operational budgets.	Officer time. Capacity of local builders.
Improved literature about housing assistance.	Review all literature and amend as necessary, to include BME straplines.	By April 2007.	Funded from existing operational budgets.	Officer time.
Service standards established.	Develop and introduce service standards after consultation with stakeholders.	By April 2007.	Funded from existing operational budgets.	Officer time.

5. MISCELLANEOUS AND COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 Whilst every effort has been made to frame the policies set out in this document in a clear manner to remove any doubt about what the assistance is for, eligibility, and other conditions that apply, applications may arise in which there are exceptional circumstances not covered by this document, where there are compelling reasons to justify providing assistance.
- 5.2 For example this may be where the spirit of the policy clearly intends to provide assistance in a particular set of circumstances, but the policy has been worded in a way that unintentionally precludes help being given.
- 5.3 In these circumstances the Strategic Director of Health and Community will have discretion to determine whether or not such exceptional applications can be approved. The Director will also consider appeals for assistance that exceed the specified maximum amounts where the officer dealing with the application has initially refused to approve the excess amount.
- 5.4 Alternatively, if the complaint is not about the policy but about the way in which a service was provided, or the way in which an application for help or advice was handled, the complaint should be made initially to the officer concerned in the hope that he/she can resolve the problem.
- 5.5 Should the complaint not be resolved, the Council has a formal complaints procedure set out in a booklet called "Any Complaints". Copies are available at main Council offices or can be requested by telephoning 0151 907 8300.

FORMS OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Major Works Assistance

Purpose

This form of discretionary assistance is intended for the improvement or repair of private sector housing within the Borough which is deemed unsuitable for occupation because it contains a Category 1 hazard under the Government's Housing Health and Safety Rating System, or several Category 2 hazards that together constitute a danger to the health and safety of the occupier, and to make such property meet the decent homes standard.

Eligibility

Priority will be given to applicants that meet the following criteria –

1. The applicant must be the owner-occupier of the property to be improved and occupy it as their only or main residence. Assistance is not available to occupiers of mobile homes or houseboats.
2. The property must be a minimum of 40 years old at the date of enquiry, and the applicant must have owned and occupied the property for a minimum of 3 years prior to the application.
3. Applicants in receipt of one of the following benefits will automatically be eligible to apply –

Income Support
Housing Benefit
Council Tax Benefit
Working Tax Credit
Pension Credit
Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
War Disablement Pension

A financial means test will be applied to those not on one of the above benefits to determine eligibility.

4. Eligible works include those necessary to rectify the Category 1 and 2 hazards, and any other works required to make the property meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. Assistance for works to alleviate overcrowding will not be given.

Conditions

5. Assistance will be based on maximum construction and professional fees/associated costs of £35,000. Where these costs exceed £35,000 applications will only be approved after undertaking a “value for money” assessment to determine whether financial assistance to repair/improve would be the best use of public money.
6. At approval stage 75% of any assistance offered will be in the form of a grant, and 25% will be an interest free loan secured as a legal charge against the dwelling. The loan is repayable to the Council when the applicant disposes of their interest in the property. An individual can choose to repay the loan earlier if they wish.
7. If, after the application has been approved, the final costs increase due to unforeseen works agreed in advance by the Council, these extra costs will be paid for as grant, not loan.
8. Although assistance will not be given just for these works, the Council will, where practicable, require the application to include works for –
 - Gas/electrical/fire safety
 - Energy efficiency improvements
 - Security measures

Other grants are sometimes available for energy efficiency works (e.g. Warm Front grants), and the Council will expect that these be used to finance such works before agreeing to include them in a Major Works Assistance application. The Council will advise on their availability.

9. The applicant must provide 3 separate builders quotes for the works. The builders must not be related to, or be, the applicant. If an applicant is unsure whether a particular relationship breaches this criterion, he/she should disclose the relationship when submitting the quotes.
10. Eligible costs for kitchen cabinets and bathroom sanitary fittings will be determined on a case by case basis by reference to the Council's schedule of rates
11. Works must be completed within one year of the application being approved. Time extensions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
12. It is a condition that the applicant must continue to own and reside in the property for a period of 3 years after the completion of the works. If this condition is breached, the financial assistance will be repayable to the Council as follows -

- Disposal within the first year 100%
- Disposal within the second year 75%
- Disposal within the third year 50%

Thereafter the applicant will just have to repay the sum secured by the property charge (the loan).

13. Applications relating to works that have previously been financially assisted by the Council will not normally be considered within 15 years of the completion of the previous application. In the case of central heating boilers, fixed heating appliances and flat roofs, this period is reduced to 10 years.
14. Where a property is jointly owned, the application form and legal charge/loan forms must be signed by each owner.
15. Where the applicant dies before the approved works are complete, the Council will pay an amount of grant proportionate to the amount of the works that have been completed. The Council will exercise its discretion in determining whether or not it would be appropriate to pay for some or all of the outstanding works, although this will normally be restricted to making the property safe and weathertight. In these circumstances the Council will require repayment of the loan but not the grant.
16. Any breach of these conditions may result in the Council seeking full repayment of the grant subject only to the exceptions set out in the Council's policy for waiving or reducing the repayment of housing assistance.
17. Financial assistance is discretionary and will be made available subject to the Council having adequate resources

Minor Works Assistance

Purpose

This form of discretionary assistance is intended for smaller scale works to deal with defects in private sector homes that pose an imminent risk to the health or safety of the occupier (where Major Works Assistance would not be appropriate, or where the property is not old enough). Additionally assistance may be given for minor works related to a Disabled Facilities Grant application.

Eligibility

1. The applicant must be the owner-occupier of the property to be repaired or be a tenant under a protected tenancy arrangement with certain obligations to undertake repairs. The property must have been owned and occupied as the applicant's only or main residence for a minimum of one year at the date of enquiry. Owners of mobile homes are also eligible subject to the same conditions of occupation.
2. Owners of houseboats are also eligible but must produce evidence that they have had exclusive mooring rights in Halton for a period of not less than one year before the date of the enquiry for the grant, and unexpired rights for a further one year.
3. The defects for which assistance is being sought must be judged to represent a Category 1 hazard under the Government's Housing Health and Safety Rating System, or several Category 2 hazards that together constitute an imminent risk to the health and safety of the occupier.
4. The property must be a minimum of 10 years old at the date of enquiry.
5. Applicants must be in receipt of one of the following benefits –

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Pension Credit
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- War Disablement Pension

Conditions

6. Assistance will be provided in the form of a grant up to a maximum of £6,000 (which includes the administrative fee). If, after the application has been approved, the final costs increase due to unforeseen works

agreed in advance by the Council, the grant offered will be increased to cover the costs.

7. Where the property inspection reveals multiple defects exceeding £6,000 the applicant, if eligible to do so, will be required to apply for Major Works Assistance to have all the works undertaken at the same time. If the applicant is not eligible for Major Works Assistance, assistance will be given to deal with the most urgent works.
8. Successive applications will not be considered until one year has elapsed since the completion of the works that were the subject of the previous application.
9. Applications relating to works that have previously been financially assisted will not be considered within 15 years of the completion of the previous application. In the case of central heating boilers, fixed heating appliances and flat roofs, this period is reduced to 10 years.
10. The applicant must continue to reside in the property for a period of one year after the date of completion of the works.
11. The applicant must provide 3 separate builders quotes for the works. The Council will use its discretion to reduce this requirement where the applicant can demonstrate that they have been unable to obtain 3, and in the case of mobile homes and houseboats where the number of suitably qualified locally based contractors is limited.
12. Applications to replace defective gas central heating boilers will normally only be considered if the boiler is over ten years old and cannot be replaced under any other energy efficiency scheme such as Warm Front.
13. Although assistance will not be given just for these works, the Council will, where practicable, require the application to include works for –
 - Gas/electrical/fire safety
 - Energy efficiency improvements
 - Security measures (window locks etc.)

Other grants are sometimes available for energy efficiency works, and the Council will expect that these be used to finance such works before agreeing to allow them for Minor Works Assistance. The Council will advise on their availability.

14. Works must be completed within six months of the application being approved. Time extensions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
15. Any breach of these conditions may result in the Council seeking full repayment of the grant subject only to the exceptions set out in the

Council's policy for waiving or reducing the repayment of housing assistance.

16. Financial assistance is discretionary and will be made available subject to the Council having adequate resources.

Accredited Landlord Loan Assistance

Purpose

This is discretionary assistance for accredited landlords who wish to acquire property that has been vacant for more than 1 year, which they intend to let out subsequently for a minimum of 5 years.

Eligibility

1. The premises must have been vacant for a period of not less than one year when purchased, as determined by Council Tax records.
2. The applicant must be a landlord accredited under the Halton Landlord Accreditation Scheme, and have been accredited for a period of not less than one year.
3. Eligible works will include those necessary to meet the decent homes standard.

Conditions

4. Assistance offered will be in the form of an interest free loan secured as a legal charge against the premises. The loan is repayable to the Council when the applicant disposes of their interest in the property. An individual can choose to repay the charge earlier if they wish.
5. Maximum eligible costs (including professional fees) are £20,000 and assistance will be provided for 50% of the cost of eligible works.
6. The premises must meet the decent homes standard on completion of the works.
7. Assistance will not be provided for premises which are intended to be let out as a house in multiple occupation.
8. The applicant must provide three separate builders quotes for the proposed works.
9. Works must be completed within one year of the application being approved. Time extensions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
10. The applicant must continue to let out the premises for a period of not less than five years after the completion of the works, and throughout this period the landlord must remain accredited under the Halton Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
11. Any breach of these conditions may result in the Council seeking full repayment of the assistance subject only to the exceptions set out in

the Council's policy for waiving or reducing the repayment of housing assistance.

12. Financial assistance is discretionary and will be made available subject to the Council having adequate resources.

Block Repair Assistance

Purpose

When a group of privately owned properties (typically in a terrace) are all in need of external repair to the roofs or brickwork, the Council may ask the owners to join in a block repair scheme so that the necessary work can be done at one time by the same contractor. This has the effect of creating financial savings, both for the Council and the owners, compared to the cost of improving properties one at a time. It also improves the appearance of the properties.

Block Repair schemes have to be approved by the Council's Executive Board Sub before they can proceed as they can take up a significant amount of financial resources.

Eligibility

1. The applicant must be the owner-occupier of the property to be improved and occupy it as their only or main residence, or be a Landlord owner of the property. The property must be a minimum of 40 years old.
2. Financial assistance is discretionary and will be made available subject to the Council having adequate resources and deciding that Block Repair is an appropriate method of tackling the external structural problems that exist.

Conditions

3. Every owner in the group of properties must consent to proceed with the proposed works for the scheme to be approved.
4. The Council will organise and supervise the works.

75% of any assistance offered will be in the form of a grant, and 25% will be an interest free loan secured as a legal charge against the dwelling, to be repaid to the Council when the applicant disposes of their interest in the property. An individual can choose to repay the charge earlier if they wish.

5. If, after the application/scheme has been approved, the final costs increase due to unforeseen works, these extra costs will be paid for as grant, not loan.
6. It is a condition that the applicant must continue to own and reside in the property for a period of 3 years after the completion of the works (or let the property out for a similar period in the case of landlords). If this condition is breached, the financial assistance will be repayable to the Council as follows -

- Disposal within the first year 100%
- Disposal within the second year 75%
- Disposal within the third year 50%

Thereafter the applicant will just have to repay the sum secured by the property charge (the loan). The circumstances in which the requirement to repay grant and/or loan will be reduced or waived are set out in the Council's policy for waiving or reducing the repayment of housing assistance.

7. Where the applicant dies before the approved works are complete, the Council will pay an amount of grant proportionate to the amount of the works that have been completed. The Council will exercise its discretion in determining whether or not it would be appropriate to pay for some or all of the outstanding works, although this will normally be restricted to making the property safe and weathertight. In these circumstances the Council will require repayment of the loan but not the grant.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Purpose

These grants are provided for works to adapt the homes of chronically sick or disabled persons to enable them to continue to live independently in their homes. Typically they are for works to allow individuals to get in and out of their home, to move around their home safely, and to improve access to bathing and toileting facilities.

Applications must be supported by an assessment from a specialist (e.g. an Occupational Therapist) from either the Council's Independent Living Team or one employed by the applicant. Most Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) will organise these works for their tenants if supported by a referral from the Independent Living Team.

The Disabled Facilities Grant scheme is a statutory one meaning that the rules and regulations about eligibility etc. are set out in law rather than Council policy. A more detailed leaflet is available upon request. The Council has discretion in only a few areas. It is also the only grant that the Council is legally obliged to provide.

Eligibility

The detailed scheme conditions are set out in Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 but the following summarises some of the main points.

1. The applicant must be the owner or tenant of the property to be adapted (this includes owners of mobile homes or houseboats), although this may not necessarily be the person for whom the works are required. A Landlord may support an application on behalf of a disabled tenant, and foster parents can apply for a disabled child in their care provided the fostering arrangement is intended for a minimum of 5 years.
2. The Occupational Therapist or other specialist must be satisfied that the proposed works are necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs.
3. The application will only be approved if the proposed works are reasonable and practicable, taking into account the age, condition and layout of the property.

Conditions

4. At its discretion, the Council may alternatively offer grant assistance to help an owner-occupier move to and/or adapt a different property if it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt the present home. When the

Council is satisfied that the applicant cannot afford a suitable alternative property, it may offer a grant of up to £10,000 to assist with relocation to and the purchase of a more suitable property, to include legal fees, moving expenses and purchase costs, payable only on completion of the move. This will not prevent an application being made to carry out essential works to adapt the new home if necessary.

5. The applicant, and any owner in the case of a landlord, must sign a certificate stating the intention that the disabled person will occupy the property as their only or main residence for a period of five years after the works are completed (or such shorter period as the person's health or other relevant circumstances permit).
6. The grant is means tested except in the case of applications for children and young persons as defined in the legislation.
7. Some works are considered essential or "mandatory" to meet an individual's needs. Others are considered non-essential or "discretionary". Grant will not be paid for discretionary works.
8. The Council will award Disabled Facilities Grant up to the statutory maximum (currently £25,000 including all professional and planning fees, VAT and any client contribution etc.). However, under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 the Local Authority can consider the needs of disabled people and under this provision additional Social Service financial support has been provided to a number of people in the past. This policy will be continued within available resources.
9. The Council is required to approve or reject any application within six months of receiving a valid application and any other relevant information reasonably required.
10. Although an applicant is only required to submit two quotes for the work, the Council recommends obtaining three. Where the applicant or a relative undertakes the work, grant will only be paid for the cost of materials.
11. Works must be completed within one year of the application being approved. Time extensions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
12. Where the disabled person dies, or ceases to use the property as the main place of residence, or their intention to occupy the property changes, before the approved works are complete, the Council will pay an amount of grant proportionate to the amount of the works that have been completed. The Council will exercise its discretion in determining whether or not it would be appropriate to pay for some or all of the outstanding works, although this will normally be restricted to making the property safe and weathertight.

Applications will be prioritised in consultation with the Independent Living Team according to the relative urgency of the works after taking account of the applicant's circumstances. However every effort will be made to approve all applications within six months of receipt.

APPENDIX 2

HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Housing Act 2004 introduces a new means of assessing the suitability of dwellings in the form of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and a variety of enforcement options for local authorities to use. The HHSRS replaces the long established fitness standard and repeals the provisions relating to this in the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the Housing and Local Government Act 1989).

In addition the previous legislation concerning repair notices for dealing with deficiencies in dwellings and much of the previous legislation relating to HMOs is repealed and replaced by new enforcement options, licensing provisions and regulations. This enforcement policy is being introduced to replace the previous 2003 policy in order to reflect the changes introduced by the new legislation.

Formal enforcement action can be particularly important in the case of rented properties and HMOs in the private sector, where some of the worst housing conditions are to be found. The Council's Policy will be to take account of the views and circumstances of tenants, landlords and owners, and we will consult where appropriate with social services, housing management officers, and other support agencies in dealing with vulnerable occupants. The Council will also adopt the principles of the Government's Enforcement Concordat, as a basis for fair, practical and consistent enforcement.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The HHSRS and powers available apply to all types of residential premises, including HMOs, purpose built blocks of flats and converted flats regardless of tenure type i.e.

- owner occupied
- privately rented
- RSL owned properties.

The Government has introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005 (SI R005 no 3208), the Housing Health & Safety Rating System Operating Guidance and the Housing Health & Safety Rating System Enforcement Guidance, and the Council will have regard to these in the operation of this policy.

The HHSRS will be used to determine whether or not any action is required by the Council to address unsatisfactory conditions in the housing stock. There are 29 potential hazards in relation to the HHSRS. The Council's enforcement officers will undertake as full an inspection of premises as possible in obtaining relevant evidence of any hazards whether minor or serious. Officers will have regard to the HHSRS operating guidance in assessing and rating the severity of hazards and will determine whether any

category 1 or category 2 hazards exist in or at the premises. The inspections will be to establish whether or not there are any deficiencies and to assess their potential harmful effects on the health, safety and well being of any current or potential occupants or visitors to the premises.

The assessment of hazards will be a two-stage process to: -

- consider the likelihood of an occurrence within 12 months following an inspection.
- consider the range of probable harm outcomes in the event of an occurrence taking place.

These two factors will be combined using the standard method to score each hazard and to determine whether it is a category 1 or category 2 hazard.

The scores from different hazards will not be aggregated, but the presence of a number of category 2 hazards may be a factor in the officer deciding what enforcement action to take. In some cases occupants may encounter one minor hazard after another as they move around the property to such an extent they may create a less safe environment than one with a single high scoring hazard alone.

In determining the appropriate action to be taken having assessed the relevant hazards the officer will consider: -

- the hazard score as determined under the HHSRS
- based upon the score whether the Council has a duty or discretion to act.
- the most appropriate means of dealing with the hazard, taking into account the potential and actual occupants.

Powers and Duties

In considering taking formal enforcement action the Council will have regard to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat. The Council has a general duty to act in relation to a category 1 hazard and must take one of the following actions: -

- serve an improvement notice in accordance with Section 11 of the Act
- make a prohibition order in accordance with Section 20
- serve a hazard awareness notice in accordance with Section 28
- take emergency remedial action under Section 40
- make an emergency prohibition order under section 43
- make a demolition order under Section 265 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended
- declare a clearance area by virtue of Section 289 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended.

The Council has similar powers to deal at its discretion with category 2 hazards, but cannot use the emergency measures, demolition orders or clearance area provisions in response to category 2 hazards unless the circumstances have been prescribed in regulations. No such regulations have been made at the present time.

In accordance with Section 8 of the Act the officer will provide a statement of reasons for the decision they have taken and a copy of the statement will accompany any notices, copies of notices and copies of any other order served under Part 1.

