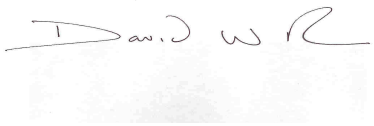
Public Document Pack

Executive Board

Thursday, 5 March 2009 2.00 p.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building



Chief Executive

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

PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
3. COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO	
(A) CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - KEY DECISION	**1 - 11**
4. QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO	

Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 19 March 2009

Item	Page No
(A) ARTS POLICY AND STRATEGY REVIEW - KEY DECISION	**12 - 75**
5. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO	
(A) LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT ACTION PLANS	**76 - 85**
(B) STATE OF BOROUGH REPORT 2009 AND REVIEW OF COMMUNITY STRATEGY - KEY DECISION	**86 - 132**
6. PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO	
(A) MERSEY GATEWAY - SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY - KEY DECISION	**133 - 354**
7. CORPORATE SERVICES	
(A) COUNCIL INTERNAL GOVERNANCE	**355 - 359**
PART II	
SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public but, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is** RECOMMENDED **that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.	
8. ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO	
(A) CEMETERY PROVISION FOR 2015 AND BEYOND - KEY DECISION	**360 - 381**

Item	Page No

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.

Agenda Item 3a

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Choice Based Lettings

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Government's five year housing plan, *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All*, published in January 2005, set out its plans for taking forward its Choice Based Lettings (CBL) policy. The aim is for all Councils to implement CBL by 2010, and there is a national policy objective to develop sub regional/regional schemes.

1.2 Even though the Council no longer manages any dwellings, it is required to have an allocations policy to ensure that reasonable housing preference is given to households in certain categories of need through its nomination agreements with RSLs. Currently Halton Housing Trust (HHT) manages a joint Council/HHT housing register and operates what in most respects is a common allocations policy

1.3 Following on from a Member seminar held on the 27th November 2008 to explain the key elements of CBL, this report now seeks the Board's agreement to work in partnership with a number of Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) across Merseyside to develop a sub regional CBL scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Board agree to the Council's participation in the development of the Merseyside Sub Regional CBL Scheme.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Traditionally anyone needing a social rented tenancy applied to a Council or RSL to join a housing register. Priority was determined by a number of means, but typically by date order or the award of points to reflect varying degrees of need. Applicants were invited to indicate their preferred neighbourhoods, but the Council or RSL determined which particular property they would be offered. The applicant's choice was limited to accepting or refusing the offer.

3.2 CBL originated in Holland and, whilst acknowledging that CBL does nothing to solve the housing shortage, it does offer a much more

customer focussed approach. There are any number of scheme variants but in essence they all feature common elements –

- All RSLs are encouraged to participate in the scheme so that there is one application form, one allocations policy and common ICT so that from a customer perspective an applicant need only apply once no matter which Landlord they want to be housed by. Some Councils/RSLs hold back a proportion of their lettings for "management lets".

- The allocations policy assigns applicants to particular priority bands according to need e.g. urgent, multiple needs, single need, no need. Within each band priority is usually determined by date of application. Some schemes apply quotas to each band to ensure a proportion of applicants are housed from each band.

- Vacant properties are widely advertised on weekly or fortnightly cycles, with information about property size, facilities, rent and sometimes even local amenities. The advert also gives an indication of any restrictions on who will be given priority or who may bid for them e.g. band, family size, etc. In some schemes private sector lets and RSL low cost home ownership schemes are also advertised.

- Applicants can bid for the particular properties that they want, provided they meet any stated restrictions. At any time up to the bidding cycle ending the ICT system will automatically tell them their position in the list of bidders in case they want to widen their net and apply for a different property. Automated or proxy bidding can be set up for vulnerable applicants, together with support systems.

- Feedback is provided after each lettings cycle to show who got what in terms of band and date of application. This helps the applicant to make more informed choices for future bids, provides some realism as to their future prospects, and provides much greater transparency.

3.3 The most recent data provided by Government suggests that 36% of Councils have already introduced CBL, with a further 59% planning to do so. Government is also keen to develop CBL schemes on a regional or sub-regional basis, recognising that housing markets do not follow local authority boundaries, and has awarded funding to a number of Councils that have sought support in doing this. Greater Manchester Councils have recently launched their sub regional scheme, Pinpoint, and a number of Merseyside Councils have been successful recently in securing funding to develop a scheme. The two new Unitaries in Cheshire are also actively developing schemes.

3.4 Research commissioned by Communities and Local Government, undertaken by Heriot-Watt University and the British Market Research Bureau, has generated positive findings about the longer term impacts of CBL. "*Monitoring the longer term impact of Choice Based Lettings*" found that CBL leads to improved tenancy sustainment and tenant satisfaction, encourages applicants to think more flexibly about their housing choices, and tends to reduce rather than compound ethnic segregation. Homeless families and other vulnerable groups welcomed the support and choice offered by CBL.

3.5 Research also found that applicants welcomed the choice, control and transparency of CBL. They also considered that the extra effort required to take part in CBL, by looking through vacancies and bidding for suitable properties, was worth it.

3.6 From a Landlord perspective there have been sustainability related savings, and efficiency savings through improved ICT, reduced refusal rates, quicker relets, and demand generated for properties previously considered hard to let. And from Councils' perspective, the existence of one housing register avoids duplication and provides a more accurate indication of housing need and trends.

4.0 THE OPTIONS

4.1 Over the last 18 months officers of the Council and HHT have, in consultation with the larger RSLs in the borough, undertaken an appraisal of the various CBL options. Those considered were as follows:

Option 1: Create a new Halton stand alone scheme.

Option 2: Join an existing scheme (e.g. the "CHOOSEaHOME" scheme operating in Warrington or the "UnderOneRoof" scheme in St Helens)

Option 3: Join a sub regional scheme

4.2 **<u>Options 1 and 2</u>**

The feedback received from RSL partners is that there is no appetite to develop a Halton stand alone scheme, the most expensive option with approximately £200,000 development costs. Whilst in the early stages RSLs were open minded about the options, the recent emergence of sub regional schemes has changed their views. The emerging consensus is that they favour joining a sub regional scheme. This therefore also discounted Option 2 to join an existing scheme in a neighbouring authority.

4.3 For RSLs this makes good business sense, particularly for those who operate across several Council areas, as they currently have to operate a variety of stand alone schemes and the costs and complexity are driving them towards rationalisation. Participation in a number of different CBL schemes increases their costs as there is less potential to streamline business processes and ultimately save on staffing costs. Operational staff are also faced with applying and explaining to customers different CBL models. Buying into a sub regional scheme therefore meets their wider organisational efficiency requirements.

4.4 **Option 3**

The sub regional options include schemes being developed in Merseyside, Cheshire West and Cheshire East. In terms of cost the sub regional schemes are likely to be the most financially advantageous due to economies of scale with larger numbers of partners sharing the costs, and the fact that two of them benefit from a Government grant of £100,000 each for initial scheme development. The option of developing a scheme between Halton, St Helens and Warrington (the Mid Mersey) was also explored, but Warrington are in the early stages of undertaking a housing stock transfer and could not commit to such a project at this time.

4.5 The clear preference of the RSLs is for the Merseyside scheme as most are Merseyside based organisations (at least those that account for the majority of the stock), with little stock held in Cheshire. From the Council's perspective the Merseyside option also has merit, given Halton's participation in the City Region governance arrangements and increasing sub regional working at all levels. As things stand Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral are committed to the scheme, with Halton, Sefton and West Lancashire due to make a decision. There are also more than 20 interested RSLs.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Whilst it is not a statutory requirement, the Council can of course ignore it, but pressure to adopt CBL is likely to be applied through future Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAAs) and Audit Commission inspections. CBL is a very clear Government policy target which is part of the general Government drive to improve choice in the Public Sector. A copy of the policy is attached as an appendix.

5.2 Irrespective of this, based on the views of other Councils that have already implemented CBL, and the research referred to earlier, the approach does genuinely seem to offer the customer a better service to traditional housing register schemes which in itself is reason for giving consideration to its adoption.

5.3 If the Council chose not to adopt CBL there would be other implications. HHT does intend to adopt CBL and thereafter would be unable to manage a joint HBC/HHT Register due to ICT constraints. This would mean the Council having to establish and manage its own housing register and nominations to RSLs. There would be initial ICT and staffing costs to set this up, with ongoing revenue costs almost certainly greater than currently paid to HHT. This would result in a large degree of duplication as applicants on the HBC and HHT CBL Register would in large part be the same, and added confusion for the customer.

5.4 The Council could decide to develop a stand alone Halton CBL scheme, but with no buy in from any of the RSLs the preceding points would still apply.

5.5 Development work on the Merseyside scheme is still at an early stage, with ultimate costs for partners dependent on the number of participating organisations and the scheme management options chosen. Even at this stage, however, it is clear that for Halton the cost of developing CBL as part of this wider partnership arrangement will be the most economic option. It is therefore proposed that the Board agree to joining the Merseyside sub regional scheme.

5.6 Ultimately all decisions about the nature of the scheme, the lettings policy, and governance arrangements will be subject to the agreement of all the partners. There is also a statutory duty on the Council to consult stakeholders on significant changes to housing allocation policy, which would be undertaken after the Board had considered any proposals.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It should be noted that a Common Allocations Policy is the preferred option of the potential sub regional partners and they have agreed to review their own policies in order to identify areas of commonality. This is both to reduce ICT costs and to make the scheme as simple as possible for users. If this is not achievable ahead of the 2010 deadline, an interim position would have to be agreed. The Council will need to review and update its own allocations policy in preparation for this.

6.2 Halton's current allocations policy seeks to give preference to local residents by awarding them 25 additional points by virtue of current or previous residence in the Borough. However, when applicants typically need 500-700 points to be housed, the effect of awarding this small number of points must be viewed as very marginal in achieving this objective. Despite this there has been only limited inter-borough migration, with data from RSLs lettings returns for the

last three years revealing that only about 1% of customers have moved between Halton and its nearest LA neighbours. Nevertheless it may be possible within a CBL scheme to restrict eligibility or priority on the Register by including some form of local connection criteria.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 From the options explored, it is clear that a Halton stand alone scheme is cost prohibitive. Even though the costs of joining a sub regional scheme are unknown at the moment, it is safe to assume that the cost of joining a sub regional scheme, along with all of the Halton RSL partners, would provide the most cost effective solution.

7.2 Halton's share of development costs in 2009/10 can be met from existing reserves. Some additional provision may need to be made in the 2010/11 budget, but ongoing operational costs are likely to be commensurate with, or even lower than, the sum currently paid to HHT to manage the Councils housing register.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The prospect of more sustainable communities stemming from clients' increased choice about where they live will potentially benefit children with a more settled environment.

8.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

CBL has the potential to offer greater mobility to those seeking employment, whilst recognising concerns about excessive in migration.

8.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

8.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 If the Council decided to adopt an approach to its allocations policy that is different to all the RSLs, the Council would be left with the

issue of how to deal with its waiting list and nominations, with potential cost implications.

9.2 Whilst the CBL target is not a statutory requirement, should Halton fail to meet the Government's 2010 deadline for CBL, it may have an adverse impact upon the Council's future CAA. If the decision is to join the sub regional scheme, or develop a Halton stand alone scheme and this does not progress at the required rate, the Council (and HHT) may need to consider a contingency or interim position. This is likely to have financial and staff resource implications.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 An equality impact assessment will need to be completed once more is known about the preferred CBL option. An additional assessment will also need to be completed as part of the allocations policy review.

10.2 Once a CBL scheme has been set up, monitoring arrangements will be put in place to ensure equality in relation to access to the service and re-housing opportunities.

10.3 The research referred to earlier found there to be no adverse impact arising from the implementation of CBL providing sufficient safeguards are put in place, and indeed found many positive outcomes for vulnerable clients including homeless households.

11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

11.1 To address the Governments policy objective of introducing CBL in all Councils by 2010 in the most cost effective manner.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 The various options considered for delivering CBL are described in sections 4 and 5 of the report, together with the rationale for the option recommended.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

13.1 The target date for implementation of the Merseyside sub regional CBL scheme is 2010.

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

None

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities

Sustainable Communities: Homes for All
A Strategy for Choice Based Lettings

"… people want more choice in housing.

Instead of the old councils points system, we should be giving people choice to move to whatever form of housing they prefer – public housing, housing association, private renting or even part ownership.

We know that the choice-based letting systems work. They've been a huge success. So, today here's another commitment. Another radical change for housing in this country. Within five years a national system of choice in social housing covering all *forms of rented accommodation."*[1]

Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott

Working towards a nationwide system of choice by 2010

Our strategy for choice-based lettings was outlined in *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All*.[2]

We will maintain our existing target for *all* local authorities to operate choice-based lettings systems by 2010, and extend this target to include all social rented housing, shared ownership and low cost home ownership options.

We will encourage the extension of CBL schemes to cover the private rented sector, and make it as easy as possible for tenants to move between local authority, housing association and privately owned accommodation.

We want to see CBL schemes developing on a regional or sub-regional basis.

What is Choice-Based Lettings?

Choice-based lettings (CBL) schemes are a way of allocating social housing through giving tenants a greater say over where they live.

The schemes allow people to apply for advertised social housing vacancies – often in the local press or through an inter-active website. Applicants can see the full range of available properties and apply for any home to which they are matched. The successful applicant is the person with the highest priority for the property which they have bid for.

[1] Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott at the Labour Party Conference – September 2004.

[2] *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All – A Five Year Plan* from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – published in January 2005.

Why is CBL a good thing?

Giving people a choice and a stake in where they live will lead to:

- **More satisfied tenants, who stay longer, pay the rent and look after their homes.**

This in turn will ensure more stable, viable and inclusive communities.

Tenants welcome CBL as a more open and transparent system which offers greater control and choice.

> *"You feel more that you are in charge. And you can find a place that you think is better for you, rather than have them think you can go here and it might not be suitable."*[3]

And there's no doubting the enthusiasm of landlords who have adopted CBL. CBL schemes have generated renewed interest in social housing and in many cases improved housing management performance. The end result is a marked improvement in the relationship between tenant and landlord.

> *"We save money because it is less labour-intensive. There is an initial set-up cost because of the technology, but in the longer run it is definitely more efficient. We have been able to reduce the number of staff administering the scheme and divert those resources into other areas, for example tackling anti-social behaviour, which has become an emerging priority for our tenants."*[4]

Partnership working and the regional agenda

Partnerships between local authorities and registered social landlords, working together with private landlords wherever possible, are the best way to ensure the greatest choice and flexibility in meeting tenants' housing needs.

These arrangements – operating on a regional or sub-regional basis – can:

- Enable mobility.
- Break down artificial boundaries and recognise existing housing and labour markets.
- Reduce costs by enabling partners to share costs and for larger RSLs to cut the costs of being involved in a several different schemes.
- Bring together a larger pool of available housing, giving tenants more choice and helping to ease localised problems of high demand.

[3] *Applicant's Perspectives on Choice-Based Lettings*, BMRB, 2004.

[4] Chris Wood, Director of Housing, Newham Council: Oral evidence to the PASC enquiry on *Choice, Voice and Public Services*, 25 November 2004.

Offering more options and support for those looking for a new home

We want councils to adopt a 'housing options' approach alongside their CBL scheme through:

- Promoting a wider range of housing options – shared ownership, low cost owner occupation, the private rented sector, mutual exchange.
- Making more and better information available about other housing services such as care and repair, staying put initiatives and adaptation services.
- Offering one-stop shops, advice centres.
- Increasing mobility, particularly marketing properties and neighbourhoods in low demand areas.

The Choice Based Lettings vision for 2010

This will include:

- Widening the choice social landlords are able to offer to all their tenants, especially supporting the most vulnerable in society to choose where they live, by offering access to a wider range of homes.
- Ensuring local authorities and housing associations work in partnership. It makes more sense for councils and housing associations to work together than to set up competing CBL schemes.
- Including privately rented homes in the CBL schemes.
- Offering everyone, who is considering shared ownership and other low cost home ownership options, equal choice.
- A regional or sub-regional approach of landlords joining together over a geographical area to share resources and offer choice.

To deliver our strategy we will:

- Provide funding to support the creation of sub-regional and regional choice-based lettings schemes.
- £4m will be available over three years – 2005/6–2007/8.
- Work in partnership with the Housing Corporation to encourage local authorities and housing associations to work together to deliver choice to their tenants.

- Work with housing providers, landlord associations and other stakeholders, including the voluntary sector, to ensure CBL systems meet the needs of vulnerable tenants and the BME community.
- Develop good practice for landlords, through guidance, and national and regional events.
- Produce statutory guidance to assist authorities in introducing CBL.
- Appoint a national CBL adviser to work with social landlords on how best to set up new, and develop existing, CBL schemes.
- Continue to look at the longer term impacts of CBL on issues such as tenancy sustainment and community cohesion through research, including studying the views of applicants and tenants.
- Complete a Race Impact Assessment of the choice-based lettings policy and the allocation legislation.
- Improve nomination arrangements between local authorities and RSLs by promoting common housing registers.
- Ensure developments in other policy areas take account of the CBL agenda, particularly the homelessness prevention agenda, and improving access to the private rented sector and low cost home ownership options.

Further Information

Further information on Choice-Based Lettings is available on the ODPM website:

www.odpm.gov.uk/choicebased-lettings

Further copies of this leaflet are available on the website at the address above or from:

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Publications
PO Box N0. 236
Wetherby LS23 7NB
Tel: 08701 226 236
Fax: 08701 226 237
Email: odpm@twoten.press.net

Or contact:

Frances Walker, ODPM, Zone 1/H4, Eland House, London SW1E 5DU
Tel: 020 7944 3666, Fax: 020 7944 3489

Product code: 05HC03050/4

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Arts Policy & Strategy Review

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To ask the Executive Board to endorse the draft Arts Policy and Strategy Review, attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board:

(1) comment on the content of the Policy and Strategy Review; and

(2) endorse the Policy and Strategy Review.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council produced its Cultural Strategy in 2001. At the time it was one of the first in the Country and held up as an example of good practice.

3.2 Subsequently it became a requirement to produce a Cultural Strategy as part of the Best Value process, but this requirement was removed in 2006, accepting that Culture should be embedded in the Community Strategy.

3.3 In 2007, Culture and Leisure Services undertook an assessment Towards an Excellent Service (TAES) that was externally validated by the IDeA.

3.4 TAES highlighted that the Cultural Strategy had not been refreshed since 2001. As the Authority had developed a separate Sports Strategy, and given that there was no longer a Best Value requirement, TAES suggested that an Arts Strategy be developed. It was argued that it would be good practice to have a clear strategic approach that could inform work streams.

3.5 Culture and Leisure Services were able to employ a Consultant, funded by the Arts Council to help produce an Arts Strategy.

3.6 The brief for the consultation was to produce a practical working document, with action plans that would be constantly reviewed and

updated.

3.7 The Employment, Learning and Skills PPB have discussed the Policy and Review, and recommend it to the Executive Board.

3.8 It is intended to produce a summary document for public circulation.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The intention is for the Arts Policy and Strategy Review to move to formal adoption by the Council.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 These are contained within the action plan and can be accommodated from existing budgets and external sources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The strategy proposes a range of participatory activities for children and young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The strategy encourages building local talent in the creative industries sector.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The strategy proposes arts projects in health care settings and the promotion of healthy lifestyles through dance.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The strategy promotes diversionary programmes for children and young people, projects to counter drug and substance misuse and projects that tackle specific issues of offending behaviour.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The strategy proposes projects contributing to community regeneration and public art to promote a sense of identity and place, contributing to the quality of urban design.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The lack of a strategy is a weakness in any inspection or assessment.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

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

None.

ARTS POLICY AND STRATEGY REVIEW

A report for Halton Borough Council by Garry Churchill

November 2008

This project is supported by Arts Council England, North West

Creative Options Consultancy Ltd
Redwood House, King's Drive, Hopton, Stafford ST18 0AJ
Tel. 01785 228099 Fax. 01785 259807 E-mail: info@creativeoptions.org.uk

ARTS POLICY AND STRATEGY REVIEW

A report for Halton Borough Council

CONTENTS

Executive Summary		3
Part 1:	Introduction and Context	
1.1	Introduction	5
1.2	What do we mean by 'the arts'?	5
1.3	National and regional policy for the arts	6
Part 2:	Review	
2.1	Overview: Arts provision in the Borough	7
2.2	Commitment by the Borough Council	8
2.3	The Brindley	9
2.4	Arts development work	10
2.5	Other Council services	10
2.6	External partnerships	12
2.7	Independent practitioners	14
2.8	Constraints and opportunities	15
2.9	Building on current achievements	17
Part 3:	Arts Policy	
3.1	The purpose of a policy and strategy	18
3.2	The corporate policy context	18
3.3	Aspiration and Policy	19
3.4	Strategic themes and objectives	20
Part 4:	Strategy	
4.1	Theme 1: A healthy community	22
4.2	Theme 2: Urban renewal and regeneration	24
4.3	Theme 3: Employment, learning and skills	25
4.4	Theme 4: Arts opportunities for children and young people	26
4.5	Theme 5: A safer community	27
4.6	Theme 6: Leadership and partnerships	28
Appendix		
1	Proposals for supporting creative industries development	29
2	A summary of national and regional policy for the arts	32
3	Summary of user group consultation comments	35
4	List of consultations	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is an Executive Summary of a review of Halton Borough Council's arts policy and strategy. It is a qualitative review, based on consultation with staff and service users, and an independent appraisal of the work of the arts service. The recommendations are those of Garry Churchill as an independent consultant and are offered for consideration by the Arts Development Team and the Borough Council to help in planning future delivery of arts development in Halton.

The purpose of the report is:

- to recognise and commend good practice
- to understand the relationship between arts development work and the Council's wider corporate objectives
- to identify areas for service development and improvement
- to suggest areas where cross-service working can be strengthened
- to help the Arts Development Team in developing their action plan and business plan for the next phase of arts development work in Halton.

Overview

The Borough of Halton has some important strengths in the arts, including its award-winning venue The Brindley, the successes of the enthusiastic and dedicated arts team in encouraging so many people to take part in the arts in different ways, the role of the arts in local schools and increasingly with younger children in the Children's Centres, and in the growing contribution by independent artists and practitioners attracted to work here.

Interest in the arts has undoubtedly grown since the Borough Council had the confidence and vision to create The Brindley. Nevertheless in an area without a strong local tradition of taking part in the arts, with relatively sparse public transport links across the Borough in the evenings, and the river crossing even now seen as a barrier by some people, there is a continuing challenge in encouraging people to have the confidence to find out what they're good at and what they might become interested in.

While the value of arts and culture in contributing to the quality of life is increasingly understood and accepted, there are still many people who have unequal opportunities to enjoy taking part in and experiencing the arts. The challenge – and the reward – for the Borough Council is to support an arts development programme which encourages people to develop their creativity, and in doing so to achieve some of the other community benefits, as outlined in this report.

Policy

In renewing its arts strategy the Borough Council's aspiration is that:

- the value of arts and culture will be recognised right across the work of the Council
- the importance of arts and culture as a key driver of the quality of life will be acknowledged in corporate strategies

- the Council will support and encourage high quality arts activities which have integrity, and in which imagination, originality and innovation are valued.

The policy of the Council is to develop and support opportunities for everybody in Halton:

- to be able – and encouraged – to take part in and experience high quality arts activity, and
- to be able to share in the social, educational and economic benefits which the arts can offer.

This policy is delivered not only through the Arts Development Team and the work of The Brindley, but also through other services including schools and other services for children and young people, libraries, and the parks and countryside service.

Strategic themes

The arts strategy will:

1. contribute to **community health and well-being**, through arts projects in health-care settings, arts development activities with specific target groups (such as older people) and promoting healthy lifestyles through dance.

2. contribute to **urban renewal and regeneration**, through managing The Brindley as a creative focus for the Borough, through outreach and neighbourhood projects which contribute to community regeneration, and through developing a strategic approach to public art so as to promote sense of identity and pride of place and contribute to the quality of design.

3. support **employment, learning and skills** in the creative sector, through building local talent and nurturing the growth of the independent artists sector and independent arts groups.

4. contribute **opportunities for children and young people**, through formal and informal learning opportunities and a range of participatory arts activities.

5. contribute to **a safer community**, through arts projects which animate the community and promote community cohesion, diversionary programmes for children and young people, and arts projects which contribute to strategies to counter drug and substances misuse or which tackle specific issues of offending behaviours.

6. provide **leadership** and develop **partnerships**, through maintaining and developing a strategic framework for the arts in Halton, developing internal partnerships and collaborations with services of the Council and developing external partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.

The strategy sets out the workstreams to be implemented to deliver each of these themes, and the improvement outcomes that will be expected.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This section introduces the report and summarises the national and regional context.

1.1 Introduction

This report is the outcome of a review led by consultant Garry Churchill, commissioned by Halton Borough Council, to consult widely across those involved with the arts in the Borough, with service users and with other Council services, and to provide an independent external perspective to help the staff of the Arts Development Team in drawing up a revised policy and strategy to guide their work over the next few years.

Following the introduction this report includes:

- Part 2 – a review of arts activity and provision in Halton
- Part 3 – an updated arts policy and strategic themes and objectives
- Part 4 – the strategy to enable the improvement outcomes to be achieved.

An Appendix includes:

- Proposals for supporting creative industries development
- A summary of national and regional policy for the arts
- Summary of user group consultation comments
- List of consultations.

An Action Plan, not included within this report, has been prepared to guide the delivery and implementation of the strategy set out in this paper.

We are grateful to all who took the time to discuss the arts in Halton and contribute to this review – including all those listed at Appendix 4 – but especially to Sue Davies, Cultural Services Manager, and her colleagues in the arts team Claire Bigley, Ruth Bates (until May 2008), Martin Cox and Louise Hesketh.

1.2 What do we mean by 'the arts'?

The arts are understood within this strategy to encompass:

- the **performing arts**, including music, dance, drama and other performance
- the **visual arts**, including crafts and public art
- the **literary arts**, including literature, poetry, reading, writing and the spoken word
- **media arts**, including film, video, broadcasting, digital creativity and the creative use of communications technology, such as creating material for use on social networking sites.

1.3 National and regional policy for the arts

Overall national policy for the cultural sector is led by the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** (DCMS). The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. DCMS aims to maximise the contribution the arts sector makes to its strategic priorities of:

- children and young people
- communities
- the economy
- delivery.

Most of DCMS's support for the arts is channelled through **Arts Council England**, which works "to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives".

'*Great art for everyone*' is the Arts Council's new national strategy for 2008-2011, with specific priorities for:

- digital opportunities
- contemporary visual arts
- children and young people
- the four-year Cultural Olympiad which began in September 2008 leading up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012.

Arts Council England North West will be producing a regional edition of the plan, outlining key initiatives and addressing how they will deliver the mission in this region. Between 2008 and 2011 the regional office will be supporting 110 arts organisations in the region with an investment of £72 million over three years; none of these is however based in Halton. Local arts projects can potentially apply to the recently revised Lottery-funded Grants for the Arts open access funding programme, for which about £5m is available annually in the North West.

Further information on national and regional policy on the arts is attached as Appendix 2.

PART 2: REVIEW

This section provides an overview commentary on the arts on Halton.

2.1 Overview: Arts provision in the Borough

The main **strengths** are:

1. The Brindley, as a focal point for arts activity across the Borough
2. the arts development team, and the passion, integrity, commitment and resourcefulness which they bring to their programme of work
3. the role of the arts in the Borough's schools and increasingly in the Children's Centres, with the educational value of the arts firmly on the agenda of the Children & Young People's Service
4. the way in which many other Council services use the arts, in partnership with the arts team, as a way of helping them deliver their services
5. the growing contribution of independent practitioners, many of whom have been drawn here by the leadership of the arts team and The Brindley
6. the commitment by the Borough Council to using the arts as one of the means by which the quality of life is improved for all residents, contributing to corporate objectives such as educational aspiration and achievement, health and well-being and urban renewal.

The main **weaknesses** are:

1. the relatively small and under-developed scale of professional arts activity other than that directly managed or supported by the Council
2. limited inward investment in the arts, and a limited range of independent partners, meaning there is a considerable dependence on the continuing support of the Borough Council
3. a dependence on artists and arts organisations from further afield to complement the contribution made by locally-based artists
4. limited availability of suitable venues other than The Brindley, especially for specialist facilities such as dance and film/video/media work
5. limited involvement in the creative industries, with a small-scale presence locally, although there is scope for stronger links with the further education sector and for help through business support initiatives.

The strategy will build on the existing strengths, and seek to make progress in addressing some of the perceived weaknesses.

The work of the arts development team has enabled many people to take part in creative activities, and the bold stroke of setting up The Brindley has provided an enormous boost to local cultural opportunities, but this needs to be understood within a local context of relatively low levels of other professional arts activity.

While Halton Borough Council is ambitious and determined to improve opportunities for local people, it is constrained by the relatively small size of the Borough, and a degree of weakness caused by the physical division by the River Mersey.

2.2 Commitment by the Borough Council

Within Halton Borough Council there is understanding and support at both political and management levels for the role of culture. There is a recognition that the arts provide opportunities to achieve a range of corporate objectives. However there are some people within the Council who feel that they do not know enough about the work of the arts team, which has perhaps been rather modest in drawing attention to its achievements.

For example, there have been arts projects which have involved some of the young people who are typically difficult to engage through more traditional approaches, such as projects addressing domestic violence, binge drinking and teenage car crime. Dance projects have been supported through the Healthy Living Programme. It is reported that murals in subways have reduced vandalism.

> ***Ten Green Bottles*** *was a project led by Arcane Dance Company, which devised and toured workshops and performances to secondary schools highlighting the dangers of binge drinking. The project was funded by the Drugs Action team, the Healthy Living Programme and Halton Strategic Partnership.*

One recent neighbourhood project used graffiti art to promote community engagement by young people:

> *"Young people in Runcorn had something to spray as they took up graffiti lessons on the Palace Fields estate.*
>
> *"Budding Banksys interested in honing their street art skills enjoyed the two-week* ***graffiti art workshop*** *backed by Riverside Housing, Arena Housing, Four Estates, Halton Borough Council's Neighbourhood Management Project and Area Forum.*
>
> *"Liverpool-based Zap Graffiti taught the skills of street art to around 13 youngsters ranging from ages seven to 13 during the summer holidays. They also learned about the history of graffiti and the positive and negative aspects of street art.*
>
> *"Children from the four estates of Palace Fields, Murdishaw, Hallwood Park and Halton Brook initiated the project when they put forward suggestions about how to tackle illegal graffiti in the area in the form of a DVD film shown to bosses from Runcorn's neighbourhood services.*
>
> *"Mark Browne, community initiatives officer for Riverside Housing, said* 'There has been a very positive response from the local community to the completed artwork. It really does brighten up the area. And because local kids have produced the art themselves we're hoping that other youngsters will take pride in it to make sure that it's not defaced.'"[1]

[1] Source: www.24dash.com, social housing and public sector news website.

2.3 The Brindley

Since its opening in 2004 The Brindley has been a great success from a number of perspectives:

- it has raised aspirations and become symbolic of a confident future for the Borough, winning awards and raising the reputation of Halton across the region and beyond
- it has provided a creative focus for the Borough, and a focus for audience development
- the venue itself is generally liked by users and is one of the best venues of its scale in the North West region
- arts development work and professional performances and exhibitions are well integrated, so the venue is much stronger than in places where the venue and the arts development work are separated
- the programme serves many different market niches while maintaining an integrity in the originality and quality of work it presents
- it has created new audiences through its programme offering and participatory events
- the wide range of classes and workshops provide structured opportunities to take part regularly for children, teenagers and older people
- the 'Open' project encourages new participation and has opened up new opportunities for people
- there is some evidence that it is beginning to attract audiences from further afield who are attracted by the programme, the venue itself and its location, and its attractiveness as an alternative proposition to attending large scale venues in Liverpool or Manchester.

Several people who were consulted declared that "The Brindley is the best thing that has happened to Halton".

At the same time it is clear that:

- there is a continuing reluctance by some people in the Borough, especially from the north bank of the river, to travel to Runcorn
- access by public transport, while excellent during the day from all parts of the Borough, is limited in the evenings
- there is a continuing challenge in raising the profile of the venue locally and regionally.

While The Brindley is a magnificent achievement, it is not possible for one single venue to meet all the Borough's needs. In particular:

- *there is a continuing demand for a more informal music venue and for rehearsal spaces*
- *any plans for managed workspaces or artists' studios for fledgling creative industries would need to be developed at other locations*
- *there will continue to be a need for arts activities distributed around the Borough in community locations for people who are unable or reluctant to travel to The Brindley.*

2.4 Arts development work

The Borough has a team of arts development officers who command respect from service users, artists and practitioners and external stakeholders for their commitment and integrity and are well connected with regional and national developments in their fields. They are experienced, imaginative, creative and resourceful, and have initiated a wide range of work for many different target user groups. User comments on the team are overwhelmingly positive (see Appendix 3). Core services including advice, information, support of voluntary and professional artists and arts groups, grants schemes and help in securing funding from other sources are all highly valued.

The work of the arts development team is well integrated with the programming of workshops, classes, performances and exhibitions at The Brindley, while still having a distinct identity through a range of collaborations and off-site projects. With specialisms in dance, drama and music the current team offers a range of expertise and contacts, and all the current officers have extended beyond their own core strengths to cover other areas of work.

Although some local authorities have moved away from the model of having an arts team based around areas of artform expertise, in favour of the posts being structured around the target user groups, there is no reason why the present model should not continue to serve Halton well given that the officers as a team focus on the Council's corporate priorities, and this will be more explicit in a new strategy with a renewed focus on outcomes.

Now that the venue has become well established there is the opportunity for the arts team to give more attention to development work which takes place in other locations, such as children's centres and community centres, although there are few other specialist spaces, and other Council venues are often under pressure for space or availability. With recent market research data available, it will be possible now to plan specific targeted interventions in neighbourhoods or localities where it is clear that there are flat spots or low levels of participation.

2.5 Other Council services

The Arts Development Team has excellent links across many other Council services, providing advice and contacts to services which use the arts as part of their delivery. Much of the collaboration is however informal or even casual, with other services not always sure of what the Arts Development Team can offer or of the limitations of the Arts Development Team, which occasionally gives rise to a degree of misunderstanding.

It would be desirable to consider how better sharing, information exchange, collaboration and forward planning could be put in place but without another tier of meetings which would be burdensome for all concerned.

- **Schools and Children's Centres:** The Borough has the highest proportion of schools holding the *Artsmark* award of all local authorities in England. This is a remarkable achievement and reflects the support available, led by the Arts Education Development Officer. It is evidence that both arts teaching in the curriculum and the provision of extra-curricular activities is meeting the standards of this nationally accredited scheme.

  Schools in the Borough have benefited from the work of professional artists and practitioners enriching the opportunities they provide, through projects such as writers' residencies and workshops by dance artists. They are networked through the Arts Education Network.

  The arts team has growing links with the children's centres, providing expertise and advice on professional practitioners for activities such as early years dance and movement programmes and helping facilitate dance projects.

  Arts programmes with early years children are emerging and with the new national Early Years Framework there will be opportunities for more planned and structured use of activities such as dance and movement, arts and crafts and music. However if the programmes in children's centres continue to develop they would need more support from the arts team which may present difficulties in terms of capacity.

- **Youth work**: Arts activities are not at present strongly embedded in youth work, despite the interest in the **H208 Festival of Youth Culture**, and there is scope to strengthen the 'cultural offer' to children and young people especially with the Government's goal (now being piloted in ten places across England) of ensuring that five hours of cultural activities, including sports and arts, should be available in and out of school to all young people.

- **Parks**: Arts events are used as one of the ways of animating the Borough's attractive parks, open spaces and countryside sites, with arts as part of community events and artists engaged to encourage participation and use of the sites through activities such as music, theatre, circus skills and pottery workshops.

- **Libraries**: Many library initiatives promote reading, writing, poetry and literature, such as the events for the **National Year of Reading**, **National Storytelling Week** and other activities. Libraries are used as venues for reading groups and for arts activities such as exhibitions at Kingsway and elsewhere, regular classes in writing at Halton Lee and in arts, crafts and media at Widnes, and with the expected use of the newly refurbished community space at Halton Lea library. Arts form one of the strands of opportunities in adult learning, with a range of courses at Kingsway and other venues.

- **Splash**: Out-of-school programmes of diversionary activities for children and young people have included some arts activities, such as the making of a CD which emerged from a DJing and rap project.

- **Community Centres**: Most of the centres are used for some community-based arts activities, especially for activities organised by local groups. Murdishaw for example is one of the venues for the *Fit 2 Dance* programme, and Ditton has an extensive range including also painting, pottery, dance and drama. The community centres provide a channel for reaching people who may not be users of The Brindley, through the local contacts, expertise and resources of the centres, especially for initial engagement.

  There has been a pattern through the Touring Network of using some of the community centres as venues for small-scale professional touring performances but this has been inconsistent. The centres would like to have more programmed events and more arts development activities but there are constraints on scheduling flexibility because of the regular weekly events at the centres. Meanwhile better communications are needed across the Borough so that the activities of the community centres are more generally known. Although there is some demand for locally based performances the Borough Council would find it difficult to resource these in addition to using the specialist facilities at The Brindley.