The assessments of hazards under the HHSRS is based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that particular hazard however in the decision making process regard will be had to the present occupants in determining the action to be taken. Some account of the views of the occupants will also be taken.

Enforcement Options

Improvement notice

This is a possible response to a category 1 or 2 hazard under section 11 or 12 of the Act. Under Section 11 the action to be taken must as a minimum remove the category 1 hazard but may extend beyond this. The notice should try to ensure that any works required are carried out to a standard that prevents the building elements deteriorating and should try to avoid “patch and mend” repairs which may require the Council to take action again should conditions deteriorate.

The notice may relate to more than one category 1 hazard. Where multiple hazards include category 2 hazards the same notice can require action to deal with both category 1 and 2 hazards. The notice cannot require remedial works to start within 28 days of the service of the notice. Appeal against the notice to a Residential Property Tribunal must be made within 21 days of service of the notice. The Council has the power to carry out work in default with or without the agreement of the person on whom the notice was served.

Prohibition Order

This is a response under Section 20 or 21 of the Act to a category 1 or category 2 hazard. It may prohibit the use of part or all of the premises for some or all of the purposes, or occupation by particular members or descriptions of people.

The order becomes operative 28 days after it is made unless the order is appealed. Any appeal must be made to the Residential Property Tribunal within 28 days from the date the order was made.

Emergency Remedial Action and Emergency Prohibition Orders.

The Council has discretion to take emergency enforcement action against category 1 hazards that present an imminent risk of serious harm to occupiers. In such circumstances the Council will take the remedial action to remove a hazard and recover reasonable expenses or will be able to prohibit the use of all or part of a property. The owner will be able to appeal but any appeal will not prevent the action from being taken or the prohibition being put into effect.

The Council may enter the premises at any time to take: -

- emergency remedial action or
- to make an emergency prohibition order
- an emergency prohibition order is served on the day it is made

Appeals may be made to the Residential Property Tribunal within 28 days of the date of the emergency remedial action being taken or the date of the emergency prohibition order being made.

Hazard Awareness Notice

This is a response under Section 29 to a normally less serious hazard where the Council wishes to draw attention to the desirability of remedial action. It is also a possible response under Section 28 to a category 1 hazard as long as no management order is in place under Part 4 of the Act. There may be circumstances where works of improvement or prohibition of use are not reasonable or practicable in which case a hazard awareness notice might be appropriate.

The procedure does not require further action by the person served with the notice but the Council may consider monitoring any hazard awareness notice that it serves. There is no appeal provision against the notices. The council may serve a hazard awareness notice where a person has agreed to take remedial action and the Council are confident the work will be carried out in a reasonable time. In the event of non-compliance the Council may then take further formal action to remove unacceptable hazards.

Demolition Order

The option to serve a demolition order remains available under Part 9 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended, where this is the appropriate course of action to take in response to category 1 hazards. An appeal can be made to the Residential Property Tribunal within 21 days of service of the order.

Clearance Areas

The provisions of part 9 of the 1985 Act as amended are retained in respect of clearance areas with certain changes to align with the new legislation. The Council can declare a clearance area if it is satisfied that each of the

residential buildings in the area contain one or more category 1 hazards (or that these buildings are dangerous or harmful to the health or safety of the inhabitants as a result of their bad arrangement of the narrowness or bad arrangements of the streets); and any other buildings in the area are dangerous or harmful to the health of the inhabitants.

Power to Charge for Enforcement Action

The Council may decide to make a reasonable charge to recover certain expenses incurred with the taking of enforcement action as mentioned above. The charges may relate to: -

- the inspection of premises
- the consideration of action to be taken
- the service of notices.

The Council is not making charges for enforcement action at the present time.

Informal Action

In most cases the Council will adopt an informal approach to try to resolve matters, in keeping with the Government's Enforcement Concordat. Where an owner or landlord agrees to take the required action, the Council will be prepared to give the person a reasonable amount of time to undertake the necessary action before resorting to formal action.

In some cases a hazard awareness notice might be served to document the process. In some cases however, where for instance there is considered to be a high risk to the health or safety of the occupant or where there are concerns perhaps through previous experience that the owner/landlord will not co-operate, then formal action will be commenced without the need for an informal approach.

The Council has introduced a scheme for the accreditation of landlords within the borough in order to develop closer working relationships enabling greater scope for informal arrangements to be agreed. The Council will promote and provide support to landlords who are prepared to meet agreed standards in terms of management and property conditions.

Situations where a service may not be provided to tenants

The Council will obviously want to assist tenants in securing necessary repairs etc to their homes. However in some circumstances it may not be considered appropriate to offer a service e.g.:

- Where the tenant unreasonably refuses access to the landlord, managing agent or landlord's builder, to arrange or to carry out the works.
- Where the tenant has, in the opinion of the Council, clearly caused the damage to the property and there are no other items of disrepair etc.

- Where the tenant has failed to keep an appointment with the investigating officer and has then not responded to a letter or appointment card requesting them to make further contact.
- Where the tenant is shortly intending to move out of the property.
- Where the tenant is already in the process of taking a private legal action regarding the matter and is pursuing a claim for compensation from the landlord.

Re –Connection Of Services

Statutory powers will be used to ensure the re-connection (or to prevent the disconnection) of the gas, electricity or water supply, to tenanted properties where the tenant is not responsible for payment of the bill.

Where section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is used the cost of re-connection and/or payment of the bill will be charged to the owner.

Harassment/Illegal Eviction

The Protection from Eviction Act 1977 makes it a criminal offence for any person to evict a tenant without following the correct procedure. The act also makes it a criminal offence for a landlord, their agent, or any other person to harass a tenant with the aim of making them leave their home. The Council considers both the harassment and illegal eviction of tenants to be serious matters and will endeavour to give guidance to those who are victims of such actions, and to prosecute offenders in appropriate circumstances.

Caravan Sites

The Council has responsibility for residential caravan sites particularly in relation to the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

The responsibilities include:

- The issuing of site licences for residential caravan sites.
- Liaison with site owners and homeowners regarding contravention of site licence conditions.

Whenever possible an informal approach is used to resolve concerns over site licence conditions, however enforcement action will be considered in appropriate circumstances.

LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Housing Act 2004 contains various new responsibilities and powers for Local Authorities in dealing with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). From 6th April 2006 Councils were required to introduce mandatory licensing schemes for certain higher risk HMOs.

Larger HMOs which include bedsits and shared houses often have poorer physical and management standards than other privately rented properties, and the people who live in them are often amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society. It is therefore considered important that such properties are properly regulated.

HMO definition

A HMO is a building or part of a building such as a flat that: -

- Is occupied by more than one household and where more than one household shares or lacks an amenity – such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities, or
- Is occupied by more than one household and which is a converted building, but not entirely self-contained flats (whether or not some amenities are shared or lacking), or
- Is converted into self-contained flats, but does not meet the requirements of the 1991 Building Regulation, and at least one third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

and if more than one household occupies the building: -

- As their only or main residence, or
- As a refuge for people escaping domestic violence, or
- By students during term time, or
- For other purposes prescribed by the government.

A household is: -

- A single person, or
- A family such as husband and wife, co-habiting couple, same sex couple and related family members e.g. son, daughter, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece etc, or
- Other relationships as prescribed by the government

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 – (SI no 373 2006) gives further guidance on persons to be regarded as forming a single

household and persons to be treated as occupying a property as their only or main residence.

Exemptions

Certain buildings cannot be defined as HMOs, irrespective of whether they meet the definitions above and include: -

- Buildings managed by a Local Authority, Registered Social Landlord, Police, Fire Authority or Health Authority.
- Buildings occupied by religious communities.
- Buildings predominantly owner occupied, including resident landlords where the owner-occupier (and his family) occupies the building (or flat) with no more than two other persons.
- Buildings occupied by only two persons who do not form a single household.

Mandatory Licensing Requirement

The licensing regime is intended to ensure that: -

- Landlords of HMOs are fit and proper persons or employ managers who are fit and proper persons.
- Each HMO is suitable for occupation by the number of people allowed under the licence.
- The standard of management of the HMO is adequate.

HMOs that meet the following definition are required to be licensed: -

- All HMOs of three or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more persons (comprising of at least two households).

Note – “Storey” includes basements and attics if they are occupied, (including by a resident landlord) or have been converted for occupation or are in use in connection with the HMO. Commercial premises, e.g. shops, offices on the ground or any upper floor are also included in the calculation of the number of storeys but not basements in purely commercial use.

See - The Licensing of House in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions) (England) Order 2006 – (SI no 371 – 2006)

Licensing Process

Anyone who owns or manages an HMO that is subject to the Mandatory Licensing requirement must apply to the Council for a licence.

The applicant will be required to complete the Council’s application form as owner or manager of the relevant HMO and must provide any supporting information reasonably required by the Council to enable the Council to exercise their licensing functions.

Upon receipt of an application the Council will decide as soon as reasonably practicable whether any action is required under Part 1 of the Act in relation to the Housing Health and Safety Hazard Rating System (HHSRS), and in any case must do that within a period of 5 years from receiving the application.

The Council will determine applications for licensing in accordance with any existing guidance set down by the Government.

The Council will grant a licence if it is satisfied that: -

- The HMO is reasonably suitable for occupation or can be made suitable for the number of intended occupants.
- The proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person.
- The proposed licence holder is the most appropriate person to hold the licence.
- The proposed manager, if there is one, is a fit and proper person.
- The proposed management arrangements are satisfactory.

The Council may refuse to grant a licence if it does not appear that any or all the above conditions will or can be met.

In approving the licence if the Council deem that the arrangements are unsatisfactory for the proposed number of occupants then it may: -

- Approve the licence for a lesser number of occupants, or
- Impose by condition of the licence that specified works are required within a given timescale to bring the property to a desired standard for the proposed number of occupants.

The Council is required to assess whether the applicant, any manager and any person associated with them or formerly associated with them are a fit and proper people to own or manage an HMO. A person will be considered fit and proper if the Council is satisfied that:

- They have no unspent convictions relating to offences involving fraud, dishonesty, violence, drugs or sexual offences.
- They have not practised unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, race, ethnic or national origins or disability in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business.
- They have no unspent convictions relating to housing or landlord and tenant law.
- They have not been refused an HMO licence, been convicted of breaching the conditions of a licence or have acted otherwise than in accordance with the approval code of practice under S233 of the Act within the last 5 years.
- They have not been in control of a property subject to an HMO Control Order, an Interim Management Order (IMO) or a Final Management Order (FMO) or work in default carried out by a Local Authority within the preceding five years.

- They have not been subject to legal proceedings by a Local Authority for breaches of planning, compulsory purchase, environmental protection or other relevant legislation.
- There is no evidence of any offence referred to above having been committed within the previous five years.

An unspent conviction or other failure is not necessarily automatic grounds for refusing a licence; other circumstances (e.g. training undertaken by the landlord or subsequent co-operation with the Local Authority) will be taken into account. Equally, the legislation refers to evidence of an offence; it is not necessary when refusing to accept someone as a fit and proper person to demonstrate that a conviction has been obtained. Evidence of spent convictions, i.e. those to which the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 applies, is not taken into account.

Where there is evidence of a problem, the Council will invite applicants to submit an explanation of their actions. The applicant will be required to account for the failure to comply with legislation, and satisfy the Council that this will not recur.

The licence if granted, will be for a maximum period of 5 years from the date of approval and will only apply to the particular HMO for which it is granted. The licence cannot be transferred to another person.

The licence will contain various conditions, which may include the following: -

- The production of valid gas safety certificates annually.
- Proof that electrical appliances and furniture are kept in a safe condition.
- The installation, proper siting and proof of maintenance of smoke alarms.
- Each occupier to have a written statement of the terms on which they occupy the property – a tenancy agreement.
- Restrictions or prohibitions on the use of parts of the HMO by occupants.
- Requirement to maintain all facilities and amenities in good repair and working order.
- Requirement to undertake specified works or repairs to be carried out within a specified timeframe.

In deciding on whether or not a HMO is suitable for occupation by a particular maximum number of households the Council will have regard to The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 – (SI no 373 2006) and any other guidance or amenity standards given by the Government or any recognised body e.g. CIEH or any local standards, later agreed by the Council.

Application Fees

The Council will charge a fee based upon the costs reasonably incurred in carrying out the administration of the licensing scheme. The cost of the licence application will be as follows: -

- £ 285 Per HMO (up to 6 habitable rooms)
- £ 295 Per HMO (up to 8 habitable rooms)
- £ 300 Per HMO (up to 10 habitable rooms)
- £ 310 Per HMO (11 or more habitable rooms).

Note – Habitable rooms are living rooms and bedrooms.

Variation or Revocation of a Licence

The Council may vary the terms of a licence at any time during its life in the following circumstances: -

- With the agreement of the licence holder, or
- Following a change in circumstances since the licence was granted.

A change in circumstances would include: -

- The discovery of new information.
- A change in any prescribed standards since the licence was granted.

The licence can be varied either under the Council's initiative or at the request of: -

- The licence holder, or
- Any person having an interest in the property (not tenants with an expired lease of 3 years or less), or
- Any person having control or managing the property, or
- Any person on whom the proposed licence imposes any restriction or obligation.

Where an application to vary a licence comes from any of the above the Council may refuse to do so having given consideration to the reasons for the request.

The Council may revoke a licence (i.e. bring it to an end before expiry by passage of time) in the following circumstances: -

- With the agreement of the licence holder.
- Where there has been serious or repeated breach of licence conditions.
- Where the licence holder or management are no longer deemed to be fit and proper persons to hold the licence or manage the property.
- Where the HMO has not been brought up to the standard required.

Interim and Final Management Orders

In certain circumstances, for example where unlicensed or problem HMOs present a risk to the health, safety or welfare of the occupiers of the property, the Council may apply to take over the management of the property. The owner retains their ownership rights. The Interim Management Order (IMO) lasts for a year to enable suitable permanent management arrangements to be made. If the IMO expires and there has been no improvement then the Council can issue a Final Management Order, which may last up to 5 years and can be renewed.

Appeals

Any person aggrieved by the Council in relation to: -

- Refusal of an HMO licence application
- Imposition of any conditions attached to a licence
- Revocation of a licence
- Variation of a licence
- Refusal to vary a licence
- Making of an Interim or Final Management Order.

can appeal to a Residential Property Tribunal.

Offences

It is an offence for any person who manages or controls an HMO, which is required to be licensed but is not licensed. Upon conviction, they may receive a fine of up to £20,000. It is also an offence for any person having control or managing an HMO to allow the property to be occupied by more people than are permitted by the licence or to fail to comply with licence conditions. In either case they may upon conviction be subject to fines of up to £5,000.

Rent Repayment Orders

Where housing benefit has been paid by the Council in respect of an unlicensed HMO that should have been licensed, the Council may apply to a Residential Property Tribunal for an order that the person authorised to receive rent payments e.g. the landlord, should repay a sum equivalent to the benefit paid. This can be for a period of up to 12 months. Similarly where any occupier has paid rent during a time when the HMO should have been licensed they may also appeal to a Residential Property Tribunal to claim back any rent they may have paid during the unlicensed period, again to a limit of up to 12 months. This can only be done if the Council has been successful earlier in taking proceedings against the person concerned.

Temporary Exemption Notices

The Council can if it deems fit serve a Temporary Exemption Notice (TEN) where a person who is required to hold a licence notifies the Council that they

propose to take steps to secure that the HMO no longer needs to be licensed. The TEN exempts the property from licensing for 3 months from the date the notice is served. If the situation is not resolved a second TEN may be served for a further 3 months. When this notice runs out the property must then either become licensed, cease to be licensable or may become the subject of an Interim Management Order.

Power of Entry

Where the Council considers that entry to premises is required to determine whether it requires a licence any officer duly authorised should be allowed entry at any reasonable time provided that the owner and any occupiers are given at least 24 hours notice.

There is no requirement to give notice where the Council considers that entry to the premises is required for the purpose of determining whether any offence has been committed (for example operating without a licence or breaching the conditions of a licence).

If entry is refused the Council can apply to the court for a warrant authorising entry (by force if necessary).

Register

The Council will provide and maintain a register of: -

- All licenses granted and in force.
- All Temporary Exemption Notices served and in force.
- All Management Orders made and in force.

The register will be available for inspection by the public.

HMO Management Regulations

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 – (SI no 372–2006) apply to all HMOs, not just those which are subject to mandatory licensing. These place responsibilities on those having control of HMOs to ensure proper management and maintenance of amenities, gas, electricity and safety provisions. In addition they require occupants to co-operate with managers of HMOs in the reasonable execution of their duties.

Any person who fails to comply with the regulations commits an offence under Section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004, which is punishable on conviction with a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, currently £5,000.

APPENDIX 4

POLICY FOR WAIVING OR REDUCING THE REPAYMENT OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE

This policy sets out the circumstances under which the Council will consider reducing or waiving the repayment of grant and/or loan assistance provided under its Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy. Decisions in these matters will be taken by the Operational Director for Health and Partnerships.

For the purposes of this policy a “disposal” of premises is a conveyance of the freehold or an assignment of the leasehold title.

Grant Assistance

1. Financial Hardship
A disposal made following such a change in the financial circumstances of the relevant person that he/she would suffer financial hardship if all or part of the amount of grant was repaid.
2. Employment
A disposal made to enable a relevant person to take up employment or to change the place of his/her employment.
3. Health and Well-being
A disposal made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health, or well being, of a relevant person.
4. Provision of Care
A disposal made to enable a relevant person to live with, or near, any person
 - (a) who is disabled or infirm and in need of care which the relevant person is intending to provide: or
 - (b) who is intending to provide care of which the relevant person is in need of by reason of disability or infirmity.
5. Insufficient Disposal Proceeds
Where the disposal proceeds are insufficient to repay any grant due to the Council.
6. Disposal to the Local Authority
A disposal to the Local Authority where the Authority acquires the premises for redevelopment using compulsory powers, or by negotiation with the same intent.

7. Inheritance
A disposal by a relevant person of premises to which an application for grant relates where those premises were vested in that person as a person taking under a will or on an intestacy and where the premises continue to be occupied by that person for the balance of the period specified in the original grant approval.
8. Matrimonial Causes
A disposal pursuant to an order made under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973.
9. Annuity Disposal
A disposal to raise a retirement income from an insurance annuity where the relevant person retains the right to occupy the property until death. The individual must be at least 70 at the time of disposal.

Loan Assistance

If a disposal falls under the provisions of points 6 or 9 above, the Council may consider reducing or waiving any loan assistance that falls due to be repaid.