- **Social Services**: The contribution that the arts can make to providing high quality experiences for people receiving social care is increasingly understood. A current initiative is a proposed pilot project to be commissioned as part of social care for adults with dementia, in partnership with local community groups, the Library service and perhaps jointly with a neighbouring local authority.

- **Drugs Action Team**: There is a history of arts collaborations, such as Ten Green Bottles (page 8) and recently a DVD project about overdose prevention, entitled 'High Risk' and made with service users from Ashley House.

2.6 External partnerships

The arts service is well connected locally and across the region. The individual officers are active in various professional fora which gives them a national context for their work.

- **Regional and Sub-regional**: Halton has links with Arts Council England at a regional level and with the Merseyside authorities through membership of the Merseyside Arts Partnership. From April 2009 there may be fresh opportunities for alliances on specific issues with the two new unitary Cheshire authorities as well as with those unitary boroughs such as Warrington.

- **Health**: The Merseyside Arts Partnership is focusing on a co-ordinating role for arts and health work across Merseyside as an inter-authority initiative, supported by Arts Council. One of the objectives is to develop a strategic influence with the Primary Care Trusts.

  Locally the PCT in Halton (and St Helens) has supported some issue-based arts work and there has been a history of projects, but these have not together been systematically evaluated for their impact and have not so far been strategically embedded within the health sector although some projects are continuing.

  *The **Scribes and Scribblers** creative writing group was initially set up to help people who were suffering from long term illness and were frequent attendees at GP surgeries. The group is now autonomous and meets regularly at The Brindley. It has published several volumes of writing including 'Worsley to Top Locks' with the support of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.*

  ***Time for Me** is a project for women with mild to moderate post-natal depression, set up by the arts team with the health visitor service, and now run in partnership with Sure Start, health workers and the Children's Centres.*

  ***Recharge** is a project for people over 50 suffering from limiting conditions and long term illness, and aims to reduce isolation through talking part in arts activities. The project continues on a largely self-managing basis with support from Healthy Living staff.*

  Recent research and proposals prepared for Halton Borough Council include the recommendations that there should be a renewed dialogue with the Halton and St Helens PCT and with the Healthy Living Programme, and that the possibility of setting up a part-time Arts for Health post be explored. The consultants' view was that "*Halton Borough Council Cultural Services cannot be the sole driver of Arts for Health programmes, and all arts for health related work should be jointly developed with a strategic partnership and shown to be delivering on the strategies for well-being and health development across the borough*" [2].

- **Heritage**: There are good arts links with Norton Priory Museum and Walled Gardens. There may be scope to develop links in future with the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre.

  ***Norton Priory** regularly works with artists and uses arts-based activities to help animate the site and as part of its community programmes in partnership with many different groups such as Age Concern, Day Centres, Children's Centres and others. Artists were engaged for example to work on a project about perceptions of disability through the ages. Creative writing has formed part of a programme for 'gifted and talented' young people devised with the schools curriculum advisers. There are weekly painting classes.*

  Norton Priory provides a temporary exhibition space, which is in great demand, and includes exhibitions curated by artists and with international work. There are also artists working on the site, with the Kitchen Gallery, an independent project sited in the Walled Garden, raku ceramics in the Mushroom House, and artists' studios.

  The Arts Development Team works closely with the staff of Norton Priory including contributing to the Heritage Access project, advising on arts projects and collaborating as partners.

[2] Source: *A Framework Report for the Delivery of Arts for Health in Halton 2008 onwards*. Nicky Duirs and Phil Burgess, May 2008.

2.7 Independent practitioners

- **Support for professional artists**: Artists and practitioners have been attracted by the excellent facilities at The Brindley and the supportive and encouraging environment promoted by the arts development team. Practical assistance with issues such as rehearsal space, marketing of events and links with schools has helped develop the viability of a professional freelance career for a number of artists and groups including Arcane Dance Company and Halton Actors in Residence (HAiR).

  The artistic reputation developed regionally and nationally by groups such as HAiR's performance at the Kendal International Women's Festival has reflected positively on Halton and contributed to an external perception of it as a Borough where artists and their work are nurtured and can flourish. There is potential for growth in the small but emergent independent arts sector, such as through the Loose Project.

  *The **Loose Project** has its origins as a music collective in 1996/97. It has been building the case for an informal music and rehearsal venue, which they had identified as a gap since the closure of the Queens Hall and the Queens Hall Studio when The Brindley opened in 2004.*

  Plans have been developed to re-open the Studio as a music venue and also as a base for Feedback magazine and other arts and community organisations. In 2008 with the support of the Borough Council £600,000 was secured from the Big Lottery Community Assets Fund.

  It is planned to open in June 2009.

- **Networking**: The artists and practitioners who live or work in Halton tend to know each other informally but are not necessarily well-networked together – there is no direct equivalent of the Halton Sports Partnership, although there is now a Cultural Partnership and there are some sector groups such as the visual artists' collective Markmakers (which has about 17 members, all professional practitioners). The views of those we have consulted suggest there is perhaps not a strong enough range of professional practitioners across the arts to develop an artists' forum at present, but there is scope to encourage networking and information flows through electronic communications.

  *This might include reviving the dormant **Raw Arts website*** (www.rawcreativity.co.uk) *as a platform and showcase for local independent practitioners, to strengthen its value as a resource, and linked to a regular e-circular to channel information, news, commissioning opportunities etc. The Raw Arts website will be complemented by the planned Cultivate website of the Halton Cultural Partnership which will provide an opportunity for local groups to have a profile.*

- **Support for voluntary sector arts groups**: Local voluntary sector arts groups are supported and encouraged by the Council including using the facilities at The Brindley where appropriate, such as by the Halton Music Society, a voluntary group that promotes professional classical music recitals. There is no strong desire from this sector though for improved networking or demand for more active interventions by the Borough Council. As noted above, the website planned by the Halton Cultural Partnership will give space for local groups to have a profile.

- **Building a career in the creative industries**: While the encouragement and advice of the arts team has been valued it is clear that there are few other sources of practical support for those wishing to develop a career in the creative industries. Moves to establish more opportunities for music training and accreditation are to be welcomed. There is scope for Riverside College to develop stronger links with the arts infrastructure of the Borough, given its role in offering courses to post-16 year olds in performing, visual and media arts.

Riverside College *provides education for most of the 16+ age group in Halton. There are A level and BTEC courses in a wide range of arts and media subjects. Advanced courses include a foundation diploma in art and design (with Chester University) and a foundation degree in theatre, applied drama and creativity, which started in September 2008 (with Edge Hill University).*

Specialist facilities include a drama studio, dance studio, recording studio and rehearsal spaces, and some use is made of The Brindley for public performances and events such as the launch in June 2008 of its own record label Indie Fire*.*

There are approximately 150 students per year taking Vocational Performing Arts courses and 100 taking Vocational Visual and Media Arts, as well as A level students. The College holds an industry week to promote links with the creative industries. There is scope for more regular dialogue between Riverside College and the Halton Arts Development Team and for stronger working links.

2.8 Constraints and opportunities

The role of local authorities in the arts is discretionary, not mandatory, and therefore the arts tend to be vulnerable, especially when budgets are under pressure. However an arts strategy which both responds to and stimulates local need and demand is essential as part of the community leadership role of local authorities.

The arts are intrinsically valuable, and this has been reaffirmed in recent statements by both Arts Council England and by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, after a decade in which the arts have been promoted largely for their instrumental benefits in delivering some of the great policy themes such as social inclusion, educational progress and economic development. The arts policy needs to recognise both the value of facilitating access to high quality arts provision for all people in the borough, and the importance of utilising the opportunities presented by the arts to help achieve other things.

Local authority arts services vary widely, because unlike most other local government services they are not highly specified by central government. They are therefore an opportunity to build on local strengths and characteristics, and to make a strong contribution to distinctiveness of place. This very diversity has however made it difficult to establish national performance indicators, which do justice to the wide variety of approaches.

Some **general constraints** on local authority arts services include:

- the continuing restrictions on local authority finances and the need to find 'efficiency' savings year on year
- the priority being given in use of Lottery funds to planning for 2012 and the Olympics

- the relative weakness nationally for the arts, compared with other cultural services, in terms of an under-developed performance measurement framework, reflecting the great diversity of approaches across the country.

Some **specific constraints** having a local effect include:

- despite its acknowledgement of the value of the arts Halton Borough Council is a relatively small authority with many pressing demands on its budgets
- the independent arts sector in the borough is small and relatively fragile
- the limited investment in Halton by the Arts Council, following the expiry of the funding towards the Brindley, with no regularly funded organisations in the borough, and Arts Council three-year spending plans fixed for 2008-2011
- the challenge of securing the sustainability of work of proven value when fixed term project funding expires.

There are also significant opportunities for developing the arts during the next few years, including:

1. For **young people**:
   - interest by the Arts Council in promoting the *Artsmark* award to schools[3], and the *Arts Award* as an accredited award for young people's individual achievements[4]
   - interest by Government in promoting the concept of 'cultural entitlement' for all young people
   - the chance to build on strong and growing interest in dance development, especially with young people
   - the opportunity to develop a more coherent policy for youth arts as Halton develops an integrated approach to supporting young people.

2. For **the wider community**:
   - opportunities to use arts activities in social care situations such as in improving the quality of life of older people
   - opportunities through the arts to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities or health or mental health issues
   - opportunities to build on the important role of volunteers on whom the organisation of so many community activities depends.

3. For investment in **the physical infrastructure**:
   - scope to incorporate public art into major new capital investments, especially with infrastructure projects such as Widnes Waterfront, Runcorn Canal Quarter and the £390m Mersey Gateway new bridge
   - opportunities arising through the ambitious *Building Schools for the Future* programme, with an estimated £90-100m for Halton (as part of Wave 6 of the BSF programme), with the chance to influence conceptual thinking about the community role of new schools as well as arts interventions in their design.

[3] As noted earlier, Halton has an outstanding record of achievement in the number of local schools gaining the *Artsmark* award.

[4] The Brindley is an approved centre for the young people's *Arts Award*, and the officers in the Arts Development Team have had training as assessors. A pilot project will see a number of young people working for the Bronze level award by April 2009.

2.9 Building on current achievements

The arts matter, to the people of Halton and to the Borough Council, for the contribution they make to social, educational, economic and environmental aspects of quality of life.

With an increased emphasis for local authorities on *outcomes*, rather than *outputs*, the next phase of arts development in the Borough will need to establish more consistent evidence about *impact* and '*value added*, especially in helping to achieve:

- **equality**, with the arts contributing to efforts to 'close the gap' and raise the level of aspirations and achievements

- **cohesion**, building sense of place and contributing to pride of place, helping to unify the Borough despite its different neighbourhood traditions, and improving the cultural opportunities available to all people living here.

PART 3: ARTS POLICY

This section sets out an updated arts policy and strategic themes for discussion by Halton Borough Council.

3.1 The purpose of a policy and strategy

The arts policy and strategy provides a framework to assist in achieving the Council's overall mission and corporate objectives. The policy and strategy is intended to guide future planning and allocation of resources and to assist in negotiations both internally and with external partners.

An Action Plan has also been drawn up providing more detail about proposed implementation, and allocations of staff and financial resources are agreed in the internal Service Plans and individual Work Plans.

A more user-friendly summary of the policy and strategy will be prepared for a wider public including for use on the Council's website and for other public information and advocacy purposes.

3.2 The corporate policy context

The Borough Council's **vision** is that:

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

The Council's **key priorities**, as set out in the Corporate Plan, are:

1. a healthy Halton
2. Halton's urban renewal
3. employment, learning and skills in Halton
4. children and young people in Halton
5. a safer Halton
6. corporate effectiveness and business efficiency.

These provide a **framework for the arts strategy** through the following themes, reflecting the Council's key priorities:

1. a healthy community
2. urban renewal and regeneration
3. employment, learning and skills
4. arts opportunities for children and young people
5. a safer community
6. leadership and partnerships

with a focus throughout on **improvement outcomes**.

3.3 Aspiration and Policy

The Council's **aspiration** for the arts is that:

- the value of arts and culture will be recognised right across the work of the Council, both through the work of the Arts Development Team and through other services
- the importance of arts and culture as a key driver of the quality of life will be recognised and represented in corporate strategies
- the Council will support and encourage high quality arts activities which have integrity, and in which imagination, originality and innovation are valued.

The **policy** of the Council is to develop and support opportunities for everybody in Halton:

- to be able – and encouraged – to take part in and experience high quality arts activity, and
- to be able to share in the social, educational and economic benefits which the arts can offer.

This policy is delivered through key services provided by the Arts Development Team:

- strategic leadership of arts development across the Borough
- partnerships with professional and voluntary sector providers, regional bodies and other agencies
- managing The Brindley and its programme, including outreach, as the Borough's flagship arts venue
- commissioning, managing or supporting arts development work
- providing information, advice, support and networking to the arts sector, other services of the Council and to external partners
- a grants scheme for funding community arts projects and development work.

Arts are also provided or facilitated through other Borough Council services including:

- libraries
- schools, children's centres, the work of the curriculum advisers and other services for children and young people
- parks and countryside.

3.4 Strategic themes and objectives

The strategic objectives are grouped around six themes, with clear objectives and a focus on outcomes:

Theme	*Objective*	*Outcomes*
1. A healthy community	To contribute to community health and well-being through: • arts projects in health-care settings • arts development activities with specific target groups (such as older people) • promoting healthy lifestyles through dance.	• More use of social and cultural approaches as an alternative to medical or pharmacological interventions. • Engaging new users and increased participation by target groups. • Increased participation in activities such as dance.
2. Urban renewal and regeneration	To contribute to urban renewal and regeneration through: • managing The Brindley as a creative focus for the Borough and for its role in wider community regeneration • outreach and neighbourhood projects which contribute to community regeneration • developing a strategic approach to public art, to promote sense of identity and pride of place and contribute to the quality of design and urban renewal/regeneration.	• Sustainability and viability of The Brindley. • Increased participation in target neighbourhoods. • Environmental and public realm improvements.
3. Employment, learning and skills	To support employment, learning and skills in the creative sector through: • building local talent • nurturing the growth of the independent artists sector and independent arts groups.	• Capacity building and a stronger independent sector. • Economic benefits with the growth of a sustainable pool of arts organisations and artists.
4. Arts opportunities for children and young people	To contribute opportunities for children and young people through: • formal and informal learning opportunities • a range of participatory arts activities.	• Increased participation by children and young people. • Increased aspirations and achievements.

continued…

5. A safer community	To contribute to a safer community through: • arts projects which animate the community and promote community cohesion • diversionary programmes for children and young people • arts projects which contribute to strategies to counter drug and substances misuse • arts projects which tackle specific issues of offending behaviours.	• Joined-up approach to reaching target audiences, working with other services to focus on identified priority areas. • Increased community cohesion. • More positive attitudes and reduced anti-social behaviour by young people.
6. Leadership and partnerships	To provide leadership and develop partnerships through: • maintaining and developing a strategic framework for the arts in Halton • developing internal partnerships and collaborations with services of the Council • developing external partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.	• Effective application of people and financial resources to achieve strategic outcomes. • Effective partnerships internally and externally including the arts having a voice in the LSP.

The specific workstreams to support these objectives and achieve these outcomes are set out on the following pages.

PART 4: STRATEGY

This section sets out more detail about the strategies to deliver on each of the themes.

4.1 Theme 1: A healthy community

The arts service will contribute to community health and well-being through:

- arts projects in health-care settings
- arts development activities with specific target groups such as older people
- promoting healthy lifestyles through dance.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- more use of social and cultural approaches as an alternative to medical or pharmacological interventions
- engaging new users, through increased participation by target groups
- increased participation in activities such as dance.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. **Arts and health**, including:
   - More arts projects in partnership with the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (such as a recent video project devised by young people with The Brindley).
   - Take part in sub-regional initiatives through the Merseyside Arts Partnership to develop arts and health work as an inter-authority initiative, supported by Arts Council.
   - Explore the scope for establishing a part-time co-ordinator to develop arts in health opportunities in partnership with the PCT.
   - Explore further collaborations relating to the key priorities of mental health, ageing, young people's issues (including teenage pregnancy, sexual health and drugs awareness), men's health and training for arts and health staff.

2. **Active lifestyles**, including:
   - Offer a range of youth dance programmes.
   - Maintain the dance development programme, at The Brindley, at off-site locations and with other services e.g. Children's Centres.
   - Continue to develop programmes such as Fit 2 Dance and Years Ahead projects (for the over 50s).

3. **Audience development**[5], including:
   - Devise and implement joint initiatives with Sports Development (the Active People survey provides data on areas of low take-up).
   - Devise and implement specific initiatives to encourage first-time audiences at The Brindley.
   - Devise and implement specific initiatives to engage more young adults, including different marketing aimed at the needs of different age groups.

[5] Note: 'audience development' means engaging people in activities as participants as well as audiences, at The Brindley and at other locations, with the objectives of involving new users, from a broader range of people, and of attracting more frequent and varied participation by people who are already users.

- Devise and implement specific initiatives to encourage new involvement through arts development outreach projects.
- Further develop joint projects with libraries and with e.g. The Reader Organisation (at Liverpool University).

4. **2012 Olympics**:
   - Work with other services and authorities and the North West Olympics Co-ordinator to develop a cultural programme related to the 2012 Olympics.

4.2 Theme 2: Urban renewal and regeneration

The arts service will contribute to urban renewal and regeneration through:

- managing The Brindley as a creative focus for the Borough and for its role in wider community regeneration
- outreach and neighbourhood projects which contribute to community regeneration
- developing a strategic approach to public art, to promote sense of identity and pride of place and contribute to the quality of design and urban renewal/regeneration.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- sustainability and viability of The Brindley as a creative focus
- increased participation in target neighbourhoods
- environmental and public realm improvements.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. **The Brindley**, including:
   - Carry out market research (specific and local, not generalised) to understand the views of users and non-users, to help shape audience development strategies.
   - Use market research data (e.g. ACORN data and findings of Active People survey) to target people in areas where there are currently low levels of participation.
   - Promote the venue more strongly beyond the Borough both to enhance the reputation of the Borough and to help the venue's sustainability by contributing to earned income.
   - Audience development work (as Theme 1.3).

2. **Outreach work**, including:
   - Devise and implement development work, with other cultural services in the borough, through specific interventions in neighbourhoods or localities where there are low levels of participation, e.g. the 'super output areas' identified in the work on Neighbourhood Management (such as the pilot project in the West Bank area of Widnes).