If a disposal arises as described in point 7 above, the requirement to repay the loan will be deferred until the next relevant disposal, secured by a continuing legal charge against the premises.

Consideration will also be given in circumstances where the disposal proceeds are insufficient to repay any loan due to the Council.

How to Apply

Requests under this policy should be made in writing prior to any circumstances that may result in a breach of grant and/or loan conditions, and be addressed to -

Principal Housing Inspector
Health and Community Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Dee Floor 1
Grosvenor House
Halton Lea
Runcorn WA7 2ED

Additional supporting documentation may be requested to enable a decision to be made. Subject to the speedy supply of such documentation a decision will normally be made within 1 calendar month.

Any person dissatisfied with a decision should use the Council's formal complaints procedure.

APPENDIX 5

SCALE OF FEES

Type of Works	Fee
<u>Minor works Assistance</u>	£200
<u>Care and Repair Agency Services -</u>	
Lifts and equipment only	£200
All other schemes	The higher of £500 or 9% of net contract value (*)
Administration charge for outsourced design consultancy	£200 in addition to (*)
Aborted work on schemes that are fully designed	6% of actual or estimated contract value.

VAT at 17.5% is charged in addition to the above fees.

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review for comment.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That, subject to comment, the review document and revised implementation timetable be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A copy of the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review document has been appended to this report as Appendix 1.

3.2 The Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy was presented to and accepted by Elected Members in July 2001. This year marks a point at which the original landmark dates and objectives, and the progress made against them, have been reviewed.

3.3 The Strategy Review document sets out the progress made in the implementation of the original strategy. The document also revises key objectives and timetables in light of progress, practical experience of the legislation and the Council's changing priorities in dealing with Contaminated Land.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no new policy implications from the review document.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The present level of staffing resource is reflected in the planned objectives for the next five years.

5.2 It is impossible to assess at this stage in the strategy the detailed budgetary requirements needed to implement the contaminated land regime. Increased spending will be incurred in terms of officer time, inspection, investigations and, where necessary, remediation.

5.3 DEFRA maintains a fund for the investigation and remediation of Contaminated Land, the Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme. Where appropriate, bids under this programme will be made to implement the Strategy objectives. To date the Council has applied and successfully received funding totalling £280,000.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The review does not alter the original risk assessment. The main risk is the failure to meet the published landmark dates and failure to accommodate the lack of input by key partners. These risks can be addressed with effective monitoring of progress and effective communication of shared projects and priorities.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 An assessment has been carried out and there are no positive or negative impacts resulting from this review.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2001	Environmental Health or HBC website	Will Watson Principal Contaminated Land Officer



Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review 2006



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the contaminated land provisions contained in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the associated Statutory Guidance, local authorities are required to take a strategic approach to inspecting their areas and to describe and publish this in a written strategy.

The Inspection Strategy document was published in July 2001. Included in the document is a requirement to review progress within four years of publication. Although the review was commenced within that period, major site developments have delayed its publication. Within that time there has been significant developments in implementation of the strategy, several major new guidance and best practice documents and growing pressures relating to land contamination outside of the Strategy. This supplementary document presents the first formal review of the strategy. It details progress made in all areas of the planned implementation of Part IIA, the results and experiences of implementation and sets out the revised objectives.

Since publication of the Strategy a number of key tasks have been completed, primarily associated with the collation, management and assessment of data relating to Contaminated Land. Historical data from maps and reports has been collated and stored using the Council's Geographical Information System. Using the GIS potentially contaminated sites have been identified and significant progress has been made in risk screening and prioritisation of land for detailed assessment.

One major project has been successfully taken through the regulatory process, one of the first such cases to be completed in the country, and a further seven sites are being assessed under the regulations. To date in excess of 250 additional sites have been identified as requiring some form of assessment.

Outside of the formal Contaminated Land process several large projects are also addressing significant Contaminated Land problems. The key project and the focus of considerable resource now and over the next five years is the Mersey Gateway Bridge. This and other large developments are anticipated to tackle many of the potentially contaminated sites, therefore whilst not formally part of the Part IIA process they do form a significant part of the workload for the contaminated land team over the next five years.

The key objectives and timetables from the Strategy document have been revised and up dated in light of the progress made, practical experience of the Contaminated Land process and changing Council priorities.

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

2. IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1 Consultation
- 2.2 Publication
- 2.3 Characterisation of the Borough
- 2.4 Information collection, storage and dissemination
- 2.5 Prioritisation
- 2.6 Inspection
- 2.7 Remediation
- 2.8 Procedures for the implementation of Part IIA

3. RESOURCES

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

5. NON-PART IIA CONTAMINATED LAND ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 Planning
- 5.2 Major development schemes
- 5.3 Understanding the Factors Affecting Health in Halton Report

6. REVISED OBJECTIVES AND TIMESCALES

APPENDICES

I. INTRODUCTION

Under the contaminated land provisions contained in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, each local authority has to “cause its area to be inspected from time to time for the purpose of identifying contaminated land” (Section 78b). If contaminated land is identified that local authority must ensure that it is managed in an appropriate manner. The Secretary of State has issued Statutory Guidance to local authorities on the implementation of Part IIA in England. Part B of this Statutory Guidance requires local authorities to take a strategic approach to inspecting their areas and to describe and publish this in a written strategy.

The inspection strategy sets out how Halton Borough Council proposes to implement its inspection duties under Part IIA. The strategy provides inspection arrangements and procedures, but also a justification for and transparency in Halton’s decisions on how they will inspect their areas for contaminated land. The strategy also sets out to ensure that all those affected by the inspection process have the same clear understanding of the rationale for inspection, how this will be carried out and over what time-scale.

The Inspection Strategy document was published in July 2001. Included in the document is a requirement to review progress within four years of publication. Although the review was commenced within that period, major site developments have delayed its publication. Within that time there has been significant developments in implementation of the strategy, several major new guidance and best practice documents and growing pressures relating to land contamination outside of the Strategy. This supplementary document presents the first formal review of the strategy. It details progress made in all areas of the planned implementation of Part IIA, the results and experiences of implementation and sets out the revised objectives.

The main Inspection Strategy document is still current and it should be read in conjunction with this review. It is intended that the Inspection Strategy will cover a five-year period, this review and associated revised work programme will take the Strategy document to 2011. A new annual review will take place to take progress into account and any major changes in practice or policy.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INSPECTION STRATEGY

The review of the implementation of the Inspection Strategy will look at the key work areas defined in the original document.

- Consultation
- Publication
- Information collection, storage and dissemination
- Characterisation of the Borough
- Prioritisation
- Inspection
- Remediation
- Procedures for the implementation of Part IIA

2.1 CONSULTATION

The Strategy was developed over the fifteen months allocated by the Statutory Guidance from the April 2000 implementation date of the Contaminated Land Regime. The document was widely distributed amongst statutory and non-statutory consultees. A broad a range of local stakeholders and interested parties as possible was included in this process. The Strategy includes a comprehensive list of those consulted. The consultation document was also made available for comment via the Council's website.

The consultation process received a limited response, however where comments were received the views, where appropriate were reflected in the final document.

2.2 PUBLICATION

The Statutory Guidance required that all Local Authorities in England publish their strategy for the implementation of the Contaminated Land Regime within fifteen months of the issuing of the guidance.

Halton Borough Council successfully published the Contaminated Land: Strategy for Inspection in July 2001. Copies of the document were sent to the relevant government department and the Environment Agency. Copies were also made available at local libraries and through the Council's website.

2.3 CHARACTERISATION OF THE BOROUGH

The Strategy sets out the broad characteristics of the Borough of Halton, in terms of environmental setting, land use, historical background and population. Since publication there have not been any major changes to the overall make up of the Borough, and therefore there is no need for revision.

It is worth making reference to the broad re-development objectives in the borough. The Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone, the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Village and the Mersey Gateway river crossing are all key re-development catalysts in Halton that will bring large areas of derelict or underused land into productive use. Section 5 considers the implications of these developments and other factors on the implementation of the Strategy.

2.4 INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

The collation, generation and storage of large amounts of information relating to potentially hundreds of parcels of land is a fundamental element of the Inspection Strategy. It is therefore vital that all the information is handled in a

manner that enables it to be used, interrogated and disseminated in an ordered and rational way.

2.4.1 INFORMATION COLLECTION

The Strategy describes that process of collecting information on potential sources, pathways and receptor to facilitate the identification of areas that may be Contaminated Land and to determine which areas are the priorities for detailed inspection.

Since the publication of the Strategy the Environmental Health Division has reviewed and collated available information held by internal departments relating to the identification and assessment of Contaminated Land. External datasets have also been acquired from individuals, companies and other organisations. The tables in appendix 2 list the full range of datasets now available for use and stored within the Environmental Health Division's Contaminated Land Information Management System.

A significant dataset is now available and contains all the main anticipated data types from all the key sources. This work was completed in the first quarter of 2003, two months behind the original milestone date. This was due to under estimating the time required to identify potentially contaminated land from historical plans, the fact that this stage of the work was integrated with other work elements (prioritisation) and pressures on resources outside of the core Strategy implementation work.

To ensure the Contaminated Land Team maintains the integrity and relevance of the database an annual review of the data sets will be undertaken. It is also likely that from time to time new datasets or sources will become available or accessible. When this occurs the Contaminated Land Team will ensure that the new data is collected and added to the system.

2.4.2 INFORMATION STORAGE

The Inspection Strategy requires that an appropriate system for the storage and accessing of all the information generated through the implementation of the Contaminated Land Regime in Halton be developed and maintained.

The core of this system has been developed in line with the Corporate Geographical Information System (GIS). As described in the Strategy document the use of a GIS is a highly effective method for the types of data used in contaminated land assessment.

Since the publication of the Strategy the storage of information has been developed in two parallel streams. Firstly, multiple data layers have been created within the GIS and stored on a central server location. This allows for the rapid display and interpretation of all data referencing sources, pathways and receptors in the Borough. The central server storage adds functionality through allowing access by multiple users from varied location within the Council structure, and security in reducing the likelihood of catastrophic losses of data.

Secondly, a database, the Contaminated Land Information Management System (CLIMS), has been developed. The core of the database was developed in partnership with the Greater Merseyside Local Authorities using best practice and key guidance documents on the management of Part IIA and Contaminated Land. Subsequently the Halton Borough Council Contaminated Land Team within the Environmental Health Division has refined the database to reflect the exact system requirements for Halton.

The CLIMS database is designed to record all actions, decisions and documents associated with individual sites as they progress through the Part IIA process. It will provide clear chains of evidence and decision processes, which are vital to the effective management of Contaminated Land and in particular, the Regulatory requirements of implementing Part IIA.

Further development of the CLIMS database will occur over the next twelve months to take the recently published guidance into account and to reflect the practical, day-to-day experiences of the implementation of Part IIA.

2.4.4 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The Contaminated Land Team within Environmental Health undertakes the core of all Part IIA work. However, there is a clear need to ensure that there is an effective route to communicating the results of Part IIA assessments and the broader information on land contamination both internally and externally.

Internally the Contaminated Land Team has set up links with all departments that have an input to the management of Contaminated Land. This enables a simple two way process for the sharing of information and advice. The Planning, Highways and Landscape Services Departments have been the most involved and strong links at management and individual officer level have been forged.

The Council has developed a Contaminated Land Communication Strategy (presented in Appendix 1) to enable a clear and consistent approach to be taken when dealing with external parties. Key to this Communication Strategy is the early involvement of all stakeholders in the process, particularly at critical decision stages.

The creation of the CLIMS database and GIS layers has enabled the development of a fast and effective external contaminated land information service. External requests received by the Contaminated Land Team are responded to by producing an individual report including information on land use, known site investigation details and an overall assessment of the potential risks associated with the queried site or property. This ties into the recently enacted Freedom of Information Act and the Access to Environmental Information Regulations. The application developed by the

section is also being used as a model for other Local Authorities across the region.

The Council also maintains a Public Register of regulatory actions under Part IIA as required by the legislation.

There is a need to further develop the information sharing protocols and to raise the degree of public involvement and ownership of the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. The first stages have been to raise awareness through public forums (the Council's system of Area Panels). However, further awareness of the Strategy and the associated work must be developed and improved over the next five years. A key task for the next twelve months is to improve the relevant sections of the Council website. This will include full details of the Strategy, guidance documents, how to obtain further information and online forms for requesting information and making comments. It is still extremely important to be considered at all stages of the implementation of the Strategy the potential effects of uncontrolled and poorly interpreted information. The Council must ensure that unnecessary blighting of land and prejudicing of development does not occur.

2.5 PRIORITISATION

The Strategy describes in broad terms the methodology for the prioritisation of the potentially contaminated sites identified in the information collection stage. Since its publication Halton Borough Council has worked in partnership with the Greater Merseyside Local Authorities, through the Contaminated Land Officers Group, to develop a suitable system.

The system has several stages that needed to be completed systematically for the whole borough. It was decided not to sub-divide the borough into different priority zones, because the overall area of the Borough is not that great and, although there are parts of the borough where it is more likely that contamination is present, there is the potential for significant problems in any

ward. The methodology developed is a screening level risk assessment that prescribes to the source-pathway-receptor concept in determining whether land is contaminated.

The first stage was the identification of potentially contaminative land uses from the historical ordnance survey plans. A GIS tool was developed to allow this to be completed in a set manner and as consistently as possible. The process generated a site within each period, or epoch, of mapping and an associated land use hazard score. In total, across all nine epochs, in excess of 20000 features have been identified. The full list of land uses and their hazard scores is contained in Appendix 2.

The second phase of the prioritisation methodology involved comparing the potentially contaminative land uses to information on pathways and receptors. Using the hazard score and the proximity to sensitive receptors each polygon was assigned to either Group A, B or C, depending on the level of risk. The Group A sites are the highest risk category, Group B medium and Group C the lower risks sites. The prioritisation methodology is reproduced in Appendix 3.

These data contain some duplication of individual sites, as the information was captured from the different map series, so in order to convert it into a single data layer the information was combined to produce a 'risk contour' map for the Borough. The plan showing the Group A areas is presented in Appendix 4.

These risk zones were then compared to present day boundaries and individual sites created. Given the size of the data set the Group A sites were characterised first.

The original scheduled completion date for prioritisation of all identified potentially contaminated sites was July 2003. To date this task has not been completed. This is part due to the task being considerably more complex than

originally predicted and additionally the nature of the Borough and the method used has made it difficult to define individual sites from the risk-contoured plan of the Borough. Furthermore, the number of reactive cases, from a Part IIA perspective and development control, redirected resources away from the process.

To date the highest scoring sites from Group A and Group B have been identified. Within each risk group each site is assigned a score between 1 and 15, 15 being the highest risk (sites with scores between 4 and 15 have been formally identified). Appendix 5 contains a plan of the priority sites in Runcorn and Widnes. Group A and B site identification will be completed by September 2006.

A new target of July 2007 has been set for the completion of the identification of the Group C sites.

2.6 INSPECTION

2.6.1 DETAILED INSPECTION OF SITES

The methodology and procedures for undertaking the detailed inspection of potentially contaminated land that Halton Borough Council will follow are set out in the Local Authority Guide to the Application of Part IIA and the Model Procedures for the Management of Contaminated Land. These documents have been published since the Inspection Strategy was originally produced. The section on procedures gives further details.

The detailed inspection under Part IIA has been completed for one area, Oakfield Drive and Lakeside Close, Widnes. This inspection was initiated in response to information gained from re-development on neighbouring land,

rather than from the prioritisation method as described in the preceding section. However, the appropriate actions were taken within the Part IIA regulatory framework. The investigations resulted in 13 separate determinations of Contaminated Land, and ultimately formal remediation.

A further four inspections are currently ongoing as a result of long-term problem sites. Whilst these sites were not formally derived from the Inspection Strategy prioritisation, as Council involvement pre-dates the writing of the Strategy, they all feature highly on the priority list.

Three sites have also been selected from the priority list for detailed inspection as a result of the recommendations contained within the 'Understanding the factors effecting health in Halton' research document commissioned by Halton Borough Council in 2004.

Sites pre-dating the Inspection Strategy	St Michael's Golf Course
	Johnsons Lane Landfill
	Weston Quarries
	Hedco Landfill
New sites scheduled for detailed inspection	Runcorn Hill Quarry
	Stenhills Quarry
	Waterloo Road area

The original schedule for initiating detailed inspections of key sites was set at commencing in July 2003. Detailed inspection resulting from the prioritisation of the borough was commenced in January 2005. However, four inspections

had been initiated prior to July 2003 through reactive work or ongoing commitments to sites.

Practical experience of the inspection process to date has shown that twelve to eighteen months is reasonable to reach a point where a determination of land as Contaminated Land can be made. This period reflects the very complex and thorough nature of the Part IIA process. Therefore in setting out milestones for the detailed inspection of the high priority sites it is difficult to predict the likely timescales required to complete each inspection. With current resources it is practicable to manage eight to ten sites at any given time.

At this stage the key milestone for the next five years is to have initiated and completed the detailed inspection of 25% of the highest priority sites. Projecting that requirement over the next five years gives a target of achieving the inspection of ten sites per year.

A critical point is that the priority list includes several sites that are likely to be assessed outside of Part IIA. For example the requirements placed on sites through the planning regime will ensure appropriate assessment is undertaken allowing them to be included in the total list of inspected sites.

Over the next five years the single greatest priority, non-Part IIA site with contaminated land implications is the Mersey Gateway. All the land along its route will need to be assessed and much of it is likely to require at least basic remediation.

2.6.2 INSPECTION OF SPECIAL SITES

Many of the potentially contaminated land sites in Halton have pollutant linkages that require investigation that may make them Special Sites (as

defined by the legislation). This is largely due to potential effects on watercourses and the major aquifer in the Sherwood Sandstone Group lithologies under much of the borough. Special Sites are ultimately regulated by the Environment Agency and they may in fact undertake the inspection process on behalf of the Council. Therefore, it is possible that the inspection of a high proportion of higher risk sites will be closely linked to the workload and resources available to the local Environment Agency office.

Halton is working with the Environment Agency in order to highlight as early as possible those sites where their involvement is required, however there may be situations where Halton's resources and work programme do not match up with those available from the Environment Agency. This should be noted as a potential issue in progressing inspections at the projected rate.

2.7 REMEDIATION

The overarching concepts for the regulation and the standard of remediation of Contaminated Land through the process of Part IIA have not changed since the first issue of the Strategy. Additional guidance and best practice on determining the most appropriate and cost effective form of remediation has been produced by the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and changes in technology and legislation have made an impact on the remedial options available. However, there is no requirement for significant changes in the processes set in the Strategy document, as each site will have its own specific requirements for remediation.

Since the publication of the Strategy, Halton Borough Council has implemented the remediation of thirteen determined properties (Oakfield Drive and Lakeside Close). After a written agreement was completed, remediation was undertaken by the Council on behalf of the appropriate persons, in this

case the owners of the properties. Remediation Statements for each of the remediated properties have been issued and copies placed on the Public Register.

The remediation strategy for the Oakfield / Lakeside properties was initiated in November 2003 and completed by June 2004.

Within the original Strategy document milestone it was anticipated that remediation of determined sites would commence in late 2003. In revising the objectives and timescales for the next five years it is impracticable to set dates for achieving remediation of sites as it is unknown how many will actually require remediation and if necessary the time for implementation will vary greatly from site to site.

2.8 PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PART IIA

The Council utilises the extensive national guidance contained within the Statutory Guidance and the Local Authority Guide to the Application of Part IIA (produced by DEFRA, the Environment Agency, the Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) in undertaking the specific stages and activities in implementing the Contaminated Land Regime. At this stage Halton Borough Council has not developed unique internal procedural guidance.

Halton Borough Council is currently working in partnership with a number of other local authorities in the region to develop a series of best practice notes and standard documents to compliment the national guidance. The development of these documents forms a rolling programme over the next one to two years. The first piece of work will cover the early stages of the Part IIA framework, site identification, investigation and determination.

3. RESOURCES

The Environmental Protection Group currently has three officers actively involved in Contaminated Land work.

- Contaminated Land Officer – main point of contact for land contamination and the implementation of Part IIA
- Technical Officer (Contaminated Land) – Part IIA project work and liaison with development control.
- Technical Support Officer (Contaminated Land) – management and development of the information systems used in the section

The present level of staffing resource is reflected in the planned objectives for the next five years.

It is impossible to assess at this stage in the strategy the detailed budgetary requirements needed to implement the contaminated land regime. Increased spending will be incurred in terms of officer time, inspection, investigations and where necessary remediation.

DEFRA maintains a fund for the investigation and remediation of Contaminated Land, the Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme. Where appropriate bids under this programme will be made to implement the Strategy objectives. To date the Council has applied and successfully received funding for two sites, totalling £280,000.

Over the course of the current financial year it is expected that funding in excess of £750,000 will be sought for both investigations and remedial work.

The cost of preliminary non-intrusive investigations are not grant funded from central government and will need to be funded from revenue. Some will be

undertaken in house using current resources but it is likely that a majority will need the assistance of external consultants costing up to £10,000 per site.

A budget review will be undertaken in the 2006/2007 fiscal year, identifying the financial resource requirements for the timetabled inspection of higher risk sites. With the current projected work load (see section 6) the implementation of the Strategy could cost in the order of £30,000.

Annual review in November will allow appropriate priorities to be made in each forthcoming years budget.

4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Section 6 sets out the detailed targets for the progression of the Inspection Strategy, based on the key activities of prioritisation, detailed inspection of individual sites and the remediation of those identified as Contaminated Land.

In addition to Halton's specific Strategy targets, the Government has added two new Best Value Performance Indicators for Contaminated Land from the year 2005-06 onwards. All Local Authorities must record and report on the total number of Site of Concern, i.e. sites where it is suspected that there may be a land contamination issue, known to the Council at the beginning of the year and keep track of all the sites where enough information is gathered to allow a decision on whether remediation is required or not. The information on sites of concern can come from any source; therefore this will include sites assessed under the Part IIA regime and those dealt with through the Planning Process.

The indicators reported upon at the year-end are BV216a, the total number of sites of concern, and BV216b, the number of sites with sufficient information expressed as a percentage of the total.

As 2005-06 is the first year of reporting the new performance indicators there is not a clear baseline of data available to set the specific local targets. The targets need to be realistically achievable, whilst showing genuine progression. Therefore based on the data currently held by the Environmental Health Section and rate of review and assessment of potentially contaminated sites, the table below presents the 1005-06 return and the targets for the next two years.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
BV216a	283	250	500
BV216b	9%	8%	5%

For the 2007-08 it is expected that the total number of 'Sites of Potential Concern' will rise significantly as the prioritisation work is completed over the next twelve months.

The rate of assessment of sites is predicted to be in the order of 25 sites per annum. This is based on the experience to date of the very thorough, complex and slow process of assessing sites through Part IIA and the rate of sites passing through the planning system that have potential land contamination issues.

The targets will be reviewed on an annual basis, the second year of reporting will be particularly important as at this point there will be both a baseline of sites and practical experience of the reporting process allowing a better assessment of the targets set.

5. NON-PART IIA CONTAMINATED LAND ACTIVITIES

5.1 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

New development and the associated Planning Processes are a major contributing factor in the management and remediation of land contamination. It is nationally anticipated that a significant proportion of all contamination issues will be dealt with in this way.

As a result of the information and expertise held within the Contaminated Land Team, officers are closely involved in the Planning process at each key stage. Officers have been involved in the production of the emerging Unitary Development Plan, a standard condition for planning approvals has been developed and the Contaminated Land Team provides daily support to Planning Officers, Building Control Consultants and to applicants and their agents.

The Contaminated Land Team commits significant amount of its resource to the Planning Process in reviewing and approving investigations and remediation schemes, providing in depth consultation with Planning Applicants and their agents, as well as site visits and monitoring of progress and adherence to agreed working plans.

Although this process has led to the effective remediation of many sites without the need for the use of Part IIA, it has placed a considerable workload on the Contaminated Land Team, diverting resources away from the specific objectives of the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. However, in order to maintain the steady progress being made on site investigation and remediation through development the Contaminated Land Team will continue to deliver this high standard of support to the process.

5.2 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Linked to the re-development and the planning process described in the preceding section are the major re-development schemes emerging in the Borough. These include the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone, the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park and the Mersey Gateway bridge proposals. These are all major schemes that have significant land contamination issues.

As discussed in section 2 the Mersey Gateway is the Council's absolute priority. Resolving the contaminated land issues is one of the key elements of the early phases of the project. It is therefore anticipated that putting resources from the Contaminated Land Team into the Gateway project will impact on other Part IIA and non-Part IIA projects.

The Contaminated Land Team has contributed to each scheme, often in close liaison with the Regeneration Department. It is anticipated that a continuing commitment to these will be required over the next five years.

5.3 UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH IN HALTON REPORT

In August 2003 Lancaster University published its report on the research commissioned by the Halton Health Partnership to understand the factors causing the poor quality health statistics in the Borough.

The report covered a wide range of issues, and land contamination was considered. Although the report did not identify any direct health consequences of land contamination (this was outside the scope of the research), it did make a key recommendation.

The report specifically set out a requirement to accelerate the programme of inspection and assessment of the borough as set out in the Inspection Strategy. It also recommended that detailed assessments of the identified high-risk areas must be started within two years of the publication date of the report.

In order to assist in this process some funding has been made available for the two-year period following the report publication. However this funding is limited and the requirement to fulfil the recommendation means there are additional pressures on the Contaminated Land Team.

6 REVISED AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND TIMESCALES

From the review and assessment of the original document taking into account the achievements to date, the practical experiences of implementing the Contaminated Land Regime, the current resource levels and the predicted non-Part IIA workload, the following section sets out the revised aims and the projected work programme for the next five years.

AIM	TIMEFRAME
Complete the identification of the Group A sites from the risk contour maps	September 2006
Complete the identification of the Group B sites from the risk contour maps	September 2006
Complete the identification of the Group C sites from the risk contour maps	July 2007
Complete the Detailed Inspection of 25% of the Group A sites	March 2010
Complete and refine the CLIMS database	July 2006
Develop standard procedures based on CLR II and the Local Authority Guide	March 2007
Develop Standard Documents the key stages of Part IIA	March 2007
Develop improved public consultation and communication process and tools, including advice leaflets and website.	July 2006
Seek the timely remediation of site formally determined as Contaminated Land	Rolling target dependant site specifics (see individual annual objectives)

6.1 2006-07 WORK PROGRAMME

The following work objectives are the key outcomes for the 2006-07 year for Part IIA activities. Note that this does not include the expected workload from development and other major schemes within the borough.

OBJECTIVE	DETAIL
1	Issue determination as Contaminated Land for St Michael's Golf Course
2	Issue determination as Contaminated Land for Weston Quarries
3	Complete second phase of detailed inspection for Waterloo Road area
4	Complete second phase of detailed inspection for Stenhills Quarry
5	Complete second phase of detailed inspection for Runcorn Hill Quarry
6	Complete second phase of detailed inspection for Hedco Landfill
7	Complete first phase of detailed inspection for Johnson's Lane Landfill
8	Complete first phase of review for 2 Group A sites

6.2 MERSEY GATEWAY

Running in parallel with the work programme for the implementation of Part IIA is the programme for the approval and construction of the Mersey Gateway.

The current timetable for the project has a completion date of 2014. The construction phase is scheduled to start in 2011. From the present to the construction start date the time is required for the planning application and public enquiry stages. Therefore the contaminated land issues must be fully investigated and assessed for these stages. Much of this work must be completed in the next 2 years.

APPENDIX I
CONTAMINATED LAND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY CONTAMINATED LAND

1.0 STAKEHOLDERS

1.1 Who must we talk to in the first instance?

- Local residents immediately affected
- Relevant HBC staff
- Health
- Ward councillors, Executive Board member and Leader

1.2 Who else may we need to communicate with?

- Media
- The wider community
- Partners / developers
- Pressure groups
- Previous residents

2.0 KEY THEMES FOR MESSAGES

2.1 What are the main headings for messages that need to be considered?

- The legislation
- Halton Borough Council's role
- How it affects the residents
- Health implications and advice
- Liability
- Financial implications
- Next steps
- How will we communicate
- Contact information

3.0 HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE AND WHEN?

The key to successful communications is that messages must be **clear, consistent, timely** and **regular**. It is therefore vital that prior to **any** form of communication taking place, there is clarity over what information is being provided.

3.1 With residents?

Methods

Personal visits

Letters

Information leaflet

Telephone calls

Once a concern has been identified by the Borough Council, and where it is feasible, **personal visits** should be undertaken to individual residents to explain the situation. Bullet points should be prepared in advance so that the messages remain consistent.

These bullet points should form part of a **letter** that can either be left with the resident or mailed shortly afterwards.

Areas to include;

- A summary of the legislation
- Halton Borough Council involvement
- Next steps, incl. requests for testing
- Health implications and advice (in general terms at this stage)
- Contact details

It is important to consider timing here. Try to avoid visits or letters arriving on Fridays as it leaves residents with a weekend where they cannot contact anyone for further information, advice or reassurance.

Once more information about what substances are involved, test results and potential remediation is known, an **information leaflet** should be drafted and given to residents for reference.

It is preferable not to give test results in isolation. A generic leaflet can be established and specific information then added as required. This should be given to residents with **written confirmation** of their results.

The information leaflet would include:

- Work to date
- What the results mean
- Health & safety advice
- Remediation possibilities
- Liability
- Financial implications
- Contact information

It is vital that residents do not feel abandoned so an **update letter** at regular intervals (to be determined) should be issued regardless of whether there is any fresh information. A simple reiteration of contact details would remind residents that we are still aware of and working on the situation.

Issues surrounding **liability and finance** are best dealt with **in writing** to avoid any confusion or doubt with letters approved by the Legal department. However, the principles of liability will have already been covered in the information leaflet.

A **letter** explaining the remediation process should also be drafted detailing what will happen, when, who is carrying it out, how long it will take, what will be replaced and contact details.

Once remediation has taken place, a final **personal visit** should be arranged to ensure residents are comfortable with what has happened. This should be accompanied by a **letter** of thanks for their patience and again reiterating contact details should they have any concerns or questions in the future.

3.2 With Halton Borough Council Staff

Methods

E-mail
Telephone
Briefings

Contact should be made as soon as possible with the Press & PR and Risk & Emergency Planning departments.

However, it may also be necessary, depending on the site of the contamination, to contact other departments whose staff may come into contact with the contaminate through their work.

3.3 With Health**Methods**

Through established links.

Any statements we wish to include in our communication material that relate to the nature of the substances and potential health implications and advice should be approved by a health rep.

3.4 With Elected Members**Methods**

Letter
Telephone
E-mail

Ward councillors, the appropriate Executive Board member and the Leader (for information only purposes) should be advised of the initial situation. As not all are regular users of the e-mail, a letter is preferable.

3.5 With the Media

Although a proactive approach would be preferable in terms of explaining why the Council is taking a particular line of action, this is complicated by issues of resident confidentiality.

This ultimately means that in such situations, we will have to be reactive. Generic statements can be prepared in advance, however.

3.6 With the Wider Community**Methods**

Letters
Personal Visits
Civic Magazine

This stakeholder group can be split into two parts – the wider community in terms of extensions to testing regimes and in terms of the community of Halton as a whole.

In the first instance, a **letter** should be prepared and delivered by hand if feasible to residents whose properties may need to be included in the testing regime.

Any further communication should follow the procedures outlined earlier.

In terms of advising the community as a whole about the legislation and our involvement in it, it would be worth considering an in-depth feature in the Council's **civic magazine** at an appropriate time (perhaps in the September edition).

3.7 With Previous Residents

Methods

Letter

It may be necessary in some cases to contact ex-residents of properties to advise them of any potential health implications. A letter should be drafted where appropriate and in conjunction with a health representative.

3.8 With Remaining Stakeholders

Communication may need to be carried out with other stakeholders and should be co-ordinated as and when necessary.

4.0 GENERIC COMMUNICATION MATERIAL TO DEVELOP

4.1 The Press & PR Unit will help to develop these forms of communication based on information provided by Environmental Health Officers.

- Initial letter to residents
- Information leaflet
- Written confirmation of results and implications
- Update letter
- Liability & financial implications letter
- Remediation process letter
- Closure letter (at end of process)
- Media statements
- Letter to previous residents

APPENDIX 2

**DATASETS HELD WITHIN THE CONTAMINATED LAND
INFORMATION SYSTEM**

A. Receptors

I Groundwater

"Ground Water Source Protection Zones"
"Abstraction"
"Grnd Water Abstractions"
"Aquifer Designations"

II Controlled Surface Water

"Landline Surface Water"

III Development

"Schools"
"Allotments"
"Play Areas"
"Open Spaces"
"Residential Developments"
"Industrial Development"
"SSSI"
"Locally designated sites"
"Forestry"
"Agricultural"
"Buildings (listed)"
"Ancient woodland"
"Recreation Areas"

B Sources

"Epoch 1 Landuse History"
"Epoch 1 (6 Inch Scale Map) Landuse History"
"Epoch 2 Landuse History"
"Epoch 3 Landuse History"
"Epoch 4 Landuse History"
"Epoch 5 Landuse History"
"Epoch 6 Landuse History"
"Epoch 7 Landuse History"
"Epoch 8 Landuse History"
"Epoch 1 Landuse History"
"PartA processes"
"PartB processes"
"Landfill Sites"

Environmental Search System

A. Historic Datasets

"Epoch 1 Landuse History"
"Epoch 1 (6 Inch Scale Map) Landuse History"
"Epoch 2 Landuse History"
"Epoch 3 Landuse History"
"Epoch 4 Landuse History"
"Epoch 5 Landuse History"
"Epoch 6 Landuse History"
"Epoch 7 Landuse History"
"Epoch 8 Landuse History"
"Historic Landfill Sites"

B. Current Processes Datasets

"Derelict Land Survey (1993) Listed Sites"
"Brownfield Sites"
"Part A Processes"
"Part B Processes"
"Registered Radioactive Sources"
"HSE Registered Hazardous Sites"
"EVC Operational Pipelines"
"ICI Operational Pipelines"
"Shell Operational Pipelines"
"Transco Operational Pipelines"
"Other Operational Pipelines"
"Private Water Abstractions"
"Licensed Water Abstractions"

C. Environmental Datasets

"Site Investigations Carried Out"
"Fluvial Flood Risk Zones"
"Tidal Flood Risk Zones"
"Drift Geology"
"Solid Geology"
"RAMSAR Sites"
"Nature Conservation Sites"

APPENDIX 3

RISK PRIORITISATION MODEL

MERSEYSIDE CONTAMINATED LAND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: ANALYSIS MODULE

RISK PRIORITISATION MODEL: SPECIFICATION

The aim of the model is to identify areas of land which could pose a threat to human health or environmental receptors-either from current or historical use-and then to prioritise these areas in order to plan further investigations and assessments in a systematic way. The approach is a probabilistic one rather than proving.

The model will utilise the pollutant linkage concept (source-pathway-receptor) generating potential pollutant linkages by investigating the spatial correlation between potential contamination sources and receptors. The correlation may be:

- coincidence (occupying the same space); or
- influential (assumed or known zone of influence)

Information Requirements

Source Datasets

These shall include all datasets in the Local Surveys set outlined in the MIS project brief.

Receptor Datasets

These shall include all sets (except Groundwater Vulnerability) in the Hydrogeology and Land-Use datasets, as outlined in the brief. Ground water vulnerability maps are available in digital form, although the 1:100,000 scale effectively renders them unsuitable for use within this module. Mapping of source protection zones is only available off the Environment Agency's web site. If vector data for groundwater vulnerability and source protections zones become a feasible option they could be included in the system at a later date.

Pathway Datasets

There are likely to be difficult problems in mapping pathways on a GIS. Drift and solid geological maps at the 1: 10000 scale lack sufficient detail at site specific level to warrant their purchase and use within the module. Thus, for the time being, geological datasets shall not be included in this model.

Classification of Datasets

A first stage in the analysis will be to classify both source and receptor datasets. Potentially contaminative land-uses will be classified into three risk categories, which shall be re-named as Priority Classes, based upon an index of perceived risk (Syms, 1999) These classes (High, Medium & Low) shall represent the potential for contaminative substances to be present at concentrations which are likely to require remedial action if the site is to be redeveloped and have been established using formalised professional

judgement based on the industries concerned and indicate the likelihood of contaminative substances being present at concentrations which may result in 'significant harm' being caused, or may result in pollution of controlled waters.

Industries have been categorised with regard to the guidance in the Syms document. Those industries not listed in the latter text but included within the keycode list have been assigned a category based upon comparison with industries of similar polluting potential. Table 1 below shows an amended form of the EAS keycodes incorporating the risk classification (amendments are in bold italics).