3. **Public art**, including:
   - Work to achieve a strategic influence with the Council's Environment Department (which includes Planning, Economic Regeneration, Major Projects and Highways); this may include the possibility of a specialist post on a part-time or freelance basis to provide expert advice.
   - Advocate for the adoption and implementation of the Planning Guidance Note and Commissioning Guide.
   - Seek to influence the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme with conceptual thinking about the community role of new schools as well as arts interventions in their design.
   - Seek to influence major infrastructure projects such as Widnes Waterfront, Runcorn Canal Quarter, the Mersey Gateway new bridge and new health facilities planned for the Borough.

4.3 Theme 3: Employment, learning and skills

The arts service will support employment, learning and skills in the creative sector through:

- building local talent
- nurturing the growth of the independent artists sector and independent arts groups in the Borough.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- capacity building and a stronger independent sector
- economic benefits with the growth of a sustainable pool of arts organisations and artists.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. Supporting professional and voluntary **artists and practitioners**, including:
   - Continue to offer a small grants and a small training grants programme.
   - Offer advice and assistance to artists, for example (i) to young bands, linking them to other sources of support and to promoters, and assist initiatives such as Loose Music and the Queen's Hall Studio project, and (ii) to visual artists and crafts makers and link them to other sources of support and to venues.
   - Improve networking for artists and arts groups, specifically by reviving and re-launching the Raw Arts website, and extending its range as a platform and showcase for local independent practitioners, to strengthen its value as a resource, including as a source of information to assist other Council services, providing a directory of artists and arts groups (with supporting information such as examples of work undertaken and names of independent referees). Complement this with a regular e-circular to practitioners to channel information, news, commissioning opportunities etc.
   - Strengthen support for the voluntary sector through the development of a DVD and website by the Cultural Partnership to make the voluntary sector more visible.
   - Build on existing links with neighbouring initiatives e.g. Cheshire Artists Network and Open Studios for the benefit of local artists and venues.

2. Supporting the **creative industries**, including:
   - Develop signposting and advice on progression routes.
   - Consider strategic alliance with agencies (such as ACME or CRISP) or with other local authorities, to counter the limited capacity.
   - Develop more formalised links with Riverside College: to collaborate on structured and planned workshops and artists' residencies, placements and practical experience to help local students considering a career in arts, crafts or media work, including technical support work; to facilitate opportunities for more advanced students to gain experience in working on community projects; and to maintain more regular contact between arts team and college staff, contributing the arts team's knowledge of the industry and the arts professions.
   - Offer work experience and mentoring for emerging artists and practitioners.
   - Look at possible opportunities through Building Schools for the Future to establish creative studios which could host artists in schools and act as incubator spaces for emerging creative businesses.

4.4 Theme 4: Arts opportunities for children and young people

The arts service will contribute opportunities for children and young people through:

- formal and informal learning opportunities for children and young people
- a range of participatory arts activities for children and young people.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- increased participation by children and young people
- increased aspirations and achievements.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. **Early years** work, including:
   - Develop the role of the arts team as a resource able to provide specialist advice to staff in CYPANs and the Children's Centres, and advising them on use of artists who are potentially available to deliver work.
   - Work through CYPANs and the Children's Centres to reach families with family learning and inter-generational work.

2. Supporting **education**, including:
   - Develop the role of the arts team as a resource able to provide specialist advice to curriculum advisers, headteachers and schools, advising them on use of artists who are potentially available to deliver work, contributing to CPD and INSET for teachers, and supporting the work of the Arts Education Development Officer in encouraging schools to apply for the *Artsmark* award and helping them to meet the standards of the programme, especially in areas such as dance where support is especially needed.
   - Plan workshops, residencies, exhibitions and performances which support schools' curricular needs, and the needs of the new Diploma in Creative and Media Studies, both through the programme of The Brindley and through links with artists and arts organisations.

3. Supporting **youth arts**, including:
   - Help to develop a Council-wide Youth Arts Policy as a statement of entitlement and service availability, working with the integrated Youth Service and with young people.
   - Work with the Borough's other cultural services towards the 'five hour offer' and the extended school day.
   - Pilot projects to promote the Young People's *Arts Award* as an accredited award, with the Positive Activities group.
   - Develop further opportunities through which young people can devise their own programming, building on the experience of H208 which included work run and managed by young people.
   - In response to young people's interest, develop film/video/media work, both at The Brindley and in conjunction with venues such as Riverside College with specialist facilities and equipment, and at new school buildings planned through BSF as part of wider community use and access.
   - Support proposals to establish a dedicated youth facility in Widnes which could increase the creative opportunities available to young people in the northern part of the borough.

4.5 Theme 5: A safer community

The arts service will contribute to a safer community through:

- arts projects which animate the community and promote community cohesion
- diversionary programmes for children and young people
- arts projects which contribute to strategies to counter drug and substances misuse
- arts projects which tackle specific issues of offending behaviours (such as vehicle crime).

Improvement outcomes will include:

- a joined-up approach to reaching target audiences, working together with other services to focus on identified priority areas
- increased community cohesion
- more positive attitudes and reduced anti-social behaviour by young people.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. **Community engagement**, including:
   - Support neighbourhood projects which promote a sense of local community.
   - Reach non-committed audiences through community animation projects in parks, open spaces and public spaces in town centre locations.
   - Assist community centres in their work of engaging local communities, including off-site and outreach work such as events, projects and community learning initiatives.
   - Discontinue attempts to provide a borough-wide Touring Network but make specific provision for rural communities (such as Prestonbrook) by buying into the Cheshire touring circuit.

2. **Diversionary programmes** for children and young people, including:
   - Devise and implement projects which promote positive images and roles for young people.
   - Devise and implement projects which tackle specific offending behaviours e.g. vehicle crime by young people.
   - Integrate arts and creative activities into Splash programmes to offer out-of-school creative opportunities.
   - Continue to offer out-of-school creative opportunities for children and young people at The Brindley.

Arts projects in partnership with the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team and with the PCT (see Theme 1) will also contribute to the theme of a safer community.

4.6 Theme 6: Leadership and partnerships

The arts service will provide leadership and develop partnerships through:
- maintaining and developing a strategic framework for the arts in Halton
- developing internal partnerships and collaborations with services of the Council
- developing external partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.

Improvement outcomes will include:
- effective application of people and financial resources to achieve strategic outcomes
- effective partnerships internally and externally including the arts having a voice in the LSP.

Specific workstreams will include:

1. **Advocacy**, including:
   - Consistent advocacy and profile-raising by the arts team.
   - Implement an improved website.
   - Promote and encourage artistic quality and integrity through the work of the arts team and their imagination, originality and innovation.
   - Work on evidence systems and PIs to ensure that impact and outcomes can be demonstrated and communicated.

2. **Working together internally**, including:
   - Ensure that the contribution the arts make to achieving corporate objectives is recognised in e.g. LAA.
   - Further development of cross-service working, and with improved planning mechanisms.
   - Develop the arts team's offering as an in-house consultancy resource including sharing information, contacts, ideas and advice with other services.
   - Develop the working relationships with the four CYPANs.

3. **Working together externally**, including:
   - Play an active role in Merseyside Arts Partnership and ensure Halton is able to benefit from sub-regional initiatives.
   - Explore the potential for links with other nearby local authorities, e.g. St Helens, for joint work on e.g. health, creative industries and in other areas where co-operation or joint action would be beneficial to Halton.
   - Maintain and develop the relationship with Arts Council England North West.
   - Maintain and develop the links with other regional and national networks, support structures and professional bodies.
   - Support Norton Priory Museum in its ambitious expansion plans which will offer enhanced arts opportunities as well as strengthening the Borough's heritage offer.

APPENDIX 1: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Introduction

As part of this review we were asked to consider the growth potential of the creative industries sector and to make some suggestions about what an appropriate and realistic role would be for Halton Borough Council.

Context

The creative industries are a growing sector of the economy:

- The creative economy accounts for over 7% of UK employment[6].
- Creative employment has grown strongly over the long run – by 3.2% p.a. from 1981 to 2006, compared with 0.8% p.a. for the broader UK economy[7].
- Self-employment and small businesses are characteristic of much of the sector: for example, in the designer fashion, the film, video and photography and the music and performing arts industries, small UK owned firms (0-9 employees) make the most significant contribution to turnover and employment[8].

Creative Industries Partnerships

In the North West, digital and creative industries are one of the development priorities set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. Arts Council England has worked with the North West Development Agency and other partners to build a network of three new Creative Industry Partnerships:

- in Cheshire (CRISP – www.cheshire.gov.uk/arts/arts_creative.htm)
- in Lancashire (Creative Lancashire –http://www.creativelancashire.org)

and also in Cumbria, working alongside the established industry agencies of:

- ACME on Merseyside (www.merseysideacme.com) and
- Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) in Manchester (www.cids.co.uk).

However in terms of regional planning, Halton and some of the other unitary authorities fall outside the remit of sub-regional bodies covering either Merseyside, Lancashire or Cheshire, and are not covered by one of the sub-regional creative industries development agencies.

Competitive advantages and disadvantages in Halton

The creative industries tend to gravitate towards larger cities, for the benefits of critical mass, larger pool of skilled workforce, more support structures, wider choice of physical infrastructure, and access to markets.

[6] Source: *Beyond the creative industries: Mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom*. Peter Higgs, Stuart Cunningham and Hasan Bakhshi. NESTA, 2008.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Source: *Creative Industry Performance: A statistical analysis for the DCMS*. Frontier Economics, London, 2007.

Halton's main advantages in developing creative industries include:

- The Brindley as a focal point for creative practitioners and cultural activities in the Borough
- the support of a dedicated team of arts development officers with artform specialisms, an advantage not shared by many of the neighbouring authorities
- a range of opportunities for freelance and commissioned work supported by the Borough Council.

There are also some aspects of the local economy, which could be turned to Halton's advantage in building a cluster of creative industries:

- the older parts of the town centres include low cost buildings which could potentially be adapted to become affordable managed workspaces or studios
- Halton is generally a low cost area
- there are excellent communications to Liverpool and Manchester.

There is potential, demonstrated by the high level of interest amongst young people (see the note in Part 2 about arts courses at Riverside College), and by the small but growing number of practitioners returning or relocating to Halton attracted by opportunities at The Brindley and in arts development, community and education work who find the context in Halton more supportive than in some other areas.

However the Borough does not have an economic development strategy focus on creative industries as a specific growth area, and is not covered by one of the sub-regional creative industries development agencies.

Potential to support Creative Industries in Halton

Within available resources, action that could be led by the Council includes:

1. Information and advice:

1.1. Provide information and advice to practitioners and would-be practitioners, both on the website and through individual surgeries.

1.2. Compile and circulate an occasional newsletter (only by e-mail) to artists and practitioners to inform them of news, opportunities, commissioning opportunities, freelance work opportunities etc., and information on who to contact in various services and other bodies.

1.3. Advise and support independent projects, which aim to increase opportunities for practitioners, such as the Loose Music Collective in its plans to develop the Queen's Hall Studio as a music venue, rehearsal space and base for independent practitioners.

2. Training and skills development:

2.1. Support local artists and practitioners through mentoring and shadowing opportunities, working with and alongside more experienced workers.

2.2. Develop more formalised links with Riverside College including:
- help develop placements and work experience for local students considering a career in arts, crafts or media work, including technical support work
- facilitate opportunities for more advanced students to gain experience in working on community projects
- maintain more regular contact between arts team and college staff, contributing the arts team's knowledge of the industry and the arts professions
- Riverside College to become an active member of the Halton Cultural Partnership.

2.3. Assist emergent groups by providing discretionary low cost access to rehearsal facilities and technical support at The Brindley.

3. Promotion and marketing:

3.1. Refresh and promote the currently dormant *Raw Arts* website (www.rawcreativity.co.uk) to extend its range as a platform and showcase for local independent practitioners, to strengthen its value as a resource, including as a source of information to assist other Council services, providing a directory of artists and arts groups (with supporting information such as examples of work undertaken and names of independent referees).

3.2. Profile locally based artists and practitioners through use of website and directory to make it easier for other Council services (e.g. Children and Young People's Service) and for independent agencies to contact them so that they could be considered for freelance or sessional work.

3.3. Work with Norton Priory Museum to promote the availability of the studios, exhibition opportunities and supporting facilities on that site.

4. Employment opportunities:

4.1. Engage locally based artists and practitioners to work on arts projects in the Borough, through the arts team and also in schools, youth work, early years work and other settings.

4.2. Promote opportunities for artists, crafts makers, photographers and film/video workers to show their work at The Brindley, libraries and other public venues.

4.3. Commission new work such as choreography, stage works, music and visual arts, crafts, and media work, for The Brindley and other settings.

5. Specialist interventions:

5.1. Consider the cost and potential benefits of either (i) buying into an existing creative industries support structure, such as ACME or CRISP, or (ii) commissioning a joint programme with one or more neighbouring authorities (e.g. Warrington).

APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY FOR THE ARTS

DCMS

Overall national policy for the cultural sector is led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

DCMS aims to maximise the contribution the arts sector makes to the strategic priorities of Children and Young People, Communities, the Economy and Delivery.

Specific aims are to:

- broaden access for all to a rich and varied artistic and cultural life
- ensure that the artistic activity we fund aspires to be world class
- ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop artistic talent and to achieve excellence in the arts
- develop the educational potential of all the nation's artistic and cultural resources
- raise standards of artistic and cultural education and training
- ensure an adequate skills supply for the arts and cultural sectors
- reduce the number of those who feel excluded from society, by using the arts.

Objectives for the period 2008-2011 are:

- Opportunity: encourage more widespread enjoyment of culture, media and sport
- Excellence: support talent and excellence in culture, media and sport
- Economic impact: realise the economic benefits of the Department's sectors
- Olympics: deliver a successful and inspirational Olympic and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy.

In February 2008 DCMS, in partnership with BERR and DIUS, published '*Creative Britain: New Talents for a New Economy*', a strategy document for the Creative Industries, which sets out 26 commitments through which the Government will take action to support the creative industries. The creative industries are seen as an important growth area nationally and regionally.

National initiatives

Some recent and current initiatives and opportunities, which may potentially impact on Halton, include:

1. The '**Five Hour Offer**': plans announced by Government in February 2008 that all children should be offered at least 5 hours of high quality arts and culture per week both in and outside of school (the '*Find Your Talent*' project), to be piloted initially in ten locations (in the North West these are Bolton Borough Council and the 'Liverpool City Region' Partnership serving three Merseyside neighbourhoods).

2. **Youth Dance**: a strengthened commitment to youth dance, with the appointment of the dancer and choreographer Wayne McGregor, to be the Government's first Youth Dance Champion, the publication in 2008 of a national Dance Review which set out ambitions to increase young people's participation in dance, an audit of dance in schools, and an expanded role for Youth Dance England. Government is committed to increasing access to dance for more young people, both in and out of school.
3. **The National Performance Framework**: the launch in March 2008 of '*A Passion for Excellence: an Improvement Strategy for Culture and Sport*', published by the Local Government Association, outlining a framework for improvement in the cultural sector in local government to support the development of the National Performance Framework.
4. The **Cultural Olympiad**: a £40 million fund to support cultural, artistic, educational and sporting activities among young people and communities across England leading to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has been launched.
5. **Voluntary arts**: an enhanced interest by the Department for Culture Media and Sport in amateur participation in the arts, with the release in July 2008 of the findings of the first ever national survey of amateur arts groups across England.
6. **Creative Partnerships**: Creative Partnerships, the Government's flagship creativity programme for schools and young people, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, is being rolled out more widely and some schools in Halton will now be participating in the programme.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England works "to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives". With new leadership nationally, and following the publication early in 2008 of the report '*Supporting excellence in the arts – from measurement to judgement*', commissioned by the Secretary of State for Culture from Sir Brian McMaster, the Arts Council has reviewed its national and regional priorities. '*Great art for everyone*' is the Arts Council's new national strategy for 2008-2011.

Specific national priorities are:

1. **digital opportunities**, including research, strategic innovation and capacity and skills-building
2. **visual arts**, to strengthen the contemporary visual arts including a national network of venues and development agencies providing high-quality visual art programmes, which includes enhancing Liverpool's reputation as a visual arts centre of excellence, both nationally and internationally
3. **children and young people**, with opportunities to experience high quality arts, to develop their own artistic skills and cultural understanding and to encourage the development of their other talents
4. the Olympic and Paralympic Games, including the four-year **Cultural Olympiad** which began in September 2008 leading up to the Games in 2012.

Arts Council England North West will be producing a regional edition of the plan, outlining key initiatives and addressing how they will deliver the mission in this region. ACENW works with the NWDA and other agencies to support the

development of the **digital and creative industries**, which are one of the development priorities, set out in the Regional Economic Strategy.

Investment plans for the next three years were announced in February 2008, with the North West regional office supporting 110 arts organisations in the region with an investment of £72 million between 2008 and 2011. A newly revised Lottery-funded Grants for the Arts open access funding programme was launched in May 2008, with about £5m available annually in the North West.

Amongst specific contributions to the work of local authorities are:

1. The Arts Council is involved in supporting the development and delivery of **Local Area Agreements**, including supporting the development of performance indicators. Engagement with the arts is recognised as contributing to cohesive communities within the new performance indicator framework (NI11).
2. Arts Council also publishes two national datasets broken down to LAA level that can be used for local targets: **Young People's Arts Awards**, an accredited award for individual young people recognising their efforts in the arts, and **Artsmark**, an award to schools based on their delivery of both curricular and extra-curricular opportunities in the arts.

Culture Northwest

The regional cultural consortium, established in 1999, has been a research, networking and advocacy organisation, working strategically through collaboration to champion the role of culture across the region and to build and drive the Regional Cultural Strategy.

Specific priorities in the current action plan are:

- establishing the North West as an international leader
- building citizenship through culture
- driving health improvement through cultural activity
- encouraging and enhancing partnerships across the region
- driving awareness of regional distinctiveness
- maximising cultural contributions to life-long learning
- building capacity within the cultural sector

Amongst current initiatives which impact on Halton are:

1. Culture Northwest is leading the regional programme for the Cultural Olympiad.
2. Culture Northwest works in partnership with local authorities on Regional Commentaries and Local Area Agreements to advocate the benefits of culture.
3. The Northwest Culture Observatory brings together resources to build the evidence base of evaluation and research.

However the (then) Culture Minister Margaret Hodge announced in July 2008 that the regional cultural consortia are to be wound up by March 2009, and that there will be a duty on the regional offices of the four key cultural sector support bodies (Arts Council, Sport England, English Heritage and the Museums Libraries and Archives Council) to collaborate on regional cultural policy and planning.

APPENDIX 3: CONSULTATION WITH SERVICE USERS

Service users were consulted for their views on what the arts service offers and their experiences as users. This was done on the basis of individual responses being non-attributable but contributing to an overview report. This is presented here.

Advice

People thought it was straightforward and easy to find out what help and advice was available, by phone and by literature.