Code	Keywords	Description	Priority Class
AB	ABATTOIR	Animal slaughtering and basic processing	HIGH
AF	ANFOD	Manufacture of pet foods or animal foodstuffs	HIGH
AN	ANIMAL	Animal by-products (i.e. animal parts) e.g. soap, candles & bone works	HIGH
AS	ASBESTOS	Asbestos Manufacture and use.	HIGH
BU	BURAN	Burial of diseased livestock	HIGH
CH	CHEM	Manufacture of cosmetics, manure, fertilizers & pesticides, detergents, oil, organic-based pharmaceuticals, other incl. glues, gelatines, recording tapes, photographic film	HIGH
DT	DRUM	Drum and tank cleaning	HIGH
FY	FOUNDRY	Furnaces & Metal processing/casting/forges/smelting-Ferro and Aluminum Alloys-Manganese Works, Slag Works	HIGH
GA	GAS	Gasworks, coke works, coal carbonisation and similar sites. Production of gas from coal, lignite, oil or other carbonaceous material other than waste	HIGH
	OR	OIL	
		Oil Refining Petrochemical production and storage.	HIGH
HM	HM WORKS	Heavy product manufacture-rolling & drawing of iron, steel & ferroalloys-includes major Tube Works	HIGH
MD	MOD	All Military Establishments incl. Firing Ranges (if not specified as Civilian)	HIGH
MG	MAG	Civilian manufacture & storage of weapons, ammunition, explosives & rockets, incl. ordnance	HIGH
OL(<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	OIL	Major oil & petrol storage (not including refining or production) and all gasometers which are not in gasworks	HIGH
PA	PAINT	Paints, varnishes, printing inks, mastics, sealants & creosote	HIGH
PL	PLATING	Electro-plating, Galvanising & Anodising	HIGH
RA	RADIO	Storage, processing or disposal of radioactive material	HIGH
SP	SCRAP	Recycling of metal waste incl. scrapyards and car breakers	HIGH
TY	TANNERY	Tannery, leather goods and skinnery	HIGH
XI	LAND INCIN	Incinerators-waste management operations	HIGH
TA	TAR	Tar, bitumen, linoleum, vinyl and asphalt works.	HIGH
TR	TIMBER	Timber treatment.	HIGH
XL	LANDFILL	Landfill waste-the deposit of waste in, on or above land	HIGH
BK	BRICK	Manufacture of clay bricks & tiles, including assoc. activities e.g. brickfields, also solitary kilns (other than limekilns)	MEDIUM
BT	BATT	Batteries, accumulators, primary cells, electric motors, generators & transformers	MEDIUM
CC	C&C	Coal storage/depot	MEDIUM
CE	CEMENT	Concrete, cement, lime & plaster products, also includes solitary lime kilns	MEDIUM
CR	CERAMICS	Tableware & other ceramics	MEDIUM

CONTAMINATED LAND INSPECTION STRATEGY
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CY	COLLIERY	Coal mining. Areas include assoc. surface activities in area but not including spoil heaps or coal mine shafts (<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	MEDIUM
DE	DEGREASING	Premises housing surface cleaning and degreasing operations	MEDIUM
DK	DOCKS	Boat-building, wharf and quays, cargo/transport handling facilities - marine or inland	MEDIUM
DP	DEPOT	Transport Depot, Road Haulage, Corporation Yards, Commercial vehicle fuelling.	MEDIUM
DY	DYE	Dye & pigments	MEDIUM
FU	FUEL	Sale of automotive fuel	MEDIUM
GG	GARAGE	Repair & sale of (i) cars & bikes (ii) parts (iii) motorway services	MEDIUM
GL	GLASS	Flat glass and glass products manufacture	MEDIUM
HS	HOUSE	Manufacturing of electrical and electronic appliances	MEDIUM
HT	HEAVY TRANS	Manufacturing & repair incl. (i) ships (ii) aerospace (iii) rail engines and rolling stock	MEDIUM
LT	L TRANS	Manufacture of cars, lorries, buses, motorcycles & bicycles	MEDIUM
LY	LAUNDRY	Laundries & dry cleaning (larger scale not usually "high street")	MEDIUM
MA	MACH	Manufacturing of engines, building & general industrial machinery, incl. nuts & bolts, gas fittings, wire rope/cable and ordnance accessories	MEDIUM
MN	MINE	Areas of mining and single or a group of shafts other than coal, or not specified-incl. levels, adits, etc. Also areas assoc. with Mineral Railways	MEDIUM
MP	METAL PROD	Constructional steelwork, metal structures & products & building materials	MEDIUM
NW	NEWS	Printing of newspapers	MEDIUM
OF(<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	OUTFALL	Outfalls incl. Warm water, industrial effluent, etc. unless directly attached to other feature e.g. end of sewer pipe	MEDIUM
PN	PRINTERS	Printing other than News Print	MEDIUM
PR	PAPER	Pulp, paper & cardboard manufacture	MEDIUM
PS	PLASTICS	All plastic goods, incl. building, packaging, tubing, moulding and extrusion, fibre glass and fibre glass resin and products, excluding the manufacture of Tar, Bitumen & Asphalt	MEDIUM
PW	POWER	Electricity generation and distribution, incl. large Transfer Stations	MEDIUM
QU	QUARRY	Quarrying of all stone (incl. limestone, gypsum, chalk & slate) and ores, includes all opencast mining & slant workings also slate/slab works, flint works, stone yards	MEDIUM
RB	RUBBER	Natural and Synthetic Rubber Products incl. tyres and rubber products	MEDIUM
RL	RLAND	Rail sidings, Yards, Rail Wharf, Goods Depot, Station etc.	MEDIUM
RW	RAILWAY	Railway Tracks-up to 4 tracks wide or 30m.	MEDIUM
SL	SLUDG	Storage treatment or disposal of sludge including sludge from water treatment works	MEDIUM
SW	SEWERAGE	Sewerage, septic-tanks, effluent-incl. all filter beds	MEDIUM
TX	TEXTILES	Natural and man-made textile manufacture and products including Hemp rope and linoleum	MEDIUM
XO	OTH LNDFIL	Other waste facilities (e.g. clean and dirty manufacture)	MEDIUM
XT	LAND TRAN ST	Waste transfer stations	MEDIUM
WR	WIRES	Insulated wire & cable for electrical/telephone purposes	MEDIUM
AP	AIRPORT	Air & space transport	LOW
AR	AIR	Air Shafts	LOW
BW	BREW	Brewing and malting	LOW
CS	CO MN SHAFT	Coal mine shafts	LOW

DG	D GROUND	Disturbed ground >200m in one dimension	LOW
DL	DISTILL	Spirit distilling & compounding	LOW
DM	DEMOL	Demolition of building, plant or equipment used for any of the activities in the schedule	LOW
ES	ELSUB	Electricity sub-station	LOW
FD	FOOD	Major food processing includes large Dairies. Exceptionally large scale Corn/Flour milling	LOW
FL	FLOOD	Areas 'Liable to Flood'-shown as point features central to flooding area	LOW
GV	GRAVE	Cemetery, modern burial grounds and grave yards	LOW
HE	HEAVY ELEC	Manufacturing of distribution, telecomms, medical, navigation, metering & lighting	LOW
HL	HOSPITAL	All Hospitals including sanatoriums but not lunatic asylums	LOW
HP	HEAP	Must be assoc. with relevant industry-incl. spoil & slag-use symbology and assoc. features to identify heap boundary (except for colliery spoil heap- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	LOW
LB	LAB	Various-technical & environmental testing & analysis	LOW
LE	LIGHT ELEC	Computers, office machinery, business/industrial electrical goods	LOW
ML	MINERALS	Abrasives, and products (not including Asbestos)	LOW
MR	MRAIL	Mineral Railways also known as 'Tramways' or inclines-not incl. urban passenger 'Tramways'	LOW
PD	P PROD	Paper, card, etc. products (e.g.packaging)	LOW
PP	P	Above ground pipelines other than sewerage	LOW
WA	D DITCH	Drainage ditches are often identified by straight parallel lines creating a boundary line of a field or fields	LOW
WC	CANAL	Canals are often identified by OS text (e.g. Leeds & Liverpool Canal)	LOW
WD	WOOD	Sawmills and manufacture of wood products (excluding treatment).	LOW
WO	OTH WAT	All other water features on the site incl. marshes, wells, springs and sluices	LOW
WP	POND	Surface ponds often located within a field surrounded by trees	LOW
WS	STREAM	Surface streams are often identified by irregular parallel lines and an arrow to show directional flow of the stream	LOW
WV	RIVER	Rivers are often identified by OS text (e.g. River Mersey)	LOW
WK	WORKS	Factory & Works-use not specified	LOW
PT	PIT	Extraction of alluvial sediments (sand, clay, peat, marl and gravel) (not used as conflicts with QU QUARRY- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	*
RF	REFUSE	Refuse and waste disposal incl. Incinerators & sanitary depot (not uses as not sufficient detail- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	*

Table 1: Priority Classification of Land Uses

Method

The qualitative risk-based functionality of this module broadly follows the Part I prioritisation scheme outlined in the CLR 6 report, (DoE, 1995), (currently under review) and will, at least initially, focus on sensitive exposure scenarios e.g.

- producing a list of all contaminative uses within a user defined area
- whether a potentially contaminated site is within a specified radius of

- certain critical land-use areas e.g. schools
- all contaminative uses within a specified distance of certain pathways (to be considered for the future)

Proposed algorithms for an inspection prioritisation procedure for development, surface waters and ground waters are shown in at the end of this document.

To enable users of the procedure to monitor progress through their individual districts, MapInfo can run the algorithms for distinct areas or quadrants in a logical manner. For example, such areas could be based upon ward boundaries, police sectors or user-defined grid squares. For each designated area the system will place sites in one of three groups. Sites placed in Group A are subjected to further assessment first, followed by sites in Group B and then those in Group C. The further Part II assessment will place the sites into further priority categories using more detailed information about each site. Part II should follow established guidance, including CLR6, and could include a more detailed desktop study, further site investigation, site-specific risk assessment or development of a remedial strategy. If the land is subject to a combination of uses, the whole site should be placed in the highest possible group. e.g. if a site comprises residential development (Group A) and a park (Group B), the whole site should be classified as Group A. If the site has been subject to more than one potentially contaminative use, the module should place the site in the highest priority class produced and then proceed with the rest of the prioritisation procedure.

At the end of the Part I assessment sites should be placed in the highest group identified under either Development, Surface Waters or Groundwater. For example, if assessment under "Development" results in the placement of a site in Group A and assessment under "Surface Waters" results in Group B, then the site should be placed in Group A. Where one or more sources affect the same receptor, given the potential for additive effects, the relative priority of the source sites will be increased. Following the initial Part I assessments, MapInfo could run a subroutine identifying any receptor within a set distance (50m?) of more than one site, whether it be Group A, B or C. In this case the lower ranked site should then be upgraded. Thus, if there is a Group B and a Group C site within 50m of the same school, the Group C site should then be placed in Group B.

For user-defined areas the module could produce a significant number of sites within the same group. How then do we prioritise intra-group? Using the 'Index of Perceived Risk', Syms (1999), contaminative categories can be assigned a 'Hazard Rank', a number between 1 and 39 (Syms uses 39 land use categories). It should be stressed that the ranking is a generalisation that should be used in the context of site specific factors. Those categories in the EAS codes not used in Syms have been allocated a ranking based upon professional judgement. Table 1 above can then be sorted upon the Hazard ranking within each risk category, as shown below.

Code	Hazard Rank	Description	Priority Class
AS	1	Asbestos Manufacture and use.	HIGH
BU	2	Burial of diseased livestock	HIGH
CH	2	Manufacture of cosmetics, manure, fertilizers & pesticides, detergents, oil, organic-based pharmaceuticals, other incl. glues, gelatines, recording tapes, photographic film	HIGH
RA	3	Storage, processing or disposal of radioactive material	HIGH
GA	4	Gasworks, coke works, coal carbonisation and similar sites. Production of gas from coal, lignite, oil or other carbonaceous material other than waste	HIGH
DT	5	Drum and tank cleaning	HIGH
XI	5	Incinerators-waste management operations	HIGH
XL	5	Landfill waste-the deposit of waste in, on or above land	HIGH
OR	6	Oil Refining Petrochemical production and storage.	HIGH
OL(<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	6	Major oil & petrol storage (not including refining or production) and all gasometers which are not in gasworks	HIGH
PA	10	Paints, varnishes, printing inks, mastics, sealants & creosote	HIGH
TA	10	Tar, bitumen, linoleum, vinyl and asphalt works.	HIGH
AB	11	Animal slaughtering and basic processing	HIGH
AF	11	Manufacture of pet foods or animal foodstuffs	HIGH
AN	11	Animal by-products (i.e. animal parts) e.g. soap, candles & bone works	HIGH
TR	12	Timber treatment.	HIGH
TY	12	Tannery, leather goods and skinnery	HIGH
FY	13	Furnaces & Metal processing/casting/forges/smelting-Ferro and Aluminum Alloys-Manganese Works, Slag Works	HIGH
PL	13	Electro-plating, Galvanising & Anodising	HIGH
MD	14	All Military Establishments incl. Firing Ranges (if not specified as Civilian)	HIGH
MG	14	Civilian manufacture & storage of weapons, ammunition, explosives & rockets, incl. ordnance	HIGH
HM	15	Heavy product manufacture-rolling & drawing of iron, steel & ferroalloys-includes major Tube Works	HIGH
SP	16	Recycling of metal waste incl. scrapyards and car breakers	HIGH
LT	17	Manufacture of cars, lorries, buses, motorcycles & bicycles	MEDIUM
MA	17	Manufacturing of engines, building & general industrial machinery, incl. nuts & bolts, gas fittings, wire rope/cable and ordnance accessories	MEDIUM
RB	18	Natural and Synthetic Rubber Products incl. tyres and rubber products	MEDIUM
BK	20	Manufacture of clay bricks & tiles, including assoc. activities e.g. brickfields, also solitary kilns (other than limekilns)	MEDIUM
CE	20	Concrete, cement, lime & plaster products, also includes solitary lime kilns	MEDIUM
CR	20	Tableware & other ceramics	MEDIUM
CY	21	Coal mining. Areas include assoc. surface activities in area but not including spoil heaps or coal mine shafts (<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	MEDIUM
QU	21	Quarrying of all stone (incl. limestone, gypsum, chalk & slate) and ores, includes all opencast mining & slant workings also slate/slab works, flint works, stone yards	MEDIUM
PW	22	Electricity generation and distribution, incl. large Transfer Stations	MEDIUM
PN	25	Printing other than News Print	MEDIUM
PR	25	Pulp, paper & cardboard manufacture	MEDIUM

NW	25	Printing of newspapers	MEDIUM
GL	26	Flat glass and glass products manufacture	MEDIUM
OF(<i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	29	Outfalls incl. Warm water, industrial effluent, etc. unless directly attached to other feature e.g. end of sewer pipe	MEDIUM
SL	29	Storage treatment or disposal of sludge including sludge from water treatment works	MEDIUM
SW	29	Sewerage, septic-tanks, effluent-incl. all filter beds	MEDIUM
FU	30	Sale of automotive fuel	MEDIUM
GG	30	Repair & sale of (i) cars & bikes (ii) parts (iii) motorway services	MEDIUM
HT	30	Manufacturing & repair incl. (i) ships (ii) aerospace (iii) rail engines and rolling stock	MEDIUM
CC	31	Coal storage/depot	MEDIUM
DP	31	Transport Depot, Road Haulage, Corporation Yards, Commercial vehicle fuelling.	MEDIUM
MN	32	Areas of mining and single or a group of shafts other than coal, or not specified-incl. levels, adits, etc. Also areas assoc. with Mineral Railways	MEDIUM
MP	32	Constructional steelwork, metal structures & products & building materials	MEDIUM
RL	32	Rail sidings, Yards, Rail Wharf, Goods Depot, Station etc.	MEDIUM
RW	32	Railway Tracks-up to 4 tracks wide or 30m.	MEDIUM
BT	33	Batteries, accumulators, primary cells, electric motors, generators & transformers	MEDIUM
HS	33	Manufacturing of electrical and electronic appliances	MEDIUM
DY	34	Dye & pigments	MEDIUM
TX	34	Natural and man-made textile manufacture and products including Hemp rope and linoleum	MEDIUM
DE	35	Premises housing surface cleaning and degreasing operations	MEDIUM
LY	35	Laundries & dry cleaning (larger scale not usually "high street")	MEDIUM
XO	35	Other waste facilities (e.g. clean and dirty manufacture)	MEDIUM
XT	35	Waste transfer stations	MEDIUM
PS	36	All plastic goods, incl. building, packaging, tubing, moulding and extrusion, fibre glass and fibre glass resin and products, excluding the manufacture of Tar, Bitumen & Asphalt	MEDIUM
DK	37	Boat-building, wharf and quays, cargo/transport handling facilities - marine or inland	MEDIUM
WR	37	Insulated wire & cable for electrical/telephone purposes	MEDIUM
WD	38	Sawmills and manufacture of wood products (excluding treatment).	LOW
BW	38	Brewing and malting	LOW
DL	38	Spirit distilling & compounding	LOW
FD	38	Major food processing includes large Dairies. Exceptionally large scale Corn/Flour milling	LOW
GV	38	Cemetery, modern burial grounds and grave yards	LOW
HE	38	Manufacturing of distribution, telecomms, medical, navigation, metering & lighting	LOW
HL	38	All Hospitals including sanatoriums but not lunatic asylums	LOW
ML	38	Abrasives, and products (not including Asbestos)	LOW
MR	38	Mineral Railways also known as 'Tramways' or inclines-not incl. urban passenger 'Tramways'	LOW
PD	38	Paper, card, etc. products (e.g. packaging)	LOW
WA	38	Drainage ditches are often identified by straight parallel lines creating a boundary line of a field or fields	LOW
WK	38	Factory & Works-use not specified	LOW

AP	39	Air & space transport	LOW
AR	39	Air Shafts	LOW
CS	39	Coal mine shafts	LOW
DG	39	Disturbed ground >200m in one dimension	LOW
DM	39	Demolition of building, plant or equipment used for any of the activities in the schedule	LOW
ES	39	Electricity sub-station	LOW
FL	39	Areas 'Liable to Flood'-shown as point features central to flooding area	LOW
HP	39	Must be assoc. with relevant industry-incl. spoil & slag-use symbology and assoc. features to identify heap boundary (except for colliery spoil heap- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	LOW
LB	39	Various-technical & environmental testing & analysis	LOW
LE	39	Computers, office machinery, business/industrial electrical goods	LOW
PP	39	Above ground pipelines other than sewerage	LOW
WC	39	Canals are often identified by OS text (e.g. Leeds & Liverpool Canal)	LOW
WO	39	All other water features on the site incl. marshes, wells, springs and sluices	LOW
WP	39	Surface ponds often located within a field surrounded by trees	LOW
WS	39	Surface streams are often identified by irregular parallel lines and an arrow to show directional flow of the stream	LOW
WV	39	Rivers are often identified by OS text (e.g. River Mersey)	LOW
PT		Extraction of alluvial sediments (sand, clay, peat, marl and gravel) (not used as conflicts with QU QUARRY- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	*
RF		Refuse and waste disposal incl. Incinerators & sanitary depot (not uses as not sufficient detail- <i>this is an EAS modification</i>)	*

Table 2. EAS keycodes sorted by Hazard Rank

Thus, all of the sites within a certain group (A, B or C) and within a specific user-defined area could be further prioritised using a sort procedure based on this ranking of hazard, further refining the prioritisation procedure.