> "*Very professional. Helped open up new ideas for me.*"

One artist commented of an officer:

> "*Such energy and enthusiasm… always a joy to work with [X]*'.

Support

Service users have benefited from practical support. This has included people being helped to develop initial ideas into fully formed projects.

One commented:

> "*I don't have a career in the arts but The Brindley has been very supportive in my personal artistic development mainly via Open and in the writing competitions it runs*".

Another commented that support and encouragement from the arts officers had

> "*raised my profile as a person involved in all aspects of amateur drama production*".

> "*[X] has worked really hard to develop the professionalism of local artists and has supported them and advocated them outside of the Borough.*"

None of those consulted had sought or received any help or support from Business Link in trying to develop the business aspects of their work as artists or practitioners.

Exhibitions at The Brindley

Artists who have exhibited at The Brindley were notably warm in their praise for the venue and for the support they had received.

> "*It gave me a personal boost and now that I have started freelance again it has provided me with a good piece for my portfolio. The Brindley were very generous both in terms of support and via an arts board funding bid.*"

> "*Extremely useful – one of the few good galleries in Cheshire.*"

> "*A perfect place to show the work. It gave my confidence a boost.*"
> "*A fantastic job – well displayed.*"

> "*A more professional venue than some others in the sub-region – one of the best non-city venues, with a high profile.*"

> "*Showing at The Brindley was extremely useful. It is one of the few good galleries in the Cheshire area that promotes a professional approach to venue, presentation, press coverage etc.*"

Marketing

The view was expressed by some users that marketing is under-invested and therefore potential is not being fully realised.

> "*Events do not seem to be advertised widely in Runcorn and Widnes… people often say they weren't aware of anything being on e.g. Halton Poet of the Year.*"

> "*Maybe publicity could reach out a bit wider.*"

> "*Maybe afforded a larger budget for advertising in local press. A lot of emphasis is on internet access (which is good)… but more publicity would be useful.*"

The point was made that events are not widely advertised, and that not everyone has ready access to the internet, or is accustomed to using the internet as a primary source of local "what's on" information. It is understood however that local paid-for advertising is not necessarily an effective use of limited resources and is not necessarily effective in broadening the audience.

At this stage in The Brindley's development it could be helpful to have the advice of an independent marketing expert to consider how to make best use of limited financial and human resources while trying to achieve the broader audience development objectives.

Appreciation

There was considerable appreciation for the work of individual officers.

> "*[Officer X] is a real jewel in Halton's crown and they are extremely lucky to have such an experienced and dedicated member of staff.*"

> "*The team were very open to new ideas and taking a risk… They presented the work in a professional way and helped at every step.*"

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

Halton Borough Council

Elected members:
- Cllr John Swain, Executive Board member and Chair of the Cultural Partnership

Cultural and Leisure Services:
- Howard Cockcroft, Operational Director, Cultural and Leisure Services and Community Safety

Arts Team:
- Sue Davies, Cultural Services Manager
- Claire Bigley, Drama Development Officer
- Ruth Bates, Dance Development Officer
- Martin Cox, Music Development Officer
- Louise Hesketh, Visual Arts Development Officer

The Brindley: venue staff
- Claire Jones, Venue Manager
- Pat Kershaw, Administration Manager
- Graeme Scragg, Technical and Production Manager
- Peter Bentham, Marketing/Sales and Information Manager

Community Development Team:
- Nicola Goodwin, Community Development Manager
- Lynda Holland, Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator
- Ian Atherton, Community Centres Manager
- Pauline Sinnott, Senior Community Development Officer
- Ditton Community Centre: Ken Neale, Centre Co-ordinator
- Murdishaw Community Centre: Mark McGinchey
- Grangeway Community Centre:

Sports Development:
- Sue Lowrie, Sport and Recreation Manager

Library Services:
- Paula Reilly-Cooper, Library Services Manager
- Janette Fleming, Reader Development Officer

Education:
- Ann Brian, Arts Education Development Officer
- Gill McGough, Advisory Teacher for Dance and PE/Sports
- Elaine Mullen, Extended Schools Development Worker (Widnes area)
- Val Armor, Service Delivery Manager (CYPAN4), and Angela Nicol, Play Development Worker, Children and Young People's Area Network (CYPAN4)
- Rebecca Tandy, Early Years Consultant
- Roger Harrison, Headteacher, St Gerard's RC Primary School (and Small Schools Arts Cluster)
- Paul Langford, KS2 Consultant for Literacy
- Dave Williams, Head of Halton Youth Service (Connexions)
- Andy Page, Education Business Partnership Manager

Other services:

- Ian Grady, Head of Strategic Policy and Partnership
- Richard Rout, Performance Management Officer
- Aileen Dunn, Substance Misuse Advocacy Manager, Drugs Action Team
- Ian Collins, Parks and Countryside Service
- Bill Morton, Parks and Countryside Service
- Stacy Murray, Adult Learning & MIS Team Leader, Adult Learning & Skills Development, Economic Regeneration

User groups and artists

- Arcane Dance: Jo Rhodes
- Alexis Butterworth, freelance dance artist
- Halton Actors in Residence: Louise Nulty and Jacky Pilton
- Ruth Spencer, freelance dance artist
- Markmakers (visual arts group): Claire Weetman
- Halton Cultural Partnership: meeting 7 July 2008
- Scribes and Scribblers (4 members, leader Evelyn Hayes)
- Steffan Jones-Hughes, artist
- Ian Bellard, artist
- Shaun Smyth, artist
- Beth Barlow, artist
- Roy Hayes, artist
- Loose Music Collective: Jaki Florek (e-mail)
- Centre 8 (11 members)
- Fit 2 Dance (3 members)
- Halton Youth Theatre (16 members and parents)

Other organisations and individuals

- Ian Banks, Public Art Consultant
- Nicky Duirs, Arts & Health Strategy Consultant
- Norton Priory Museum: Ellen Fenton, Learning & Community Manager
- Riverside College: Gary Lamb, Manager, Creative and Performing Arts; Maxine Mealey, Programme Area Leader, Creative Arts; Daniel Brady, Programme Area Leader, Vocational Performing Arts
- Arts Council England North West: David Gaffney, Officer, Regional Partnerships

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN

Theme 1: A healthy community

The arts service will contribute to community health and well-being through:

- arts projects in health-care settings
- arts development activities with specific target groups such as older people
- promoting healthy lifestyles through taking part in dance and other art forms
- encouraging increased participation.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- more use of social and cultural approaches as an alternative to medical or pharmacological interventions
- engaging new users, through increased participation by target groups
- increased participation in arts activities such as dance.

Workstream	*Action*	*Timescale*	*Target/PI*	*Partnership links*	*Resources*
1: Arts and health	a) Take part in sub-regional initiatives through the Merseyside Arts Partnership to develop arts and health work as an inter-authority initiative, supported by Arts Council.	Short	Creation of a Pan Merseyside Arts & Health Post	• Merseyside Arts Partnership • Arts Council	Arts Council
	b) Explore further collaborations relating to the key priorities of mental health, ageing, young people's issues (including teenage pregnancy, sexual health and drugs awareness), men's health and training for arts and health staff.	Short and on-going	Pilot visual arts residency at The Brooker Centre.	• Primary Care Trust • Social Services • NHS	Arts Development PCT Funding Small Grants
	c) More arts projects in partnership with the Drugs & Alcohol Action Team (such as the recent *High Risk* video project).	Medium	Develop theatre project – Young People and drug dependent parents	• Drugs & Alcohol Action Team • Ashley House	Drugs & Alcohol Action Team Arts Development

	d) Explore the scope for establishing a part-time co-ordinator to develop arts in health opportunities in partnership with the PCT.	Medium	Establish pilot projects	• Primary Care Trust • St Helens Council	Arts Council Apply for grants
2: Active lifestyles	e) Offer a range of youth dance programmes including regular groups and classes at The Brindley.	On-going	Deliver a minimum of 7 sessions dance per week for Y.P.	• Schools, colleges and PRUs	Schools
	f) Maintain the dance development programme, at The Brindley, at off-site locations and with other services e.g. Children's Centres.	On-going	Engage 4 special schools, 3 children's centres, 2 community centres	• Children's Centres • Special Schools • Community Centres	Children's Centres
	g) Continue to develop programmes such as *Fit 2 Dance* and *Years Ahead* projects (for the over 50s), delivered at several locations.	On-going	Engage 100 + older people in dance activity	• Social Services • Lifelong Learning • Sports Development	Existing Council Budgets
	h) Develop dance programmes for people at risk of obesity, so that people can choose dance as well as sport, in collaboration with Sports Development and health referrals.	Medium	Train a dance artist in G.P. Dance Referral Qualification. Develop Obesity project	• Sports Development • Primary Care Trust	Arts Council Arts Development
3: Audience	i) Use research and market intelligence to identify and understand more about who the users are, who are the non-participants and where the gaps are.	Short	Identify non participants and the areas they come from	• Marketing Dept • Acorn • HBC Research & Intelligence	Existing Council Budgets
	j) Devise and implement specific initiatives to encourage first-time audiences and non-participants to attend or take part in events at The Brindley.	Short and on-going	Develop 'Map Initiative' project training with College / Univ. students	• Marketing Dept • Higher Ed. • Corporate Communications	Arts Council

	k) Identify areas of low take-up (evidenced through *Active People* survey), find out more about needs of specific neighbourhoods, then devise and implement specific initiatives to encourage new involvement, through arts development outreach projects and joint initiatives with Sports Development and Community Development.	Medium	Pilot a summer project with 'Lip Service' to engage new users and undertake research as part of that project.	• Sports Development • Community Development	Arts Development Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

	l) Devise and implement specific initiatives to engage more young adults, including different marketing aimed at the needs of different age groups.	Medium	Target Brindley programme to attract more young adults. Look into texting and Facebook	• Marketing Dept • Corporate Communications	Existing Council Budgets
	m) Further develop joint projects with libraries.	Short and on-going	Develop 'Get into Reading' Project for people with dementia	• Libraries • The Reader Organisation • Social Services	Libraries Arts Development
4: 2012 Olympics	n) Work with other services and authorities and the North West Olympics Creative Programmer to develop a cultural programme related to the 2012 Olympics.	Medium	Explore the potential and opportunities for Halton's engagement in 2012	• Olympics Creative Programmer • Sports Development	Apply for funding as appropriate

Theme 2: Urban renewal and regeneration

The arts service will contribute to urban renewal and regeneration through:

- managing The Brindley as a creative focus for the Borough and for its role in wider community regeneration
- outreach and neighbourhood projects which contribute to community regeneration
- developing a strategic approach to public art, to promote sense of identity and pride of place and contribute to the quality of design and urban renewal/regeneration.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- sustainability and viability of The Brindley as a creative focus
- increased participation in target neighbourhoods
- environmental and public realm improvements.

Workstream	***Action***	***Timescale***	***Target/PI***	***Partnership links***	***Resources***
1: The Brindley	a) Carry out market research (specific and local, not generalised) to understand the views of users and non-users, to help shape audience development strategies (*as Theme 1 Action i*).	Short	Identify non participants and develop research to understand needs	• Research and Intelligence	Existing Council Budgets
	b) Use market research data (e.g. ACORN data and findings of Active People survey) to target people in areas where there are currently low levels of participation (*as Theme 1 Action k*).	Medium	Explore research and target projects accordingly	• Sports Development • Community Development	Arts Development
	c) Promote the venue more strongly within and beyond the Borough both to enhance the reputation of the Borough and to help the venue's sustainability by contributing to earned income. Explore scope for an 'ambassador' style system for local print distribution to neighbourhoods	Ongoing	Devise options for wider marketing and Explore the idea of using Ambassadors linked to the volunteer strategy.	• Local volunteers • Tourism • Arts Council • Marketing dept	Existing Council Budgets
	d) Audience development work (*as Theme 1.3*).				

2: Outreach work	e) Devise and implement development work, with other cultural services in the borough, through specific interventions in neighbourhoods or localities where there are low levels of participation, e.g. the 'super output areas' identified in the work on Neighbourhood Management (such as the pilot project in the West Bank area of Widnes).	Ongoing	Pilot development of Phoenix Park Gateway project.	• Other cultural services • Community Development • Major Projects • Rangers • Schools • Neighbourhood Management	Partnership funding
3: Public art	f) Work to achieve a strategic influence with the Council's Environment Department (which includes Planning, Economic Regeneration, Major Projects and Highways); this may include the possibility of a specialist post on a part-time or freelance basis to provide expert advice.	Short	Adoption of Public Art Strategy. If approved appointment of a 2yr part-time post	• Environment Department • Planning • Pan-Merseyside partners	Arts Council (partnership funding)
	g) Advocate for the adoption and implementation of the Planning Guidance Note and Commissioning Guide.	Short	Adoption of Guidance note and commissioning guide	• Environment Department	None
	h) Seek to influence the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme with conceptual thinking about the community role of new schools as well as arts interventions in their design.	Short and ongoing	Development of new arts spaces in schools and for wider community use	• Building Schools for the Future programme • Schools/staff	Building Schools for the Future funding
	i) Seek to influence major infrastructure projects such as Widnes Waterfront, Runcorn Canal Quarter, the Mersey Gateway new bridge and new health facilities planned for the Borough.	Medium / Long	Appointment of 2yr part-time Public Art post	• Planning • Major Projects Dept • Local Improvement Finance Trust	Arts Council Local Improvement Finance Trust

Theme 3: Employment, learning and skills

The arts service will support employment, learning and skills in the creative sector through:
- building local talent
- nurturing the growth of the independent artists sector and independent arts groups in the Borough.

Improvement outcomes will include:
- capacity building and a stronger independent sector
- economic benefits with the growth of a sustainable pool of arts organisations and artists.

Workstream	***Action***	***Timescale***	***Target/PI***	***Partnership links***	***Resources***
1: Artists and practitioners	a) Continue to offer a small grants and a small training grants programme.	Ongoing	Support min of 6 arts organisations per yr.	Community Groups	Arts Development Grants
	b) Offer advice and assistance to artists, including linking them to other sources of support.	Ongoing	Minimum 12 surgeries per year	• Arts organisations • Arts Council	Existing Council resources
	c) Improve networking for artists and arts groups, specifically by reviving and re-launching the Arts website, and extending its range as a platform and showcase for local independent practitioners, to strengthen its value as a resource, including as a source of information to assist other Council services, providing a directory of artists and arts groups (with supporting information such as examples of work undertaken and names of independent referees). Complement this with a regular e-circular to practitioners to channel information, news, commissioning opportunities etc.	Short	Develop and set up new website by September 09 Explore the potential for a e-newsletter and the means to sustain one by Sept 09	• Arts organisations • Artists • Web designers	Arts Council (partnership funding)

	d) Strengthen support for the voluntary sector through the development of a DVD and website by the Cultural Partnership to make the voluntary sector more visible.	Short	Completion of DVD and web site by May 09	• Cultural Partnership	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
	e) Build on existing links with neighbouring initiatives for the benefit of local artists and venues (e.g. across Merseyside and in Cheshire).	Ongoing	Establish a biennial exhibition for Greater Merseyside. Next one in 2010	• 'Best of Merseyside' partnership • Cheshire Artists Network	Merseyside Partners Arts Council
2: Creative industries	f) Develop signposting and advice on progression routes.	Short	Hold artists surgeries as required	Artists	Existing Council resources
	g) Offer work experience and mentoring for emerging artists and practitioners.	Ongoing	Provide 4 work experience opportunities per yr. Develop a mentoring pack by August 09	• Higher Education • Artists	Existing Council resources
	h) Consider strategic alliance with agencies or with other local authorities, to counter the limited capacity for creative industries support.	Medium	Explore the costs involved and the value of 'buying in' to external agencies	• Regional development groups, Merseyside or Cheshire Creative Industries support agencies or other partners	

	i) Develop more formalised links with Riverside College: to collaborate on structured and planned workshops and artists' residencies, placements and practical experience to help local students considering a career in arts, crafts or media work, including technical support work; to facilitate opportunities for more advanced students to gain experience in working on community projects; and to maintain more regular contact between arts team and college staff, contributing the arts team's knowledge of the industry and the arts professions.	Medium	Strengthen and develop relationships and productive links with staff Hold creative industry day for dance students. Riverside to host professional classes for students and artists linked to The Brindley	• Riverside College • Staff	Existing Council Resource Riverside College spaces
	j) Look at possible opportunities through Building Schools for the Future to establish creative studios, which could host artists in schools and act as incubator spaces for emerging creative businesses.	Medium	Develop more arts spaces in schools. Link with mentoring opportunities for artists in schools	• Building Schools for the Future Programme • Artists	Existing Council resources

Theme 4: Arts opportunities for children and young people

The arts service will contribute opportunities for children and young people through:
- formal and informal learning opportunities for children and young people
- a range of participatory arts activities for children and young people.

Improvement outcomes will include:
- increased participation by children and young people
- increased aspirations and achievements.

Workstream	***Action***	***Timescale***	***Target/PI***	***Partnership links***	***Resources***
1: Early years	a) Develop the role of the arts team as a resource able to provide specialist advice to staff in Children & Young People Area Networks and the Children's Centres, and advising them on use of artists who are potentially available to deliver work.	Short	Establish ways to work strategically with Children & Young People Area Network Manager	• Children & Young People Area Networks • Children's Centres • Nurseries •	Existing Council resources
	b) Work through Children & Young People Area Networks and the Children's Centres to reach families with family learning and inter-generational work.	Short	As above	• Children & Young People Area Networks • Children's Centres • Lifelong Learning	Children & Young People Area Networks Children's Centres

2: Education	c) Develop the role of the arts team as a resource able to provide specialist advice to curriculum advisers, headteachers and schools, advising them on use of artists who are potentially available to deliver work, contributing to Continuing Professional Development and INSET for teachers, and supporting the work of encouraging schools to apply for the *Artsmark* award and helping them to meet and maintain the standards of the programme, especially in areas such as dance where support is especially needed.	Ongoing	Continue to support schools and develop training as appropriate. Develop a logging system to record contacts, details and outcomes	• Children & Young People's Service including Arts Education Development Officer • Schools • Sports Development Officer • Health	Existing Council Resources
	d) Plan workshops, residencies, exhibitions and performances, which support schools' curricular needs, both through the programme of The Brindley and through links with artists and arts organisations.	Ongoing	Minimum of 3 professional events programmed for schools per term	• Schools • Riverside College • Artists • Prof Companies	Existing Council Budgets
3: Youth arts	e) Pilot projects to promote the Young People's *Arts Award* as an accredited award, via the Positive Activities group.	Short	Minimum of 6 Young People to go for Arts Award in 09/10	• Youth Service • Connexions • Children & Young People's Service	Grant funding from Arts Award
	f) Work with the Borough's other cultural services towards the 'five hour offer' and the extended school day.	Short/medium	Initiate and co-ordinate a programme to offer to schools	• Cultural services • Museums • Schools	Schools Existing Council resources
	g) Help to develop a Council-wide Youth Arts Policy as a statement of entitlement and service availability, working with the integrated Youth Service and with young people.	Medium	Aim to develop and adopt a Youth Arts Policy by end of 2010	• Youth Service • Connexions • C & YP Service	Existing Council resources
	h) Develop further opportunities through which young people can devise their own programming, building on the experience of H208, which included work run and managed by young people.	Medium	Arts Award project lad and developed by Young People for summer 2010	• Young People	Arts Award Youth Bank

	i) In response to young people's interest, develop film/video/media work and digital creativity, both at The Brindley and in conjunction with venues such as City Learning Centres with specialist facilities and equipment, and as part of wider community use and access.	Medium	Produce film project for summer 2009 Explore potential links with City earning Centres and The Brindley	• Schools • Youth Centres • Community Centres • City Learning Centres	Youth Bank Apply for grants
	j) Support proposals to establish a dedicated youth facility in Widnes, which could increase the creative opportunities available to young people in the borough.	Medium	Creation of a dedicated youth facility offering creative opportunities	• Youth Service • Connexions	My Place scheme

Theme 5: A safer community

The arts service will contribute to a safer community through:

- arts projects which animate the community and promote community cohesion
- diversionary programmes for children and young people
- arts projects which contribute to strategies to counter drug and substances misuse
- arts projects which tackle specific issues of offending behaviours

Improvement outcomes will include:

- a joined-up approach to reaching target audiences, working together with other services to focus on identified priority areas
- increased community cohesion
- more positive attitudes and reduced anti-social behaviour by young people.