Therefore, the outcome of running the module for each designated area within a LA would be a map showing the individual sites, possibly colour coded for each group, and a more detailed schedule highlighting the groupings and assigned hazard ranking of each potentially contaminated site. Where identified sites overlap selected areas, the site shall be placed in the quadrant where the majority of the site area lies.

A sub module should be able to answer such queries as 'What are the potentially contaminated sites within a certain user-defined distance of a sensitive receptor'? A list of likely queries needs to be further developed by the CLOG sub-group.

The procedure outlined above and shown in the following flowcharts is a simple and systematic approach to deciding what priority to give certain sites when implementing an Inspection Strategy, based upon an assessment of the proximity of a potential target. This document is an initial draft of the prioritisation procedure and as such is open for discussion and modification

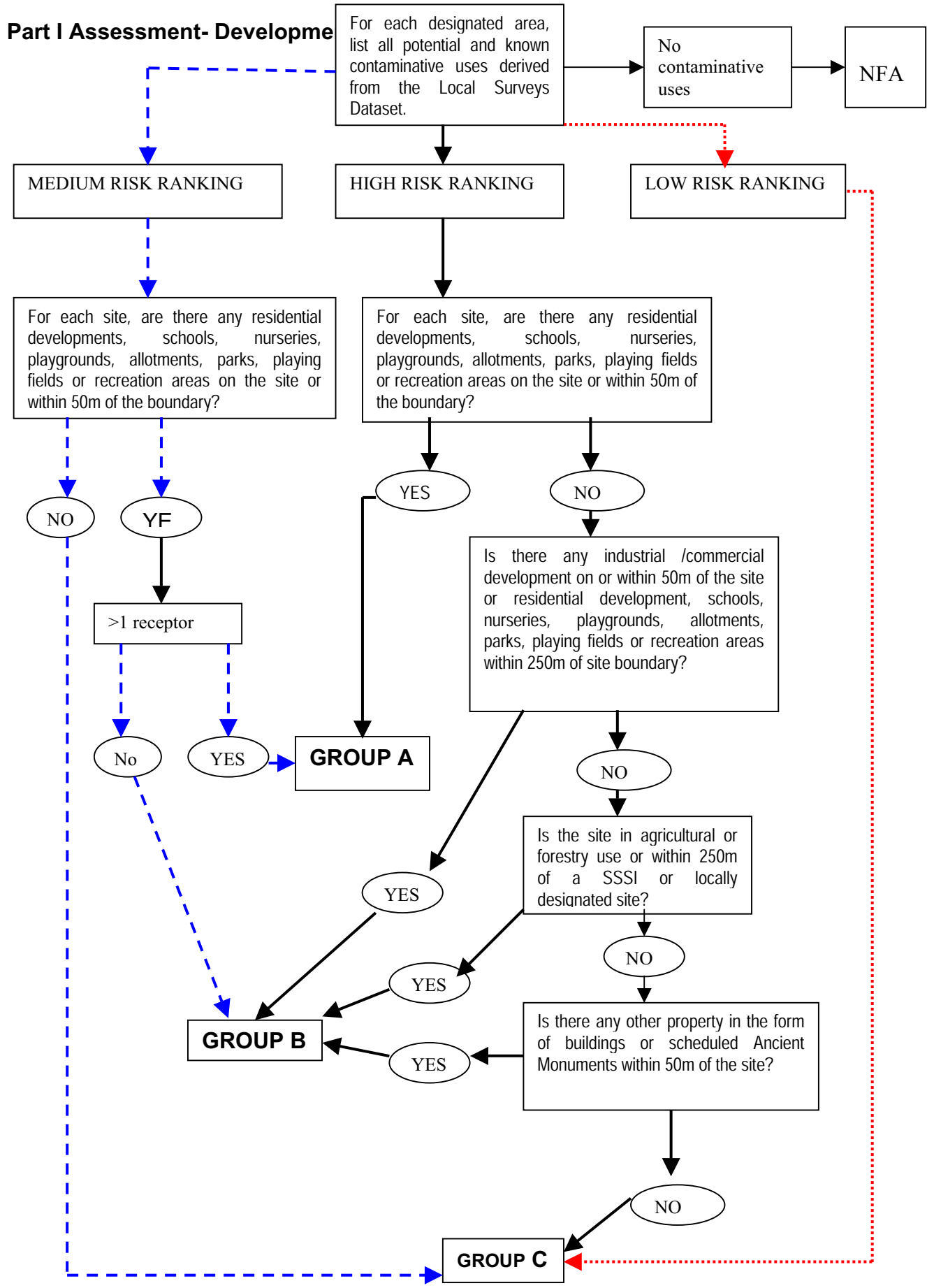
by members of the CLOG and the GIS sub-group.

References

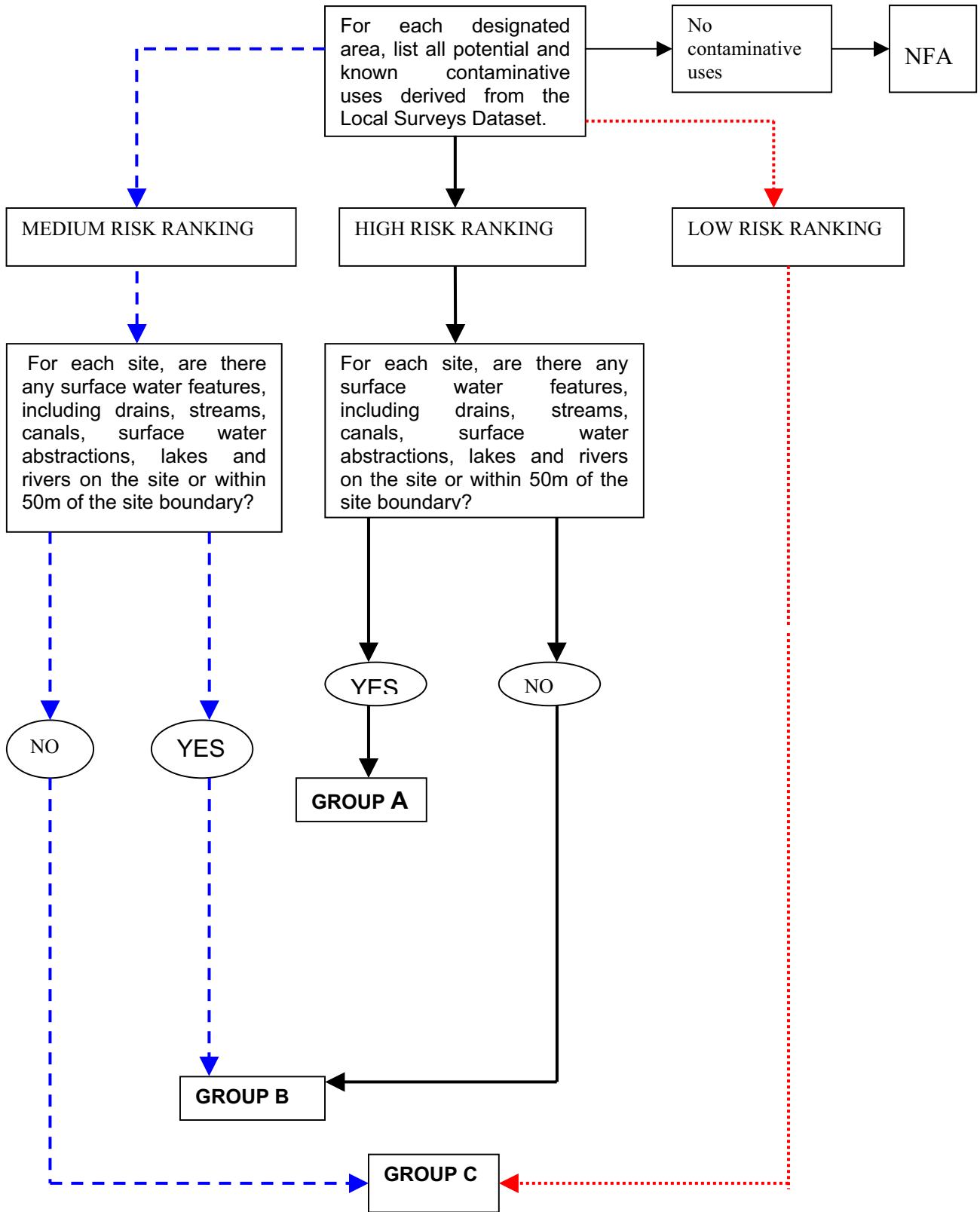
DoE, Department of Environment, (1995). *Contaminated Land Research Report No.6, Prioritisation and Categorisation Procedure for Sites which may be Contaminated*. DoE, London.

Syms, P. (1999). *Desk Reference Guide to Potentially Contaminated Land Uses*. IVSA.