Workstream	***Action***	***Timescale***	***Target/PI***	***Partnership links***	***Resources***
1: Community engagement	a) Develop provision for small-scale events in out lying communities (such as Preston Brook) as well as engaging them in arts activity at The Brindley	Short	Summer Theatre project 09	• Preston Brook Village Hall • Upton • Cronton • Hale	Arts Council Existing Council Budgets
	b) Support neighbourhood projects which promote a sense of local community, through outreach work such as neighbourhood events, projects and community learning initiatives.	Medium	Castlefields – Visual arts project Music project planned for 2010	• Community Development	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Arts Dev
	c) Reach non-committed audiences through community animation projects in parks, open spaces and public spaces in town centre locations.	Ongoing	Develop a 'free running' programme in parks (subject to funding) 09	• Parks & Countryside Service • Cultural Partnership • Friends' groups	Awards for All Splash

2: Diversionary programmes for children and young people	d) Integrate arts and creative activities into *Splash* programmes to offer out-of-school creative opportunities.	Short	Pilot film screenings in Aug 09	• *Splash* programme	Splash
	e) Devise and implement projects which promote achievement and roles for young people.	Ongoing	Arts Award for minimum of 6 Y.P. in 09/10	• Youth Service • Connexions Schools	Arts Award funding
	f) Devise and implement projects, which tackle offending behaviours or Not in Education Training or Employment young people.	Ongoing	Devise, develop and evaluate a music and dance project linked to boxing by end of 09	• Youth Service • Connexions • Youth Offending Team • The Bridge • Sports Dev	Existing Council Budgets External funding – grant applications
	g) Continue to offer out-of-school creative opportunities for children and young people at The Brindley.	Ongoing	Continue to offer a wide range of out-of-school activities (minimum 14 events per week)	The Brindley Community Centre	Existing Council Budgets

Theme 6: Leadership and partnerships

The arts service will provide leadership and develop partnerships through:

- maintaining and developing a strategic framework for the arts in Halton
- developing internal partnerships and collaborations with services of the Council
- developing external partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.

Improvement outcomes will include:

- effective application of people and financial resources to achieve strategic outcomes
- effective partnerships internally and externally including the arts having a voice in the LSP
- raised profile for the arts service.

Workstream	***Action***	***Timescale***	***Target/PI***	***Partnership links***	***Resources***
1: Advocacy	a) Work on evidence systems and PIs to ensure that impact and outcomes can be demonstrated and communicated; perhaps commissioned evaluation.	Short	Set up robust evaluation system for projects.	• Corporate and Policy Department External consultant	Existing Council Budgets
	b) Consistent advocacy and profile-raising by the arts team to increase awareness and understanding of the range and impact of the arts development work. Prepare and publish new brochure; implement an improved website with more information about the service offering; more interviews, articles for publications, and presentations at conferences etc.	Short and ongoing	Develop e-newsletter Set up an improved web site relating to arts development work Devise promotional T shirts for freelance staff	Brindley marketing	Existing Council Budgets

	c) Promote and encourage artistic quality and integrity through the work of the arts team and their imagination, originality and innovation, and nurture artists and alleviate their tendency to isolation.	Short and ongoing	Develop freelance artist packs by summer 09 Support artist forums	• Freelance artists	Existing Council resources

2: Working together internally	d) Develop the arts team's offering as an in-house consultancy resource including sharing information, contacts, ideas and advice with other services. Much of this can be made available on the improved website.	Short	Develop an improved website.	Brindley marketing	Arts Council
	e) Develop the working relationships with the CYPANs in the borough.	Short	Meet with Children & Young People Area Networks manager	• Children &Young Peoples Area Networks	Existing Council resources
	f) Ensure that the contribution the arts make to achieving corporate objectives is recognised in the LAA (e.g. role of arts in contributing to health and well-being).	Medium	Explore links to Local Area Agreements	• Corporate and Policy Department • Cultural Partnership	Existing Council resources
	g) Further development of cross-service working, and with improved planning mechanisms.	Ongoing	Develop projects as appropriate	Range of partners dependent on the project	Partnership funding depending on project
3: Working together externally	h) Explore the potential for links with other nearby local authorities, for joint work on e.g. health, creative industries and in other areas where co-operation or joint action would be beneficial to Halton.	Short	Merseyside Arts Partnership project is accomplished	• Other local authorities	Arts Council Existing Council resources
	i) Support Norton Priory Museum in its ambitious expansion plans which will offer enhanced arts opportunities as well as strengthening the Borough's heritage offer.	Short	Support development of Heritage lottery bid	• Norton Priory Museum	Heritage Lottery Funding
	j) Play an active role in Merseyside Arts Partnership and ensure Halton is able to benefit from sub-regional initiatives.	Ongoing	Attend regular mtgs.	• Merseyside Arts Partnership • Arts Council	Existing Council resources
	k) Maintain and develop the relationship with Arts Council England North West, and advocate on behalf of artists and arts work in the borough.	Ongoing	Meetings with art form staff as appropriate	• Arts Council England North West	Existing Council resources

	l) Maintain and develop the links with other regional and national networks, support structures and professional bodies.	Ongoing	Arts Development Team to continue to attend regional and national networks.	• Networks e.g. National Association of Local Government Arts Officers. Touring Exhibition Group, National Association of Youth Theatres, Dance UK	Existing Council resources

Notes to the Action Plan:

1. Lead responsibility sits with the Arts Development Team except where otherwise stated.
2. Timescale is indicated as follows:
   Short term = within one to two years
   Medium term = within three years
   Long term = may take five years or longer
3. More detailed allocations of staff and financial resources are set out in the Service Plan and individual Work Plans.
4. This Action Plan should be updated annually to take account of achievements and changing circumstances.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Local Area Agreement Delivery Plan

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report proposes the updating of the Action Plans for each of the five strategic priorities in order to deliver Halton's Local Area Agreement and the approval of the funding allocations contained within them.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

(1) the five Action Plans accompanying the report be approved;

(2) the allocation of the Working Neighbourhood Fund and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund for 2009/10, and the indicative allocations for 2010/11referred to in this report and contained in the Action Plans, be approved;

(3) the allocation of the Council's Priority Funds referred to in this report including that contained in the Action Plans be approved; and

(4) delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to approve amendments to the Actions Plans as necessary.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton has in place an established mechanism for managing its neighbourhood renewal programme. Since 2002, the Halton Strategic Partnership Board has ensured that there is a Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) for each of the five priorities. These partnerships were commissioned to produce the original Strategies and Action Plans and have produced updated Action Plans setting out their activities and investment proposals for 2009/10. They set out a programme of activity to deliver the thematic elements of the Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement for Halton, and in particular to address the key

measurable outcomes set out therein. Proposals within the Action Plans are expected to:

- address the priorities;
- be based on evidence of need and best practice;
- focus on prevention;
- have an exit strategy;
- help the most disadvantaged;
- be cost-effective and good quality; and
- bring an appropriate level of match funding

3.2 The Action Plans use Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), and in the case of the Safer Halton Partnership Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) as well. In addition the Council has committed a substantial amount of resources through the Priorities Fund (PF). The Council monies are aimed at supporting neighbourhood renewal activity by match funding initiatives within the Action Plans. The Action Plans are appended to this report. They have been put forward by the relevant Specialist Strategic Partnership and were approved by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board on February 18 2009 insofar as they relate to Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.

3.3 The Council is Accountable Body for Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Safer and Stronger Community Fund allocations, and it is incumbent upon Executive Board to formally approve any allocations.

4.0 FUNDING

4.1 The proposals within the Action Plans will be funded from a number of sources, both public and private. For the purposes of this report the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) and Halton Borough Council's Priorities Fund (PF) contributions have been highlighted separately.

4.2 The new Local Area Agreement was signed last June (2008), and 2008/9 saw the ending of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the introduction of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. This time last year it was agreed to reduce the core allocation of Working Neighbourhoods Fund to the five action plans so as to establish a "commissioning pot". This commissioning pot is being used to fund three cross-cutting areas that were identified in the Local Area Agreement as areas where progress was proving difficult, but where improvement would have a positive effect on meeting a wide range of existing targets. These three areas were alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour, and worklessness/skills/enterprise.

4.3 The Priorities Fund is intended to divert or bend mainstream spending towards the five priorities. The proposed Action Plans allocate £1,488,512 of the Revenue Priorities Fund. The balance has been

committed to support spending priorities behind the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan through the mainstream budget.

4.4 Appended to this report are details of the proposals within the five Action Plans. In summary, the funding implications are as follows:

	2009/10			2010/11		
	Revenue Priorities Fund	**Working Neighbour-hoods Fund**	**SSCF**	**Revenue Priorities Fund**	**Working Neighbour-hoods Fund**	**SSCF**
A Healthy Halton	205,000	532,735		195,000	532,735	
Halton's Urban Renewal	20,000	462,720		20,000	462,720	
Children & Young People in Halton	385,000	623,430		385,000	623,430	
Employment, Learning & Skills	283,512	2,290,957 (see note below)		283,512	2,290,957 (see note below)	
A Safer Halton	175,000	677,580	430,000	175,000	677,580	172,000
Area Forums	420,000	180,000		420,000	180,000	
Partnership support, development and promotion		192,000			192,000	
Commissioning Pot:						
-Alcohol Harm Reduction		350,000			550,000	
-Anti-social behaviour		400,000			500,000	
		0			0	

- Worklessness skills & enterprise		(see note below)			(see note below)	
Total	1,488,512	5,709,422	430,000	1,478,512	6,009,422	172,000

Note that the £1,500,000 worklessness/skills/enterprise commissioning pot has been combined with the £790,957 core allocation to Employment Learning and Skills to form a combined programme of £2,290,957

4.5 The Specialist Strategic Partnerships will be responsible for regular and careful monitoring of expenditure and progress will be reported to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board. The position will be reviewed in October 2009 and any necessary adjustments made then. The minutes of the specialist partnerships are reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Board so that there is an opportunity for scrutiny of progress. In addition, where WNF funds council activity, expenditure is reported as part of the quarterly monitoring reports.

4.6 The government has announced the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund allocations for both 2009/10 and 2010/11. Most of the Specialist Strategic Partnerships have indicated how spend will be profiled across the two years, and it is therefore recommended that Executive Board gives indicative approval now to the 2010/11 allocations of WNF, SSCF, and Priorities Fund where they are shown in the appendix to this report to assist forward planning. These indicative proposals can then be confirmed in 12 months time on the basis of satisfactory progress in 2009/10.

4.7 Before individual projects contained within the Action Plans can proceed, a service agreement must be entered into with the relevant Specialist Strategic Partnership and the Halton Strategic Partnership Board. These service agreements set out the expected outcomes and outputs together with quarterly expenditure forecasts. The Specialist Strategic Partnerships are responsible for monitoring progress on a quarterly basis, and progress is reported to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposals in the Action Plans have important direct implications for the Council's key strategic objectives. There are financial implications associated with the allocation of the Priorities Fund.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 There are implications for all Council priorities. The decision of Executive Board will award significant funding to all five priorities and so to a range of initiatives which impact on the quality of life of Halton residents. The listing of schemes, by priority is set out in Appendix 1.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The costs identified in the plans are indicative only at this stage and there is a risk that allocated monies could remain unspent at years end. However, there is now six years experience of managing this process and a combination of over programming and robust programme management is used to mitigate this risk. The LAA and Action plans are subject to a strategic risk management process. It is not considered that they form a significant risk necessitating a separate major risk appraisal.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Action Plans operationalise the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. A key component of that strategy is a commitment to equality and diversity in all the policies, programmes and processes that are undertaken. This commitment will be embedded in all of the actions in the plans.

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

DOCUMENT	PLACE OF INSPECTION	CONTACT OFFICER
Local Area Agreement	Municipal Building Widnes	Rob Mackenzie
Community Strategy	Municipal Building Widnes	Rob Mackenzie

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Safer & Stronger Communities Fund & Priorities Fund (Revenue) Allocations

A HEALTHY HALTON

	2009/10		2010/11	
	WNF	**PF**	**WNF**	**PF**
New Commissioning	171,302			
Dietic & Exercise Programme	22,550			
Voluntary Sector Counselling Support Project	41,000			
Sports Volunteer and Club Development	30,750	30,000		30,000
Health & Physical Activity Development	39,975			
Information Outreach Services	35,158			
Reach For The Stars	35,875			
ILC Accessible Transport	25,625			
Complementary therapies	20,500	75,000		75,000
Capacity Building	57,500		61,500	
Dignity Co-ordinator	52,500		56,315	
VATF		100,000		90,000
Total Allocated	***532,735***	***205,000***		***195,000***
Overprogramming	***0***			
Budget	***532,735***		***532,735***	

HALTON'S URBAN RENEWAL

	2009/10		2010/11	
	WNF	**PF**	**WNF**	**PF**
Partnership Co-ordinator		20,000		20,000
Town Centres Improvements	130,000		130,000	
EDZ - Widnes Waterfront	200,000		200,000	
Business Parks Improvement	15,000		15,000	
Contaminated Land Reclamation	100,000		120,000	
EDZ Masterplanning phase 2	20,000		0	
Total Allocated	***465,000***	***20,000***	***465,000***	***20,000***
Overprogramming	***(2,280)***		***(2,280)***	
Budget	***462,720***		***462,720***	

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS

	2009/10		2010/11	
	WNF	**PF**	**WNF**	**PF**
Pre Level 2 provision (skills for life assessor ,pre-level 2 provision)	207,726	80,000	207,726	80,000
Foundation employment	28,000		28,000	
YMCA	20,250		20,250	
NEET Employers	35,000		36,000	
Apprenticeships	150,000		150,000	
Neighbourhood Employment (NEO, moped scheme, Links to work)	146,000	10,000	229000	10,000
Enterprise Development	322,975	60,000	322,975	60,000
Halton Employment Project (team, provision and business survey 2009/10)	818,000		848,000	
Supported Employment	75,000	20,000	76,000	20,000
Halton ILM	99,000	44,512	99,000	44,512
Employment Outreach	60,000		60,000	
Inspiring Women	10,000		10,000	
Benefits Express	81,000	69,000	81,000	69,000
Budgeting Skills	32,606		32,606	
CAB Debt advisors	68,400		68,400	
Voluntary Sector Sustainability	7,000		7,000	
Community Grid	79,000		0	
Support to newly unemployed/redundancy response	51,000		15,000	
Total Allocated	***2,290,957***	***283,512***	***2,290,957***	***283,512***
Overprogramming *	***0***		***0***	
Budget -Core	*790,957*		*790,957*	
Budget Commissioning	*1,500,000*		*1,500,000*	
Budget TOTAL	***2,290,957***		***2,290,957***	

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN HALTON

	2009/10		2010/11	
	WNF	**PF**	**WNF**	**PF**
Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health	15,000			
Portage	15,833			
Missing from Home	70,000		70,000	
Behaviour and Attendance	22,000			
PEP Dowries	3,333			
Young Carers Strategic Lead	16,667			
PACT – Neglect Project	125,000		125,000	
Tackle Fitness with the Vikings	16,667			
NEET Strategy Plan	46,333			
Improving Education for Vulnerable Youngsters	13,333			
Youth Activity (On the Streets)	27,467			
Independent Travel Training	10,000	30,000		30,000
Canal Boat Project (Making Waves)	16,500			
New Commissioning	225,297			
Kingsway Literacy Development		355,000		355,000
Total Allocated	***623,430***	***385,000***		***385,000***
Overprogramming	***0***			
Budget	***623,430***		***623,430***	

Notes:

The CYP SSP intends to commission it's 2009/10 allocation of £623,430 in line with the agreed Children's Trust priorities. These are proposed to be narrowing the gap, improving health and tackling NEET but will be formally agreed following wide consultation in March. As a temporary measure to ensure that all project managers are able to plan for this change the Commissioning Manager has written out to service providers to extend all current projects for a further four months. Missing from Home, and PACT are exceptions because they were commissioned last year in accordance with the new process for three years to the March 2011, and so WNF has been allocated for the full year. These allocations have been reflected in the table above. The balance of the allocation (£225,297) will be used to commission interventions in line with the 3 priorities mentioned above.

A SAFER HALTON

	2009/10			2010/11		
	WNF	**PF**	**SSCF**	**WNF**	**PF**	**SSCF**
Youth Splash	28,090	100,000		13,559	100,000	
Blue Lamp	504,600			517,907		
Pride Of Place		33,000			33,000	
Area Forum Co-ordinator		42,000			42,000	
Domestic Violence	100,000		32,260	100,000		34,084
Anti Social Behaviour			39,776			41,172
Community Safety Team			72,120			75,080
Prolific and Persistent Offenders	44,890			46,114		
Neighbourhood Management			258,000			
Contribution to dedicated drugs team			42,911			46,118
Total Allocated	***677,580***	***175,000***	***445,067***	***677,580***	***175,000***	***196,454***
Over-programming	***0***		***(15,067)***	***0***		***(24,454)***
Budget	***677,580***		***430,000***	***677,580***		***172,000***

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: State of Borough Report 2009 and Review of Community Strategy

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the findings of the 2009 State of the Borough report and its implications for the mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That

(1) the revised State of the Borough report be noted; and

(2) the Policy and Performance Boards be consulted on a mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted in 2006. It contains a long-term vision and objectives with targets for the period 2006-2011. Since it was prepared:

(1) A national indicator set and local area agreements have been introduced.

(2) Statutory Guidance under the Local Government and Public Health Act has been issued.

(3) There have been revisions to underpinning policies and strategies such as the Children and Young People's Plan.

3.2 It is therefore necessary to conduct a mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is intended that this is an update, not a complete revision. Surveys to date confirm that the underlying vision and priorities remain relevant. The main areas for review will be:

(1) To explain the vision, providing a clearer picture of what we want Halton to be like in 2025 (to meet the requirement of statutory guidance).

(2) To update the indicators and targets for each priority. The targets should include LAA targets and any other local targets we feel relevant. At present there are differences in indicators and targets between the LAA and Community Strategy that need to be rationalised. For example, the LAA targets all age all cause mortality (number of deaths) the Community Strategy targets life expectancy.

(3) To review the section on cross-cutting issues which picks up social exclusion and poverty.

3.3 The five Specialist Strategic Partnerships have been consulted and work has commenced on the mid-term review. A consultation draft will be available for consideration by partners, SSPs and PPBs with a view to a final version being approved at the Halton Strategic Partnership Board in May and Council in July.

3.4 Evidence to date suggests that priorities for Halton have not changed. This will be validated by the Places Survey and an updated State of the Borough report (see below). Widespread engagement is therefore not planned for this mid-term review. However, in 2010 work will commence on a full review and roll forward of the strategy with wide engagement, linking up with work being done on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

4.0 STATE OF THE BOROUGH 2009

4.1 As part of the preparation for the mid-term review the State of the Borough report has been updated. It is important to note that much of the data reflects the situation before the current economic downturn due to the time lag in the availability of statistics.

4.2 The final 'scorecard' – shown in Table 22 – assesses the state of Halton in terms of the three main dimensions of sustainable development. There have been no significant changes since the last report. The scores represent the quintile where the district falls on each of the measures ('A' representing the strongest performance, ranging to 'E' representing the weakest).

- Economic Development – Halton scores a 'C' overall, and against the region, however, its performance is mixed. Halton scores well on aspects of economic development relating to productivity (A – up from B in 2004), business and enterprise (A) and industrial structure (A). The Borough performs less well in terms of its human capital where the scores slip to an 'E'. There may be implications for future economic development, and the continued low score of an 'E' on economic change is still a cause for concern. The results in this sector are very similar to 2004.

- Social Development – In the context of Great Britain as a whole, Halton scores an 'E'. Halton still performs poorly on most indicators of social profile. The borough also performs poorly when compared regionally, recording lower scores for all indicators except inequality where it is in the mid quintile.

- Environment – Halton's performance is mixed for the environment, with an overall score of a 'B'. It performs well in terms of housing affordability and floorspace change, scoring an 'A' in both. The Borough also performs above average in terms of connectivity, with a score of a 'B' when compared to the nation. It performs less well in terms of services, amenities and the natural environment, although it's mostly better than the region for these measures.

4.3 The most significant changes since 2008 are:

- Unemployment rate has risen to 3.6% (Oct 2008) from 2.9% (Oct 2007), however the long term unemployed rate has decreased to 10.4% from 11.3%, *table 7: labour market.*

- Offences per 1,000 population has increased since the last report to 63.7 (2007-2008) from 41.7(2006-2007). Halton's total crime score has increased with its ranking worsening from 79 to 65 nationally, *table 16: crime.*

- Halton's commercial and industrial floorspace rank has fallen since the last report. Currently Halton is ranked 50 out of 375 (2007) compared to a rank of 22 (2006) in the last report, *table 18: commercial and industrial property.*

- Halton's local amenities rank has improved since the last report where it had a rank of 219 out of 376 (2007). Currently Halton is ranked 109 out of 376 (2008). This is mainly due to improved GCSE results, *table 20: Services and Amenities*.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The opportunities and challenges facing Halton are well-known. The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the steps we need to take to bring about real improvement and how we will measure progress. The LAA is a set of targets agreed with Government which reflects the Community Strategy. The mid-term review is an opportunity to bring these together in a single coherent document.

The State of the Borough report provides further evidence to support our priorities. It does not, however, fully reflect the impact of the economic downturn. The recession should not deflect us from our long-term ambitions but may affect the pace at which we can move forward.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the primary policy document for the Council and its partners who have a statutory duty to have regard to it.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of the Strategy will require the application of resources by all the partners in Halton, and consideration of impact on priorities is already part of the Council's budget setting process.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The Community Strategy sets out our priorities for Children and Young People, Employment Learning and Skills, Healthy Halton, Safer Halton and Urban Renewal in Halton.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 The key risks to the revision of the Strategy are lack of consensus. This is mitigated by consulting key partners and PPBs.

9.2 The risks to delivery of the Strategy are set out in the Partnership Risk Register.

10.0 QUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 Addressing inequality is a key theme in the Strategy.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

The State of the Borough in Halton

An Economic, Social and Environmental Audit of Halton
January 2009

Most of the data in this report reflects the situation before the economic downturn as it is a snapshot of the latest data available.

Data is constantly being updated on the Halton Observatory website:

http://halton.localknowledge.co.uk/

and on the Research & Intelligence website:

www.halton.gov.uk/research

State of the Borough January 2009 update

This is an update of the January 2008 report. All the tables within the report have been updated, however as there has only been a year between the two reports the data will not have changed significantly and many of the messages remain the same. The larger changes have been highlighted below:

- Unemployment rate has risen to 3.6% (Oct 2008) from 2.9% (Oct 2007), however the long term unemployed rate has decreased to 10.4% from 11.3%, *table 7: labour market.*
- Offences per 1,000 population has increased since the last report to 63.7 (2007-2008) from 41.7(2006-2007). Halton's total crime score has increased with its ranking moving from 79 to 65 nationally, *table 16: crime.*
- Halton's commercial and industrial floorspace rank has fallen since the last report. Currently Halton is ranked 50 out of 375 (2007) compared to a rank of 22 (2006) in the last report, *table 18: commercial and industrial property.*
- Halton's local amenities rank has improved since the last report where it had a rank of 219 out of 376 (2007). Currently Halton is ranked 109 out of 376 (2008) although this is mainly due to improved GCSE results, *table 20: Services and Amenities.*

The final 'scorecard' – shown in Table 22 – assesses the state of Halton in terms of the three main dimensions of sustainable development. There have been no significant changes since the last report. The scores represent the quintile where the district falls on each of the measures ('A' representing the strongest performance, ranging to 'E' representing the weakest).

- Economic Development – Halton scores a 'C' overall, and against the region, however, its performance is mixed. Halton scores well on aspects of economic development relating to productivity (A – up from B in 2004), business and enterprise (A) and industrial structure (A). The Borough performs less well in terms of its human capital where the scores slip to an 'E'. There may be implications for future economic development, and the continued low score of an 'E' on economic change is still a cause for concern. The results in this sector are very similar to 2004.
- Social Development – In the context of Great Britain as a whole, Halton scores an 'E'. However Halton still performs poorly on most indicators of social profile. The borough also performs poorly when compared regionally, recording lower scores for all indicators except inequality where it is in the mid quintile.
- Environment – Halton's performance is mixed for the environment, with an overall score of a 'B'. It performs well in terms of housing affordability and floorspace change, scoring an 'A' in both, The Borough also performs above average in terms of connectivity, with a score of a 'B' when compared to the nation. It performs less well in terms of services, amenities and the natural environment, although it's mostly better than the region for these measures.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction 5

1.1 Background 5
1.2 This Report 6

2 Economic Development 8

2.1 Introduction 8
2.2 Macro-Economic Performance 8
2.3 Industrial Structure 12
2.4 Business and Enterprise 14
2.5 Education and Skills 15
2.6 Labour Market 16
2.7 Summary 17
3.1 Introduction 19
3.2 Demography and Migration 19
3.3 Occupational Profile 23
3.4 Prosperity 24
3.5 Deprivation and Inequality 25
3.6 Health 27
3.7 Crime 28
3.8 Summary 29

4 Environment 30

4.1 Introduction 30
4.2 Housing 30
4.3 Commercial and Industrial Property 31
4.4 Transport: Accessibility and Mobility 32
4.5 Services and Amenities 34
4.6 Natural Environment 36
4.7 Summary 38

5 Conclusions: The Final 'Scorecard' and Policy Discussion 39

5.1 Introduction 39
5.2 The Final 'Scorecard' 39
5.3 Policy Implications 40
5.4 Next Steps 41

Tables & Figures

Table 1: Economic Scale 9
Table 2: Productivity and Earnings 10
Table 3: Economic Change 11
Table 4: Industrial Structure 13
Table 5: Business and Enterprise 15
Table 6: Education and Skills 16
Table 7: Labour Market 17
Table 8: Age Profile 20
Table 9: Migration and Population Change 21
Table 10: Ethnicity 22
Table 11: Household Structure 23
Table 12: Occupational Profile 24
Table 13: Prosperity 25
Table 14: Deprivation and Inequality 26
Table 15: Health 27
Table 16: Crime 28
Table 17: Housing 31
Table 18: Commercial and Industrial Property 32
Table 19: Transport: Accessibility and Mobility 34
Table 20: Services and Amenities 36
Table 21: Natural Environment 37
Table 22: The Sustainable Development 'Scorecard' for Halton 40

Figure 1: Macro-Economic Performance 12
Figure 2: Economic Development Summary 18
Figure 3: Social Profile Summary 29
Figure 4: Environment Summary 38

1 Introduction

"Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfill their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."[1]

1.1 Background

This is the fourth review of the State of the Borough that Halton has undertaken, following the first one produced in the year 2000, which was revised in 2002 and rewritten at the beginning of 2005 and updated in 2008. This is the second one prepared since the Halton Data Observatory was set up and populated with a wide range of indicators about Halton. This report has used the Observatory as its principal source of data for this review. It covers the same audit of economic, social and environmental conditions as the last edition and presents the key findings of this latest assessment of the challenges and issues that face the Borough of Halton.

Information found in this report is a snapshot of the latest data available. Data is regularly updated by on the Research & Intelligence's website: www.halton.gov.uk/research

The very first State of the Borough report in 2000 underpinned the process whereby the Council and its strategic partners agreed on 5 shared goals to improve the position of Halton and its people: These five aims covered health, regeneration, life chances, wealth and safer communities. They have been reviewed each time the State of the Borough has been produced and each time the analysis has concluded they were still the most relevant subject areas for the next part of the process. In 2006 the Council and its partners agreed a new sustainable community strategy for Halton, again based on the analysis of the State of Halton report. The Strategy articulates five priorities for the Borough:

- ***A Healthy Halton*** *- To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health.*
- ***Halton's Urban Renewal*** *- To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough.*
- ***Halton's Children and Young People*** *- To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy.*
- ***Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton*** *- To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth.*
- ***A Safer Halton*** *- To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.*

This will be achieved through the following approach:

[1] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.

- ***Closing the gap*** *between the most deprived communities in the borough and in Halton overall.*
- ***Tackling inequality*** *and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.*
- ***Making what we do sustainable*** *so that our quality of life is protected and enhanced for the benefit off current and future generations.*
- ***Investing in preventative activity*** *that stops problems occurring rather than paying for actions to fix things that are going wrong. We need to invest more in success, rather than in failure.*

It will be delivered using these principles:

- ***Leadership*** *- the Partnership's role is to give clear strategic leadership to the borough and enable people to make the necessary contributions to make a difference.*
- ***Fair and inclusive -*** *promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities. This includes the need to positively target activity at the most deprived geographical areas or particular groups of people.*
- ***Good value -*** *being economical, efficient and effective in delivering 'Best Value' for the public.*
- ***Collaborative*** *- this is about collective responsibility for making things better and embedding partnership approaches in everything that we do.*
- ***Evidence-based -*** *ensuring we learn from best practice elsewhere and make good use of research about what works in addressing the borough's priorities.*

Given that these nearly all involve 10, 15 or even 20 year implementation programmes to achieve, it is not surprising that the same five goals remain constant. They also mirror the same aims and objectives of other similarly characterised areas in other parts of the country. These characteristics are of a mostly tightly populated urban area with a strong manufacturing heritage (in Halton's case the chemical industry – but it would be similar to many other old mining or steel towns of northern England where the old infrastructure is defunct and the town has had to look to new solutions to re-establish itself).

1.2 This Report

The Halton Data Observatory was commissioned in 2005 and introduced in 2006. Its platform is the same Local Futures system that was used in the last audit because Halton's Strategic Partnership was so impressed by the audit undertaken by Local Futures in 2005 that they commissioned them to use the same basis for the Halton Data Observatory. The Observatory therefore incorporates the same development history, i.e. it's based on the same platform that was developed in collaboration with the Audit Commission, the Local Government Association, plus individual local authorities and partnerships.

The basic thrust of this Audit is to compare and benchmark the performance of Halton against a selection of comparator districts, the Greater Merseyside sub-region, the North West, and the rest of Britain. Performance is assessed according to how well

the borough scores on a range of carefully selected benchmark indicators of economic, social and environmental well-being.

The results of the audit can be used to inform policy development and reviews such as the Annual Performance Plan, and can also be used as an evidence base in order to advance Halton Council's economic development and regeneration priorities with the NWDA, NWRA, the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and other strategic bodies.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 – Economic Development, covering: economic performance, industrial structure, business and enterprise, education and skills, and the labour market;
- Chapter 3 – Social Profile, covering: age and occupational structure, prosperity, deprivation and inequality, health, and crime;
- Chapter 4 – Environment, covering: housing, commercial and industrial property, transport and connectivity, services and amenities, and the natural environment;
- Chapter 5 – Synthesis and Conclusions, draws together the three broad sets of findings and discusses their implications for Halton Borough Council.

The main body of the report draws on a selected number of benchmark indicators. It is essentially a snapshot of the latest position in early 2009. However, because the data comes from many different original sources and collected at different time periods, it is a snapshot covering data ranging from the 2001 Census to the IMD 2007, with the majority centring around 2005/2006.

2 Economic Development

2.1 Introduction

This audit follows the same structure as the last one so it can compare or monitor the changes – both improvements and any worsening situations – since early 2005. It begins by assessing the present state of the Halton's economy in terms of its competitiveness at the sub-regional, regional and national levels. The Audit examines five aspects of economic development that need to be 'joined-up' in the context of strategy, partnership and practical initiatives. The five aspects, each with their own benchmark indicators, are as follows:

- Macro-economic performance;
- Industrial structure;
- Business and enterprise;
- Skills and education;
- Labour market.

This analysis of Halton's performance in respect of each of these aspects is presented below. At the end of the chapter, a composite picture is given which shows how these aspects inter-relate, and summarise the key findings on economic development in Halton. The latest data has been used in each case, even though in some cases it may still be several years old.

2.2 Macro-Economic Performance

Macro-economic performance has been examined using indicators for economic scale, productivity, and change.

Beginning with economic scale, the Audit assesses scale in terms of both output and employment (workplace-based). The results are presented in Table 1.

- Halton still has a relatively small economy and has improved in recent years, however from 2005 to 2006 its ranking has fallen from 167th to 171st out of 408 British districts for economic scale. Out of 10 Merseyside and North Cheshire Authorities, Chester, Knowsley, Vale Royal and Warrington have all improved.

- Halton's economy is relatively small by national standards (the economic scale score of 81.5 is below the national average which is benchmarked to a score of 100), with low shares of Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment. However all these measurements have improved slightly, relative to the national rank or share over the last 4 years. Not surprisingly, the economy of the sub-region is still dominated by Liverpool.

Table 1: Economic Scale

LAD	Share of national GVA, 2005	Share of total national employment, 2006	Economic Scale Score (GB=100)	Economic Scale Score Rank (of 408)
Liverpool	0.68	0.86	314.3	12
Warrington	0.42	0.44	174.3	46
Sefton	0.3	0.37	137.0	75
Wirral	0.3	0.37	136.2	76
Chester	0.27	0.27	109.1	116
Middlesbrough	0.21	0.24	91.8	149
St. Helens	0.19	0.23	86.6	159
Halton	**0.19**	**0.21**	**81.5**	**171**
Knowsley	0.18	0.21	79.4	180
Vale Royal	0.19	0.18	76.0	192
Ellesmere Port and Neston	0.12	0.12	50.0	311
Hartlepool	0.11	0.12	47.9	316
Greater Merseyside	1.85	2.24	108.5	18 (of 53)
North West	10.15	11.44	118.8	3 (of 11)
Great Britain	100	100	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

The second measure of macro-economic performance is productivity. Table 2 shows the results.

- Halton is the 76th most productive economy out of 408 in Great Britain.

This continues the improvement shown in the last audit. This represents a rise of 33 places from 109th to 76th in 4 years – a very good achievement. Its index score of productivity has dropped since the last audit from 112.7 to 108.6. However, Halton is doing better than the national average, which is indexed at 100. Halton's GVA per head is second only to Warrington in the list of 12 comparator authorities in table 2, at £21,371. Also up in relative terms are the workplace weekly earnings, from just below the national average 4 years ago to an index figure of 107.4, ie 7.4% above the national average.

These improvements are even more impressive when compared to the relative changes in Greater Merseyside and the North West. In the Merseyside sub region, conditions have improved since the last audit so that its rank has improved among sub regions from 36th to 33rd.

Table 2: Productivity and Earnings

LAD	Average gross weekly earnings (wkpl), GB=100, 2006	GVA per head 2005	Economic Productivity Score (GB = 100)	Economic Productivity Score Rank (of 408)
Warrington	103.3	£22,945	116.6	57
Halton	**107.4**	**£21,371**	**108.6**	**76**
Ellesmere Port and Neston	110.4	£19,476	103.0	101
Chester	99.1	£19,003	100.5	114
Vale Royal	94.0	£18,372	97.2	126
Liverpool	98.5	£16,334	93.2	146
Knowsley	101.3	£12,762	87.4	189
Hartlepool	82.8	£12,715	78.1	265
St. Helens	86.6	£11,091	76.0	290
Middlesbrough	88.0	£11,399	73.2	323
Sefton	85.9	£9,949	70.3	353
Wirral	82.4	£8,949	67.9	369
Greater Merseyside	92.3	£12,981	82.1	33 (of 53)
North West	93.0	£15,571	90.7	6 (of 11)
Great Britain	98.3	£18,945	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

The final measure of macro-economic performance in this latest snap shot of Halton's performance is the degree of economic change between 1998 and 2007 (see Table 3).

- In terms of change in employment, Halton performs well below the national average and is ranked 339th of all districts nationally, out of 408 districts. This is primarily because of Halton's dependence on the manufacturing sector and this sector has been affected most in falling numbers. Despite this, Halton's ranking is 41 places higher than it was 4 years ago. All the other Merseyside and North Cheshire comparators have seen their position decline over the same period.