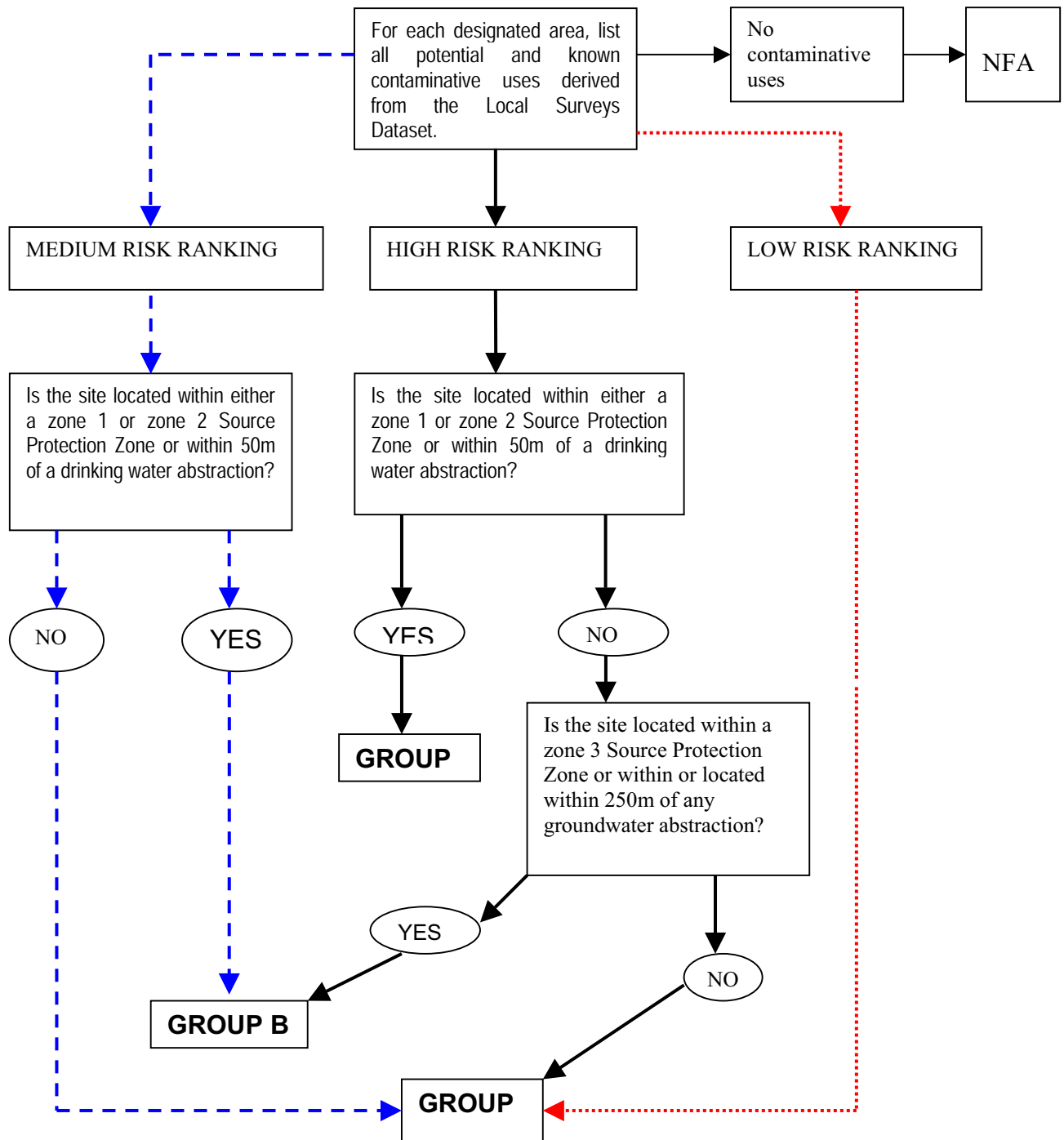
Part I Assessment- Developme



Part I Assessment- Controlled Surface Waters

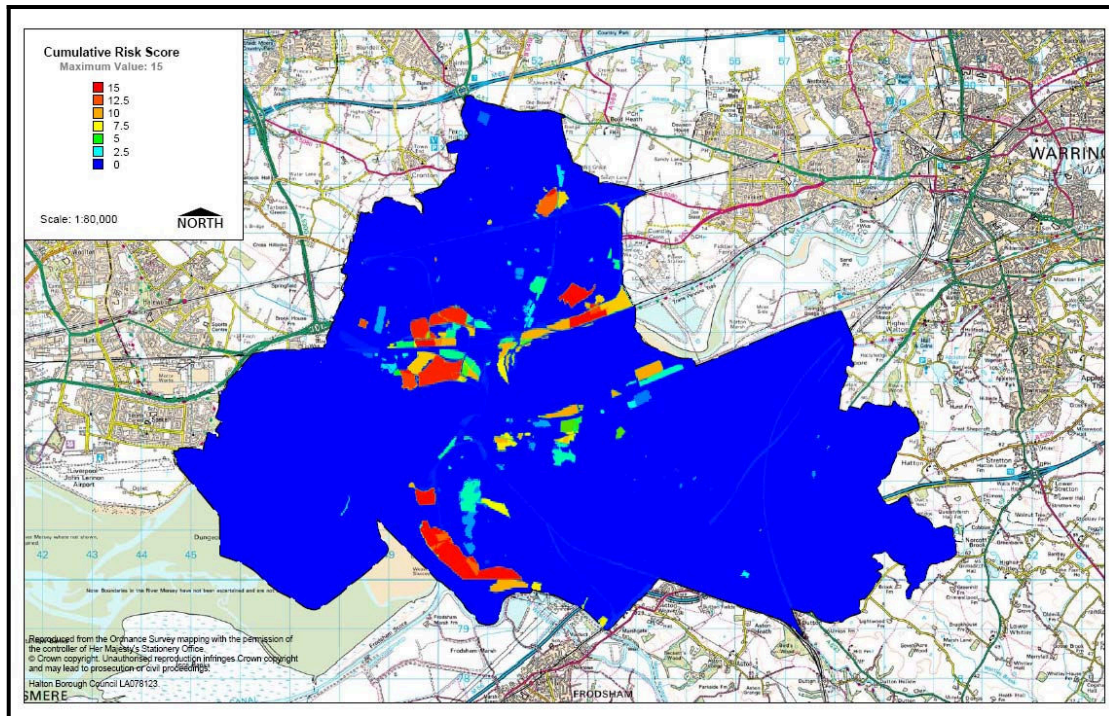


Part I Assessment- Controlled Ground Waters



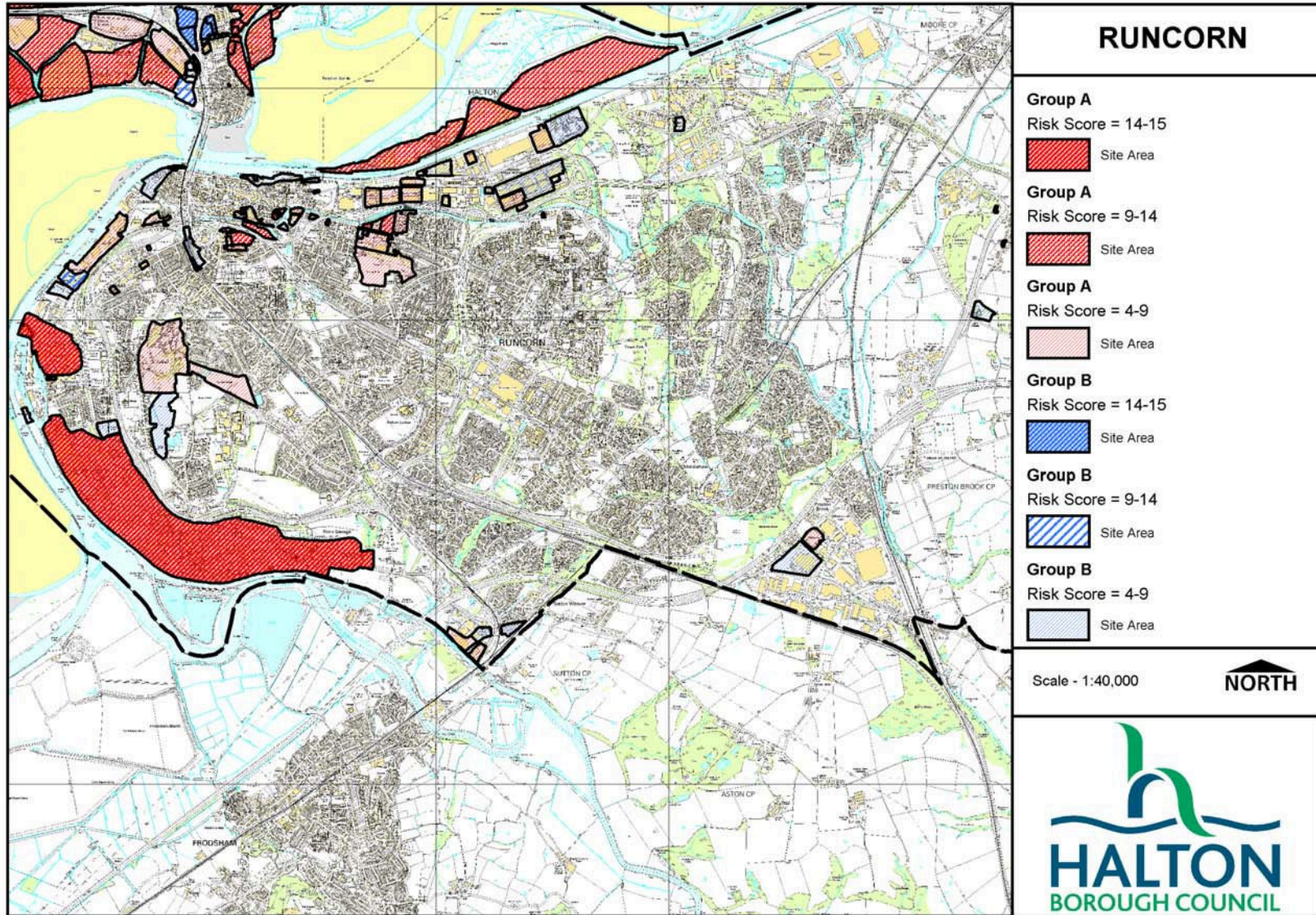
APPENDIX 4

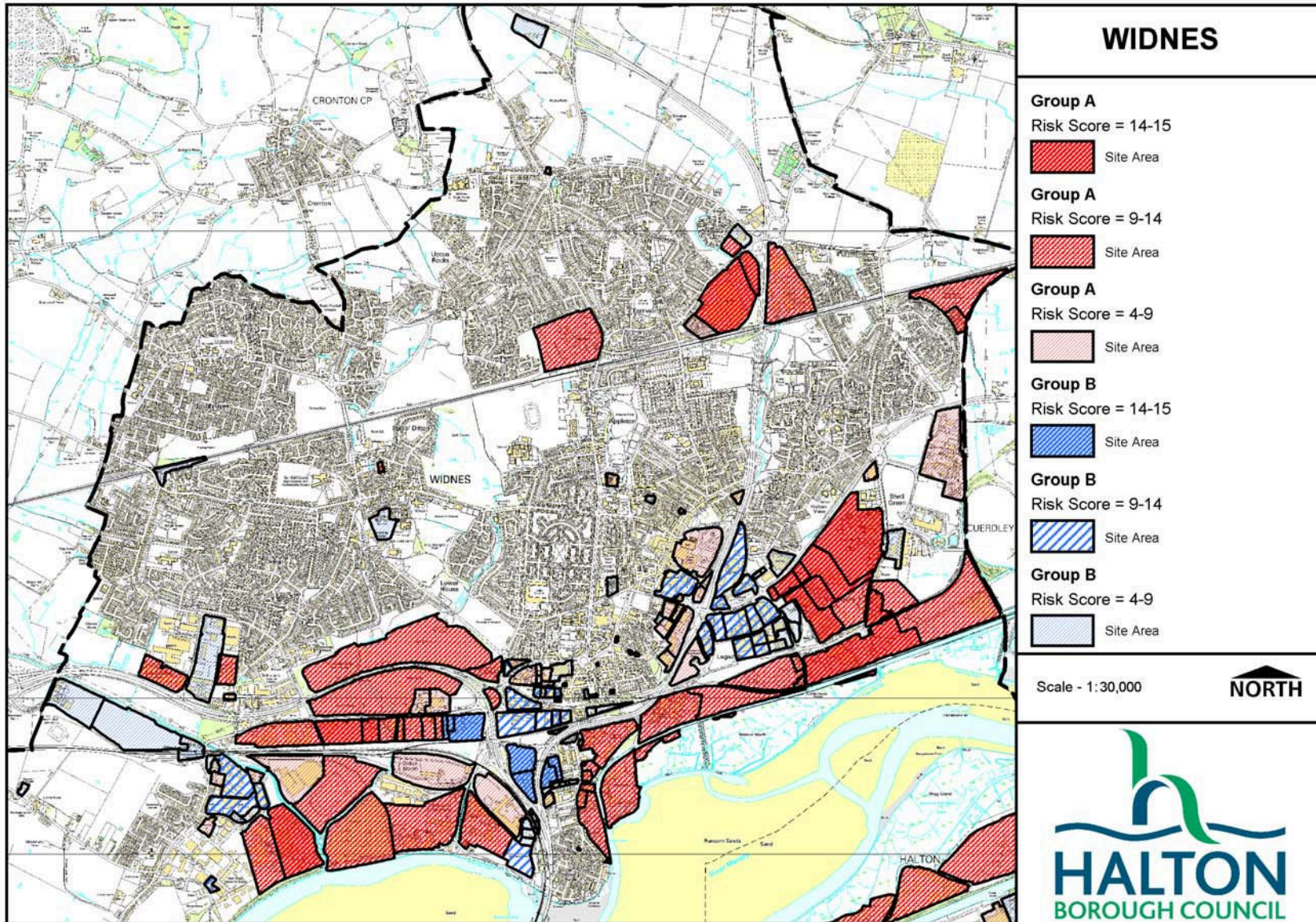
HIGH RISK CONTOUR PLAN



APPENDIX 5

GROUP A AND B PRIORITY SITES LOCATION PLAN







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REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Highway Skidding Resistance Policy

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report reviews the current position regarding the measurement and treatment of highway skidding resistance and proposes the introduction of a policy for analysing skid resistance data to produce programmes of treatment.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Skidding Resistance Policy submitted as an appendix to this report be recommended to the Executive Board for adoption.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 1998 the Council approved an overall policy document in relation to Highway Maintenance Strategy. Part of the strategy covered the method by which the measurement of skidding resistance of highway surfacing was to be carried out.
- 3.2 National guidance on skidding resistance has changed significantly since the Strategy was approved and a specific policy for analysing skid resistant data to produce programmes of treatment is now required.
- 3.3 The 2005/6 Local Transport Plan included the requirement for the preparation of a Highways Asset Management Plan. This will identify the extent of highway assets and their condition together with recommendations for maintenance to keep the asset in a suitable condition. The Plan requires that policies be established or reviewed to ensure that the correct processes are used in the maintenance of the Highway. This Skidding Policy will form part of a series of new policies that will evolve out of the development of the Asset Management Plan
- 3.4 The current skid resistant processes outlined in the present Strategy have been superseded by changes in national guidance and maintenance systems and is no longer wholly applicable to the Highway Network in Halton. New investigation levels have been identified and new surfacing materials and systems developed. The introduction of abrasive and cleaning systems can help restore surfaces to their original condition or road surfaces can be treated with several high performance surfacing systems to provide a new layer of aggregate. These processes are now available as alternatives to resurfacing. The systems are

however expensive to carry out and need to be correctly targeted to provide best value.

- 3.5 The new policy has been prepared take account of these developments. This document will meet current requirements and more importantly recognise the contribution of accident analysis to the assessment process.
- 3.6 Under the proposed policy sites identified as having low skidding resistance will now be correlated against road geometry, surface characteristics and also accident statistics. This will provide a mechanism by which the Highway Engineer can make a reasoned risk assessment to determine what treatment, if any, needs to be carried out at any particular location and at any point in time.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council is required to have in place a suitable policy. Failure to do so would leave the authority open to litigation and also breach its duty as Highway Authority.
- 4.2 This policy will enable clear identification of the priority sites for treatment but will be dependant upon the availability of resources. No direct financial implications will take place as a result of the Policy adoption.
- 4.3 There are no direct Social Inclusion or Crime and Disorder implications.
- 4.4 In targeting resources more precisely to the treatment of the Highway better use will be made of scarce aggregates and so deliver improvements to both Sustainability and Best Value in Highway Maintenance.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The introduction of this policy is a major factor in the Asset Management process. The Skidding Resistance Policy is essential to the preparation of the LTP and will contribute to its assessment under the CPA process.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 The introduction of a contemporary policy that meets current practice is fundamental to the Council's duty to maintain the Highway Network. If the current methods were retained there would be significant risk of litigation in the event of road traffic accidents.
- 6.2 The Council has an obligation to carry out its duties to nationally agreed standards. This cannot be met under the current policy framework.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising as a result of the proposed action.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Highway Maintenance Strategy Document (1998)	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Skidding Resistance Policy (2006)	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Highways Act 1980	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Well Maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management, 2005 Edition, July 2005	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7 Pavement Design and Maintenance, Section 3, Pavement Maintenance Assessment, Part 1, HD28/04 Skid Resistance.	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7 Pavement Design and Maintenance, Section 5, Surfacing and Surfacing Materials, Interim Advice Note IAN 49/03 Use of Warning Signs for New Asphalt Road Surfaces.	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
CSS Guidance Note, Skidding Resistance, May 2005	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
'The Implementation Of A Skid Policy To Provide The Required Friction Demand On The Main Road Network In The United Kingdom' Ramesh Sinhal	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Road Death Investigation Manual 2001	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)
Highways Economics Note No.1 2004 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of road Accidents and Casualties Dec 2005	Rutland House	C Dutton Section Leader (Network)



Halton Borough Council
Environment Department
Highways Division

**SKIDDING
RESISTANCE
POLICY**

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INTRODUCTION

As the Highway Authority Halton has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway in a condition that is safe and fit for purpose¹. Between 1994 and 2004 5414 personal injury crashes took place in on Halton's roads². These incidents resulted in 1301 people killed or seriously injured and 6894 slightly injured incurring a cost to the community of more than £34,000,000 every year. Many of these accidents took place in wet conditions or where skidding was regarded as a contributory factor.

An important aspect of maintaining the safe condition of the road is to provide an adequate wet road skid resistance. Studies have shown that improving skid resistance at targeted wet road crash locations can substantially reduce crash rates.

The Highway Authority is required to have in place a Policy governing the use of skidding resistance tests and the actions that arise from the survey data produced. This requirement is contained in The Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance³, which also recommends that a Policy be adopted as part of the Highways Asset Management Plan.

Levels of skidding resistance are best based on actual speeds rather than speed limits and this information can in some cases be derived from data collected from site. Data is not available for all locations however and the appropriate level of skidding resistance will need to be determined by the speed limit operating on each section of road wherever actual data has not been collected.

Guidelines for the minimum levels of skidding resistance at certain features already exist. New national investigatory levels have been published in HD 28/04 to supersede the earlier HD28/94. They are reproduced below in Table 1⁴. These investigatory levels are primarily set for use on trunk roads most of which are subject to the national 60-70mph speed limits. They can generally be applied to all local roads although the relevance to roads with 30-40 mph limits means that some modification could be applied in certain circumstances.

Achieving the required skid resistance assumes the use of high Polished Stone Value (PSV) aggregates that are both scarce and expensive. The aggregate generally used in highway surfacing cannot achieve the levels required to meet this high standard at all points on the Network. The implication of this is that all new controlled pedestrian crossings, together with new traffic signals and roundabouts in rural locations, will probably require anti-skid surfacing to be provided as part of its design. All other locations require checking to ensure they are above the recommended investigatory levels.

Note that the new guidance specifically excluded the issue of early skid resistance and that the guidance contained in Interim Advice Note IAN49/03 is applicable in these cases⁵. This policy recognises this requirement and its adoption will be incorporated into all future highway schemes.

The purpose of this document is to set down the Council's policy on skid resistance monitoring on adopted roads and the resultant action to be taken⁶. It is in line with the current legal requirements, procedures and technology⁷.

HD 28/04 requires that routine monitoring of skid resistance be carried out on Halton's 'A' and 'B' roads. The most appropriate method for this survey is by use of SCRIM. Where required by this policy testing may be extended to selected 'C' roads and unclassified road sites if considered appropriate and resources are available. This would be in addition to investigation of any specific locations where problems have already been identified, in line with good practice for the road safety policy and analysis of road accident statistics. Alternative testing methods using Pendulum and Griptester equipment may be used at specific locations if circumstances dictate.

Table 1
Site Categories and Investigatory Levels

Site category and definition		Investigatory Level at 50km/h							
		0.30	0.35	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65
A	Motorway								
B	Dual carriageway non-event								
C	Single carriageway non-event								
Q	Approaches to and across minor and major junctions, approaches to roundabouts								
K	Approaches to pedestrian crossings and other high risk situations								
R	Roundabout								
G1	Gradient 5-10% longer than 50m								
G2	Gradient >10% longer than 50m								
S1	Bend radius <500m – dual carriageway								
S2	Bend radius <500m – single carriageway								

Notes:

1. Investigatory Levels are for the mean skidding resistance within the appropriate averaging length
2. Investigatory Levels for site categories A, B, and C are based on 100m averaging lengths (50m lengths for some Overseeing Organisations) or the length of the feature if it is shorter.
3. Investigatory Levels and averaging lengths for site categories Q, K, G and S are based on the 50m approach to the feature but this shall be extended when justified by local site characteristics.
4. Investigatory Levels for site category R are based on 10m lengths.
5. Residual lengths less than 50% of a complete averaging length may be attached to the penultimate full averaging length, providing the site category is the same.
6. As part of site investigation, individual values within each averaging length should be examined and the significance of any values which are substantially lower than the mean value assessed.

In addition to the predominantly reactive processes laid down later in this policy the Council also undertakes a proactive annual programme of surface treatments.

The surface-dressing element of the maintenance programme has several specific benefits:

- Increase in texture depth.
- Improvement of skidding resistance.
- Preservation of the fabric of the highway by sealing of the surface to prevent ingress of surface water.
- Improvement of visual appearance.

A limited area of highway is also treated each year by the replacement of part or all of its structural elements with new bituminous material. This process is mainly aimed at preservation of the structural integrity of the highway. These processes noticeably improve skidding resistance. In 2006/7 the cost of these elements of highway maintenance was £831,530.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of this policy are: -

- To ensure the Council meets its duty of care under the Highways Act (1980).
- To adopt a set of skid resistance investigatory levels comparable to those specified by the Highways Agency for Trunk Roads, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7, HD 28/04, and Well-maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management.
- To adopt and specify appropriate standards for new and maintenance works to minimise potential skidding situations.
- To identify potential skidding crash sites and to take appropriate measures to minimise the risk of such crashes.
- To investigate reported crash sites, establish whether inadequate skid resistance could be a factor and recommend appropriate measures to remedy the situation.
- To analyse skid resistance survey measurements to identify deficient sites, and to erect warning signs where necessary.
- To investigate crash history at deficient sites to establish whether remedial treatment is necessary.
- To make the most cost effective improvement in wet skid resistance, and to prioritise sites for remedial treatment within the resources available.

LOW SKID RESISTANCE AS A FACTOR IN CRASHES

Police reports are the main source of crash data and are reliant on the officer at the scene recording all the important factors⁸. As a result low or differential skidding resistance does not often appear in reports as a primary cause of crashes even though skidding was deemed to have taken place. It may, however, be a secondary factor, which is important but often unrecognised. Most roads in the Halton have a skid resistance which is adequate for normal driving and the majority of drivers are aware that roads are more slippery when wet, but tend to expect a certain level of friction provision, and drive accordingly.

In emergency situations frictional demand is much greater, even so the primary cause of skidding crashes is attributed to driver error, excessive speed, poor signing etc and not the skid resistance of the surface.

A higher skid resistance will not prevent the emergency situation from arising nor will it improve driver behaviour, judgement or capability. It can, however, very often mitigate the effects of driver error and reduce the risk of the crash occurring or at least reduce the severity of a collision.

It is important to note that the range of treatments for deficient road surfaces is limited. The use of high friction dressings and specialist treatments is recognised as one of the most effective. Other treatments involving mechanical, chemical or high pressure scarifying or cleansing of the road surface can in some cases restore the SFC of the existing aggregate. Also of use is the provision of additional signing and traffic calming features that can reduce overall traffic speeds. In some cases this can prove to be more effective than merely creating an environment to allow for and in some cases encourage poor or irresponsible driving attitudes.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SKID RESISTANCE AND CRASHES

The relationship between skid resistance and potential crash sites is not precise because of the nature of skid resistance as a factor in crashes.

There is no simple dividing line between a 'safe' and 'unsafe' skid resistance condition for a particular section of road but research has been carried out to establish some broad outlines. In the mid 1980s a study by the DoT showed that for some site categories there was a sharp increase in crash

risk below certain levels of Mean Summer Scrim Coefficient (MSSC). The results of this study were used to define the Investigatory MSSC in originally in HD28/94 and Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance - Code of Practice for Maintenance Management and subsequently HD 28/04, and Well-maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. The levels were based on a risk analysis.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Skid resistance improvements can be implemented at relatively low cost by use of Surface dressing, retexturing and other means and can produce very substantial benefits to the community in terms of savings in crash costs, and in the reduction of crashes resulting in personal injury.

The monetary value of road crashes has been estimated by the Department of Transport and is updated annually. This is shown in table 2 below. The values take into account medical costs, police and administration costs, damage costs and lost output; they also include a value for the human costs (pain, grief and suffering)⁹.

Table 2

Crash Costs by Severity (2000 prices)

Severity	Cost per crash £ (2000)	Cost per crash £ (2004)
Fatal	1,323,880	1,384,463
Serious	154,110	155,563
Slight	15,380	11,991
Average for any injury crash	52,070	43,649

It can be seen from table 2 that the cost varies considerably depending on the severity of a crash.

Various studies have shown that expenditure on compliance with skid resistance standards has been cost effective. This is particularly noticeable at high stress sites such as those at approaches to traffic signals and pedestrian crossings since crash densities are high at these locations. Achieving the appropriate skid resistance requirement has produced a high benefit/cost ratio particularly in urban areas.

Taking this idea even further, research carried out at TRL has calculated that an increase in MSSC of 0.10 on the road network in Great Britain would reduce the wet road skidding rate from 35.4% to 22.2%. Taken over the 1994 to 2004 period this could have reduced the cost to the community from £375,543,260 to £235,510,180, a saving of £140,033,080 in Halton. This equates to between £12,000,000 and £13,000,000 per annum.

The increase in MSSC of .10 would require the use of higher cost anti-skid treatments, which would lead to prohibitively high initial expenditure and future long-term maintenance costs. Thus it is recommended that these treatments should be restricted to high-risk sites to give the best cost/benefit ratio. To treat the approach to a pedestrian crossing for example costs initially in the region of between £5,000 and £10,000 dependant upon the road type and category with subsequent long-term maintenance costs if anti skid surfacing was applied. Most treatments of this type have a limited life of between 5 and 10 years before replacement is required to maintain the MSSC.

DEFINITION OF DEFICIENT SITES

In order to consider any appropriate course of action where a site is considered to be deficient it is important to define what is meant by the term ‘ Deficient Site’. A site that is simply below the Investigatory Level may not be deficient because as its title implies this is a level below which further examination of a site is necessary.

To determine if a site requires treatment a risk analysis should be carried out taking account of all relevant factors involving a degree of subjective judgement, which may vary.

A site is deemed to be Deficient when: -

- The mean MSSC over the assessment length (usually 50 or 100 metres depending on location and site category) is at or below the Investigatory Level AND two or more wet road injury crashes have occurred in the preceding three years AND the proportion of wet road crashes is greater than 30% of all road crashes.
- The mean MSSC over the assessment length is more than 0.10 below the investigatory level AND one wet road injury crash has occurred at the location in the preceding three years.
- The mean MSSC is more than 0.20 below the Investigatory Level over the assessment length or over any continuous portion, 30 metres or more in length, within the assessment length, regardless of the past crash record.

A site is deemed to be Under Investigation when: -

- The mean MSSC over the assessment length or over any continuous portion, 30 metres or more in length, is between 0.00 and 0.20 below the Investigatory Level.
- If there are a high proportion of wet crashes, even though the SCRIM is above Investigatory Level.
- If any single value is 0.20 below the Investigatory Level.

TEXTURE AND PSV

Both the texture depth and the polishing characteristics of the stone used in the surfacing material have an effect on the skidding resistance of the road. It is important therefore that the correct standards are achieved when any surfacing material is laid and maintained thereafter. In view of this Table 3 shows the requirements for texture depth and Table 4 shows the polished stone values.

Table 3
Standards for Minimum Texture Depth of Bituminous Surfacing

Site Category	Speed mph	Minimum Texture Depth (Sand Patch) mm	
		New Works	Investigatory Level
High Texture	>60	1.5	0.95
Medium Texture	30 - 59	1.2	0.8
Low Texture	<30	0.9	0.65

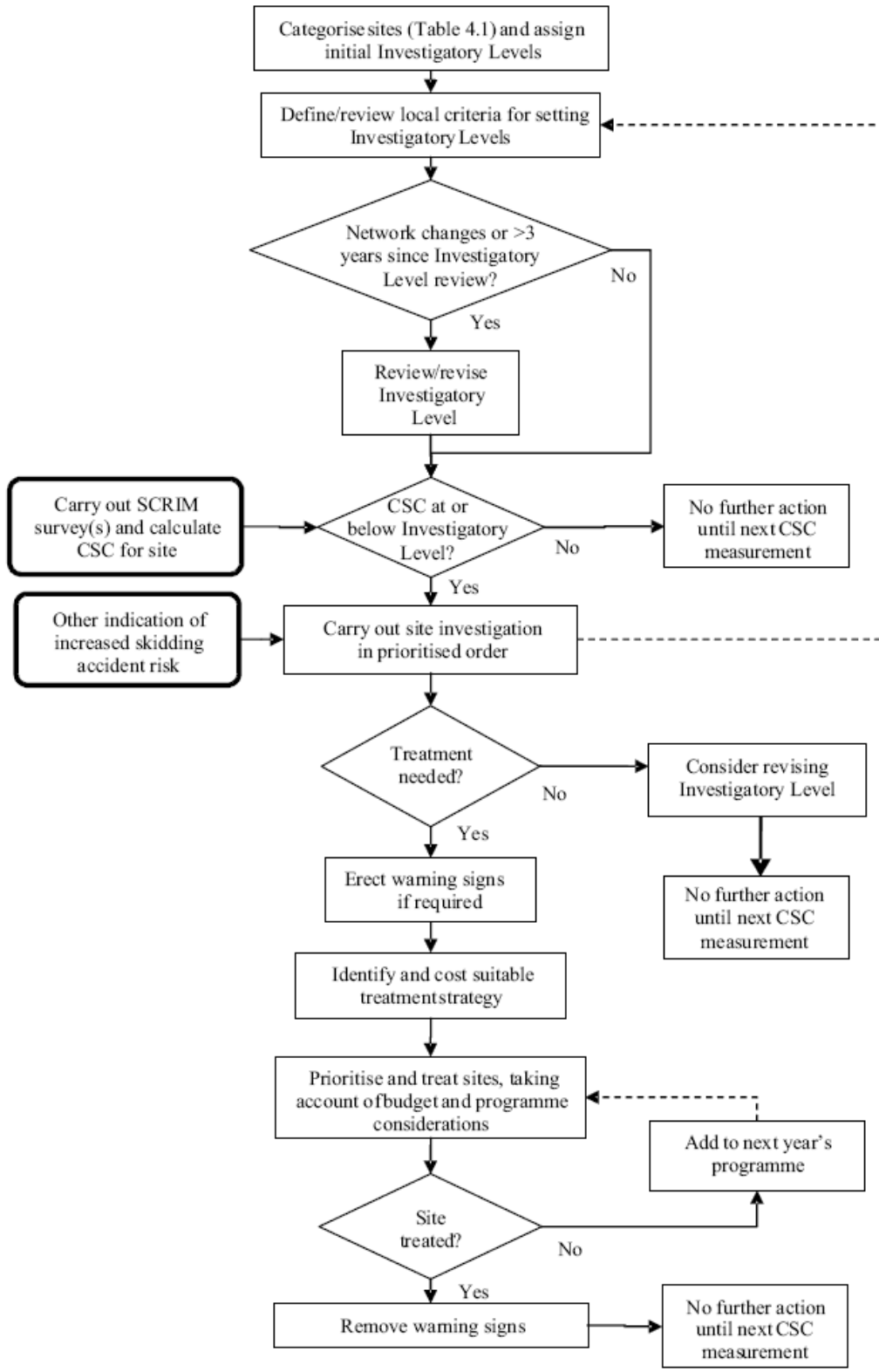
ROADMARKINGS AND COLOURED OVERLAYS

It is important when considering road markings and coloured overlays that account is taken of the skid resistance requirements of each location and that appropriate specifications are used to minimise differentials. Under normal circumstances, however, grey or yellow bauxite should be used so as not to detract from the required visual effect of coloured surfacing at specific sites.

Table 4**Minimum PSV Required for New Wearing Course**

IL Band	Default IL	Site Categories	Site Definitions	Traffic (cv/lane/day) at design life									
				0 - 250	251 - 500	501 - 750	751 - 1000	1001 - 2000	2001 - 3000	3001 - 4000	4001 - 5000	5001 - 6000	over 6000
I	0.35	A,B	Motorway (mainline), Dual carriageway (non-event)	50	50	50	50	50	55	60	60	65	65
Ia	0.35	A1	Motorway mainline, 300m approaches to slip roads	50	50	50	55	55	60	60	65	65	65
II	0.40	C,D	Single carriageways (non-event), dual carriageway approaches to minor junctions	50	50	50	55	60	65	65	65	65	68+
III	0.45	E,F,G1, H1	Single carriageway minor Junctions, approaches to and across major junctions, gradients 5-10% >50m (dual, downhill only; single, uphill and downhill), bends <250m radius >40mph.	55	60	60	65	65	68+	68+	68+	68+	70+
IV	0.50	G2	Gradients >50m long >10%	60	68+	68+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+
V	0.55	J,K	Approaches to roundabouts, traffic signals, pedestrian crossings, railway level crossings and similar.	68+	68+	68+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+
VI	0.55(20kph)	L	Roundabouts	50 - 70+	55 - 70+	60 - 70+	60 - 70+	60 - 70+	65 - 70+	65 - 70+			
VII	0.60(20kph)	H2	Bends < 100m radius	55 - 70+	60 - 70+	60 - 70+	65 - 70+	65 - 70+	65 - 70+	65 - 70+			
Where 68+ material is listed in this table, none of the three most recent results from consecutive tests relating to the aggregate to be supplied shall fall below 68.													
Throughout this table 70+ means that specialised high-skidding resistance surfacings complying with MCHW1 Clause 924 will be required.													
For site categories L and H2, a range is given and the PSV should be chosen on the basis of local experience of material performance. In the absence of other information, the highest values should be used.													

Flow Diagram to Identify and Treat Sites with Skidding Resistance Problems



SKIDDING POLICY ACTION PLAN

- SCRIM surveys should be carried out annually on the ‘A’ and ‘B’ road network to establish SCRIM levels and therefore analyse ‘Deficient Sites’ and ‘Sites Under Investigation’.
- Crash records should be monitored to establish areas with a high proportion of wet crashes.
- Investigations into SCRIM warning/investigatory levels and site layout may need to be carried out/updated, if crashes are found to concentrate in certain areas.
- The crash record of high stress sites with low SCRIM levels will be analysed and assessed by Highways and Traffic Engineers.
- Other sites will be considered in the routine programme for skid resistance improvement to make the most cost effective improvement in wet skid resistance, and to prioritise sites for remedial treatment within the resources available.
- Sites that meet the criteria set out in this policy will be placed in a priority listing and included in the maintenance programme with the appropriate treatment.
- Additional SCRIM surveys of ‘C’ roads shall be undertaken if the level of accidents indicates a significant need.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken of those sites at or below Investigation Level where treatment is not deemed necessary under the policy.
- A proactive policy of surface dressing and highway surfacing will take place annually to improve the overall level of skidding resistance of the highway network. The programme will take specific note of the geometry of the highway layout and the current accident data in its formulation.

References:

1. Highways Act 1980 (TSO)
2. Cheshire County Constabulary Accident Statistics
3. Well Maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management, 2005 Edition, July 2005 (The Stationery Office)
4. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7 Pavement Design and Maintenance, Section 3, Pavement Maintenance Assessment, Part 1, HD28/04 Skid Resistance. (Highways Agency)
5. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7 Pavement Design and Maintenance, Section 5, Surfacing and Surfacing Materials, Interim Advice Note IAN 49/03 Use of Warning Signs for New Asphalt Road Surfaces. (Highways Agency)
6. CSS Guidance Note, Skidding Resistance, May 2005 (County Surveyors Society)
7. ‘The Implementation Of A Skid Policy To Provide The Required Friction Demand On The Main Road Network In The United Kingdom’ Ramesh Sinhal (Highways Agency)
8. Road Death Investigation Manual 2001 (Association of Chief Police Officers – National Operations Faculty)
9. Highways Economics Note No.1 2004 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of road Accidents and Casualties Dec 2005 (Department for Transport)

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Best Value Review of Transportation and Access - Key Review Outcomes

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the main findings of the recently completed Best Value Review of Transportation and Access. This major 12-month review commenced in September 2005 and focussed on the provision of passenger transport services within the Borough.
- 1.2 The aim of the Review was to ensure that the policies and strategies for the provision of various passenger transport services either directly provided by the Council and other organisations optimise the resources available for tackling the changing access needs of communities in the Borough. The timing of the Review is important as its recommendations will help inform the development of the second Local Transport Plan for the Borough (2006/7 – 2010/11) as well as a host of supporting strategies. Therefore, the purpose of the report is to set out the key messages from the Review for consideration by the Policy and Performance Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) subject to any comments and observations made, the report is received by the Board;**
- (2) reports of the progress towards implementing the Improvement Plan be included in future performance monitoring reports to the Policy and Performance Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Transport and Access Review was comprehensive in scope and examined in great detail a wide range of existing policies and arrangements which have been put in place over a number of years to provide passenger transport services in the Borough (some of which are directly provided by the Council and others are delivered in partnership with other providers and commercial companies). An Executive Summary of the Review as well as the more comprehensive final report is available on the Council web site. In line with all previous Best Value Reviews, a comprehensive Improvement Plan has been developed, of

which progress to address issues raised in the Review will be assessed over the coming months and years.

3.2 The Review examined a range of critical passenger transport issues, including:-

- The quality of the local public transport network, the majority of which is provided by local bus services;
- The quality of provision of a range of accessible 'door to door' transport services in the Borough. These include services provided on the Council's behalf by Halton Community Transport, as well as a wide range of services of vulnerable adults and SEN children funded by Health and Community Directorate and Children and Young People's Directorate;
- The quality of travel information and advice currently provided by the Council to local communities within the Borough;
- An assessment as to whether the existing transport arrangements effectively meet the needs of specific vulnerable groups within the community which continue to suffer from social exclusion; and
- A critical review of the Council's existing partnership arrangements both with other key agencies and organisations with regards to the provision of quality travel choices for local people.

3.3 These issues were considered in the light of the following series of key transport challenges facing the Council: -

- The Halton StAR Review into post 16 education;
- The modernisation of adult day care facilities;
- Rapidly rising transport tender costs;
- Changes to health care provision in the Borough, especially the recent announcement by North Cheshire NHS Trust;
- New land use patterns and developments;
- Need to replace the Council's own passenger transport fleet in 2007; and
- Increasing demand generally for 'door to door' accessible transport.

3.4 The Review highlighted the significant resources that the Council currently spends on providing both directly and indirectly various passenger transport services for local residents. This includes:-

- £650,000 per year on providing socially necessary bus services (which typically operate early mornings, evenings and Sundays across the Borough);
- £2.42m per year in travel assistance for clients of the Council's Children and Young People's Directorate and the Health and Community Directorate;
- £0.5m per year spent directly by the Council's Transport Co-ordination Team on providing a range of other key services including public transport information and infrastructure.

3.5 The Review identified that during the course of the first Local Transport Plan for the Borough (2001/2 to 2005/6), the Council achieved national recognition (Beacon Status) for its approach to procuring accessible passenger transport services. This highlighted: -

- The strengths of the existing single integrated Transport Co-ordination Team;
- The multi agency partnership approach in the borough to improve access to education and training facilities for post 16 learners;
- High levels of investment in the local bus network by bus operators;
- The pilot “Neighbourhood Travel Team” which was established to work closely with socially excluded communities across the Borough; and
- The Travelsafe initiative designed to reduce the incidence of crime in and around the public transport network.

4.0 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Some key recommendations include:-

- ***Improving the quality and accessibility of public transport services within Halton***

This will be achieved through:-

- The creation of a single integrated passenger transport booking call centre for all ‘door to door’ accessible transport services operating within the Borough;
 - The introduction of common branding and a unified approach to the marketing of the various accessible transport services;
 - Better utilisation of the Council in house passenger transport fleet – including longer hours of working and more varied range of duties; and
 - More joint working between the Council passenger transport fleet and vehicles operated by Halton Community Transport;
 - These improvements are designed to encourage independent passenger travel supported by travel training and individual journey planning.
- ***Developing the local bus network within the Borough.***

This will be achieved through: -

- Improve the quality of local bus stations and key public transport interchanges within the Borough;
- New improved services to the major hospital sites, especially Halton, Warrington and Whiston General Hospitals from the top 5 most deprived Wards in the Borough;

- More attention to bus network development to ensure communities are better linked to new employment areas and opportunities brought about through the regeneration of the area.

• ***Improving the quality of passenger information***

This will include: -

- Improved quality of conventional information at bus stops, including the development of a new tube style “Network Map” which is currently being piloted in the Borough;
- Further installation of more bus stop real time bus passenger information. This new technology has just been extended in north Widnes as part of the service 61 “Kickstart” scheme funded by the Department of Transport;
- The introduction of SMS texting at every bus stop within the Borough, enabling passengers to gain access to accurate up to date bus departure information; and
- Ensuring greater community participation in the Halton Public Transport Liaison Panel.

• ***Improving further the provision of good quality and accessible transport for post sixteen learners.***

Key improvements include: -

- Introduction of new post 16 discounted multi operator bus ticket – now agreed and to be introduced by end of October 2006;
- New campus link shuttle bus service linking the various campuses of Riverside College;
- Improved transport for work based learners and those students participating in the new 14-19 Gateway diplomas;
- Better targeting of travel advice and support for learners drawn from socially excluded communities and NEET clients identified through recent work undertaken by the Connections Service.

• ***Reducing the environmental impact of passenger transport within Halton.***

- Promotion of biofuels and other environmentally sustainable fuels for passenger transport operation;
- Halton BC is leading a major trans national project to promote biofuels by passenger transport operators across the EU, including partners drawn from Spain, Italy, Germany, Croatia and Greece.

- ***Internal service improvements.***

Following extensive consultation with key stakeholders, the following improvements were identified:-

- Transport Co-ordination should continue to organise and procure the Council's passenger transport services within a revised organisation structure in order to meet the challenges identified in the review.
- The development of more robust and accountable Service Level Agreements between Transport Co-ordination and the Children and Young People and Health and Community Directorates;
- Continuation of and further investment in the Council's "In House" passenger transport vehicle fleet, and provide a balance of public / private passenger transport service provision.

5.0 COMMENTS OF THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

5.1 The report was presented to the Business Efficiency Board on 6 September 2006. The report was received and the following comments/observations were made for consideration by the PPB:

- the general reduction in usage of public transport services and whether the review sought to find ways to improve this;
- the implications of fuel cost increases and how this may affect subsidised services;
- how the introduction of free bus passes for the elderly may impact usage figures;
- where and for which department(s) out of borough transport services were needed;
- difficulties for the public in understanding bus timetables, which it was noted was being addressed and a new style of timetable may be introduced in the near future, similar to that of the London Underground; and
- if and where it may be possible to find efficiency savings within the transportation department.

5.2 These comments are receiving detailed consideration and initial responses are as follows:-

- With the recent improvements to the concessionary travel scheme in the Borough (free travel Monday to Friday after 09.30am, all day Saturday and Sunday), there has been a significant growth in bus patronage;
- The Council has already in the last 12 months implemented a major review of supported bus services in the Borough in response to rising tender costs, which has enabled the Council to maintain a level of

service on the Core Bus Route Network commensurate with the standards set out in the Halton Bus Strategy;

- Transport is provided across borough boundaries for public transport services in partnership with neighbouring transport authorities (Cheshire, Merseytravel and Warrington); for Children and Young Peoples Directorate for some denominational schools and for children with special needs where the necessary provision is not available in the Borough. Also a self-financing scheme provides transport for a declining number of children to secondary schools in Frodsham, Helsby and Warrington.
- The Council is in the process of updating the way it produces conventional at stop information. The information will be displayed in a new 'easy to read' format and relate to a new route identification colour scheme which will correspond to a new 'tube style' network map; and
- Work is ongoing to identify and implement further efficiencies in line with the Best Value Improvement Plan.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Best Value Review's recommendations will support the second Local Transport Plan, the Bus Strategy and the Access Strategy covering the period 2006 - 2011.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Most of the recommendations contained in the Improvement Plan will be implemented using existing resources. However some, such as improving the effectiveness of the Job Link service will use HBC Priorities Funding and others, mainly to develop the local bus network, will be met by external funding. These funding sources include the Urban Bus Challenge, the 'Kickstart' scheme, the EU STEER Programme and LTP/developer funding.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 It is important that the review recommendations are implemented in accordance with the agreed timescales. Failure to do so would mean that recommended improvements to Transportation and Access would not be realised and there would not be noticeable improvements for the public. Implementation will be monitored via progress reports to the Business Efficiency Board, the service planning process, reporting on performance via Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board and quarterly performance monitoring reports.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1 The service improvements will ensure that all sections of the community benefit from good quality transport choices, with a special emphasis to

ensure that access to key facilities is improved especially for socially excluded people.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Final Report of the Best Value Review of Transportation and Access	Best Value and Performance Management Division, Municipal Buildings, Widnes.	Les Unsworth Best Value Advisor Ext. 1162