Total employment in Halton decreased by 0.7 percent during 1998 - 2007, well below the national increase of 10.1 percent, and the North West regional increase of 9.6 percent. Halton had the third lowest rate of change of all comparator areas with the exception of Ellesmere Port and Neston and the Wirral. This is a similar position to the last audit carried out January 2008.

Halton performed better in terms of change in gross weekly earnings, with a 6.9 per cent increase in wages between 2005 - 2006. This was 4th highest in the comparator towns and better than the sub regional, regional and national increases.

Table 3: Economic Change

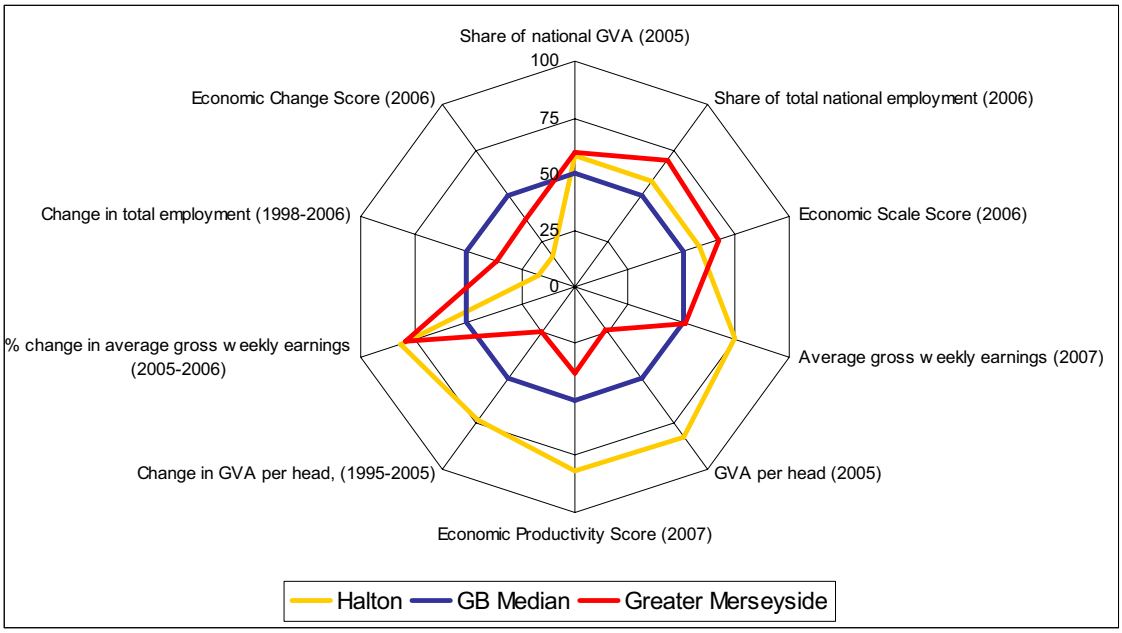
LAD	Change in GVA per head, (1995-2005)	% change in average gross weekly earnings, 2005-2006	Change in total employment 1998-2007	Economic Change Score (2006) (GB=100)	Economic Change Score Rank (of 408)
Knowsley	67.1	4.3	35.68	402.7	11
Middlesbrough	54.8	-0.5	23.2	229.1	67
Warrington	70.0	-6.4	10.66	168.5	127
Vale Royal	49.7	1.4	15.82	146.8	150
Liverpool	75.3	3.0	12.07	143.6	154
Chester	49.7	8.2	10.45	129.4	180
St. Helens	67.1	5.1	14.8	126.4	184
Hartlepool	32.8	-0.2	2.24	69.6	244
Sefton	55.1	8.3	2.11	47.9	275
Ellesmere Port and Neston	49.7	9.4	-3.23	-17.4	336
Halton	**70.0**	**6.9**	**-0.71**	**-19.0**	**339**
Wirral	56.9	0.7	-5.93	-86.9	391
Greater Merseyside	67.0	4.2	7.76	85.5	34 (of 53)
North West	57.4	3.9	9.58	98.3	7 (of 11)
Great Britain	64.1	4.4	10.11	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

A summary of Halton's macro-economic performance is shown in Figure 1. The spider chart shows how the borough rates against all 408 districts in Great Britain, and the Greater Merseyside sub region, where the top ranked areas score 100 and the bottom 0.

- Overall the borough of Halton is performing well. The economy is relatively small (particularly compared to nearby, larger settlements such as Liverpool), but productivity is above average. Trends in economic change are a cause for concern however, when increases in general employment are undermined by declines in the manufacturing totals, which leave Halton with one of the worst positions in the country.

Figure 1: Macro-Economic Performance



Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures [2]

2.3 Industrial Structure

In advanced economies, the critical structural economic trend is the growth of the knowledge economy across and within all sectors, marked by rising levels of innovation, technology, creativity, and entrepreneurship – and by a more skilled and educated workforce. Halton's Community Strategy emphasizes the need for a "more competitive economy with a wider, more diversified base for employment opportunities." [3]

This audit assesses the Halton's industrial structure from this knowledge economy perspective. This is done by separating:

- 'Knowledge-based production' – aerospace, electrical machinery and optical equipment, printing, publishing and recorded media, chemicals and energy; and
- 'Knowledge-based services' – telecommunications, computer & related services, R&D, finance and business services, air transport services, recreational and cultural services.

These industrial groupings are based upon European Commission and OECD definitions of 'knowledge-intensity' where individual industries are classified as 'knowledge-based' if graduates make up at least 25 per cent of their workforce. The results of the assessment of Halton's industrial structure are shown in Table 4.

[2] This chart displays the national ranking of Halton and Greater Merseyside; converted to a percentile score (i.e. the top ranking district scores 100% and the bottom ranking 0%)
[3] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.

- Halton contains a high proportion of employment in knowledge-driven sectors, ranking it 34th out of 408 districts in the country. This is an improvement on last years audit when Halton was ranked 48th.

In 2006 some 33.1 per cent of employees in Halton were working in knowledge-driven sectors, compared to 22.4 per cent in the North West and 24.3 per cent in Great Britain. This was second highest among all the comparator districts and ranks Halton 34th nationally. A large proportion of the knowledge economy in Halton is composed of knowledge-driven production – 7.7 per cent – compared to 3.4 per cent in Great Britain as a whole, i.e. over double the GB average. The proportion of employment in knowledge-driven services in Halton is 25.4 per cent, again above the national average of 20.9%.

Employment in the knowledge economy in Halton has increased by 35.1 per cent between 1998 and 2007 (in contrast to a increase of 20.5% between 1998-2006). This is above the national, region and sub region figures.

The public sector is an important driver of the knowledge economy, and crucially provides a 'buffer' against economic downturns. The proportion of employment in public services in Halton was actually lower than most comparator areas and Great Britain as a whole in 2005 and again in 2006. (18.9 per cent compared to 27.1 per cent in Great Britain). Furthermore, between 1998-2007 employment in the public services actually declined by –4.1% in the Borough, in contrast to big increases nationally (14.2 per cent) and among all comparator towns. The largest increase was recorded in Knowsley at 48.1 per cent and 40.3% in Ellesmere Port & Neston.

Table 4: Industrial Structure

LAD	Employment: K-production (wkpl) (%) 2006	Employment: K-services (wkpl) (%) 2006	Employment: K-sectors (wkpl) (%) 2006	Employ change: k-sectors (wkpl) (%) 1998-2007	Employment: public services (wkpl) (%) 2006	Employ change: public services (wkpl) (%) 1998-2007	Industrial structure score (GB=100) 2006	Industrial Structure Score Rank (of 408)
Warrington	4.04	29.27	33.3	22.55	19.45	39.82	137.81	32
Halton	**7.67**	**25.39**	**33.06**	**35.06**	**18.88**	**-4.08**	**136.81**	**34**
Chester	2.04	28.69	30.73	31.69	26.29	19.59	127.16	47
Vale Royal	4.54	19.00	23.53	21.28	23.52	38.71	97.39	117
Ellesmere Port and Neston	7.37	14.73	22.1	35.06	18.78	40.29	91.46	151
Liverpool	1.73	18.69	20.43	26.54	39.31	12.16	84.53	171
Middlesbrough	1.53	18.54	20.07	21.81	38.57	13.09	83.07	180
Sefton	1.1	16.59	17.7	-12.31	39.15	16.02	73.24	231
Hartlepool	3.75	13.69	17.44	29.15	30.02	23.89	72.17	242
Wirral	3.26	13.72	16.99	38	36.15	16.63	70.29	254
Knowsley	4.69	11.50	16.19	114.28	32.89	48.1	66.99	274
St. Helens	2.2	12.26	14.46	35.87	25.95	28.33	59.85	330
Greater Merseyside	2.75	16.81	19.56	22.93	34.93	15.93	80.94	35 (of 53)
North West	3.9	18.51	22.41	29.57	27.79	14.53	92.74	4 (of 11)
Great Britain	3.42	20.90	24.32	22.72	27.10	14.18	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

2.4 Business and Enterprise

A dynamic local enterprise culture is imperative to the competitiveness and overall economic success of Halton. Business support is one of the three key 'focuses' of the Borough's Economic Development Strategy which emphasises the need to encourage start-ups and provide the necessary support to facilitate future growth. This latest audit's Enterprise Index accounts for new business survival, business formation and change, and change in VAT registered business stock. Table 5 shows the results of the latest audit of business and enterprise in Halton.

- Halton performs well in terms of business and enterprise, as its rank has improved from 119th to 19th out of 408 districts in the country for 2007 over 2003.

Business density (measured by the number of firms per 1000 population) in Halton has improved since 2004 but is still lower than the national and regional averages. In 2008 there were 26.7 businesses per 1000 population in Halton, compared to 34.5 per 1000 population in the North West and 40.2 per 1000 population nationally. Among comparator areas Chester and Vale Royal record the highest density of firms, at 46.8 per 1,000 and 42.4 per 1,000 respectively.

A positive sign is the increase in the number of VAT registered businesses in Halton between 1998-2008. The increase in Halton was 37.2%, well above the national average of 21.3 percent and above all the comparator districts except Knowsley at 40.9%. The level of entrepreneurship is slightly above average with a new business formation rate of 14.0 percent compared to the national average of 10.6 per cent. The 2 year survival rate of new business is not so good this time, - at 79% its down from 81.2% in 2000-2002 and below all the other comparators including the Great Britain average of 80.2 per cent.

The proportion of businesses in Halton operating in the knowledge economy has increased to just above the regional average. In 2007, the Halton figure was 30.7 while the North West figure was 29.7. The increase in business in knowledge driven sectors between 1998 and 2007 is 35.1%, higher than the national and regional averages of 22.7% and 29.6%. The share of employers who are SMEs in 2007 was 20.7%, higher than the national average of 14.9% and 2nd highest in the comparator group.

Table 5: Business and Enterprise

LAD	Proportion of businesses in Knowledge-driven production, 2007	Proportion of businesses in Knowledge-driven services, 2007	Proportion of businesses in Knowledge-driven sectors, 2007	Change in businesses in knowledge driven sectors, 1998-2007	Business per 1000 population (Number) 2008	Average business size 2007	share of employers who are micro 2007	share of employers who are SME 2007	share of employers who are large 2007	New business formation rate (%) 2007	Change in VAT business stock (%) 1998-2008	New Business Survival Rate (24 months) (%) 2003-2005	Business Enterprise Score 2007 (GB=100)	Business Enterprise Score Rank
Knowsley	1.5	31.7	33.2	114.3	17.0	15.5	80.0	19.1	0.9	12.9	40.9	83	124.3	17
Halton	**2.9**	**27.9**	**30.7**	**35.1**	**26.7**	**15.1**	**78.3**	**20.7**	**1.0**	**14.0**	**37.2**	**79**	**124.0**	**19**
Warrington	1.6	36.0	37.6	22.6	37.0	13.9	82.4	16.5	1.2	14.0	32.6	84	123.6	20
Ellesmere Port and Neston	2.4	28.6	30.9	35.1	25.0	13.2	78.8	20.6	0.6	14.7	23.1	85	120.4	27
Hartlepool	1.6	22.5	24.0	29.2	20.4	13.6	80.2	18.9	0.9	14.1	24.7	82	117.6	36
St. Helens	1.7	22.8	24.5	35.9	23.8	13.0	80.0	19.1	0.9	12.7	27.4	83	114.2	44
Middlesbrough	1.1	26.9	28.1	21.8	18.6	17.9	77.6	21.2	1.2	14.3	19.8	80	114.0	46
Wirral	1.6	28.2	29.8	38.0	24.1	11.1	82.6	16.7	0.6	12.2	22.4	81	107.7	96
Chester	1.4	35.6	37.0	31.7	46.8	11.7	83.6	15.8	0.6	11.5	21.7	84	106.0	118
Sefton	1.4	25.5	26.9	-12.3	26.3	11.1	83.0	16.5	0.6	11.7	19.8	84	105.7	121
Liverpool	1.2	27.8	29.0	26.5	25.1	16.5	79.6	19.3	1.1	12.0	21.2	80	105.5	127
Vale Royal	1.5	32.6	34.1	21.3	42.4	9.8	85.9	13.5	0.6	10.5	27.2	81	104.2	146
Greater Merseyside	1.6	27.2	28.8	22.9	24.3	13.7	80.9	18.3	0.9	12.3	24.4	81.54	109.8	6 (of 53)
North West	1.6	28.2	29.7	29.6	34.5	12.0	83.1	16.2	0.7	10.9	19.7	82	101.4	4 (of 11)
Great Britain	1.7	30.6	32.3	22.7	40.2	11.1	84.5	14.9	0.7	10.6	21.3	80.19	114.4	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

2.5 Education and Skills

This is where the good news about the economic prosperity ends. The local economy may be doing very well, but the ability of local people to access that prosperity is governed by their skills and qualifications – or lack of them.

The knowledge economy – a key policy goal of NWDA – is powered by human capital, itself measured according to the knowledge, skills and other attributes of the workforce. The importance of education and training is recognised by the Halton Strategic Partnership which, in the community strategy for the Borough, stresses that personal development and training are important "to promote the ability of local residents to ensure they have the skills and means to access a range of good quality secure job opportunities, and encourage residents to seek employment". [4]

In this latest audit, local levels of education and skills are assessed in terms of the qualifications profile of the working age population (i.e. the available workforce) and the results are presented in Table 6.

- Halton performs poorly in terms of skills and qualifications levels, ranked 387th out of 408 districts in the country, 21st worse in GB. This is down from 370th in 2006, illustrating that other LAs are outperforming Halton and overtaking it.

The proportion of working age people with 'higher end' skills in Halton is lower than Great Britain, the region and the Greater Merseyside sub region. In 2007, 16.2 per cent of people were qualified to at least NVQ level 4 (a university degree), compared to 28.6 per cent in Great Britain, 25.4 per cent in the North West and 21.6 in Greater Merseyside.

[4] Halton Borough Council, Halton Community Strategy

At the other end of the scale, 20.1% of people in Halton possessed either no qualifications, or were qualified to NVQ level 1 equivalent in 2007. This was a big improvement from the 2002-03 figure when it was 41.7 per cent of the working age population. However, other areas have improved even more to leave Halton in a worse rank in 2007 than it was in 2002. Both Liverpool and Hartlepool, plus the Greater Merseyside average have all overtaken Halton in the past 4 years. In 2002-2003 Knowsley was over 10 percentage points worse than Halton; by 2007 Knowsley had overtaken Halton.

Table 6: Education and Skills

LAD	Proportion of working population qualified below NVQ 2 Jan-Dec 2007	Proportion of working population with NVQ 2 Jan-Dec 2007	Proportion of working population with NVQ 3 Jan-Dec 2007	Proportion of working population with NVQ 4+ Jan-Dec 2007	Change in working age population with no qualifications, 1997-2003	Change in working age population with nvq4+, 1997-2003	Training in last 13 weeks (res) (%) March 2008	GCSE's A*-C (%) 2006/07	IMD - Education score (Av score) 2007	Skills and quals score (res) (GB=100) Jan-Dec 2007	Skills and quals score rank (of 408)
Chester	15.17	16.18	19.95	36.11	11.81	16.27	18.58	61.1	12.13	106.05	113
Warrington	16.76	20.09	18.97	32.2	-5.28	24.14	21.8	69.7	16.99	103.56	162
Vale Royal	21.71	22.19	13.53	34.24	16.87	3.34	16.84	67.1	16.29	102.36	187
Ellesmere Port and Neston	21.16	21.63	19.35	26.92	-33.27	1.92	17.81	54.9	23.59	100.64	211
Wirral	16.73	23.97	20.79	24.95	-2.54	5.82	16.06	60.9	20.52	99.98	229
Sefton	17.35	24.78	17.09	25.87	-4.98	24.09	17.09	64.1	19.02	96.45	283
Middlesbrough	16.62	23.53	22.39	19.49	-28.61	30.16	21.68	53.9	38.82	94.44	311
Hartlepool	17.86	26.27	22.42	17	-20.44	23.47	21.88	61.6	33.1	94.26	316
St. Helens	18.29	24.37	17.38	22.28	18.01	4.3	20.65	62.3	26.32	92.01	346
Liverpool	17.22	21.81	18.49	20.15	2.31	23.68	19.41	58.3	38.08	87.8	381
Halton	**20.14**	**26.92**	**17**	**16.18**	**-12.06**	**46.8**	**17.35**	**61.9**	**30.12**	**86.28**	**387**
Knowsley	20.13	22.66	17.28	15.5	23.01	47.88	17.94	50.8	43.89	81.74	403
Greater Merseyside	17.82	23.6	18.32	21.59	3.41	18.53	18.14	59.95	29.29	91.57	52 (of 53)
North West	18.04	22.32	19.34	25.35	-5.2	13.26	19.22	60.13	24.89	97.37	8 (of 11)
Great Britain	18.43	21.16	18.70	28.59	-12.63	17.53	20.28	62.00	22.67	100.00	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

2.6 Labour Market

The final aspect to be considered within the economic development section of this audit is on the labour market characteristics of Halton. Compared to the EU average, Britain has a less regulated labour market and enjoys relatively high employment rates and low unemployment (most of the country exceeds the minimum 70 per cent employment rate target set by the European Commission in the EU Employment Action Plan). Table 7 provides a summary of labour market conditions in the borough and the comparator towns.

- Halton still performs poorly with respect to the labour market, but its ranking out of 408 districts in the country has risen slightly from 357th in 2006 to 346th by 2008 and the gap between it and the national average has narrowed.

With an employment rate of 70 in 2008 (up from 66.7% in 2002/03, Halton is now only 4.7 percentage points below the national average compared to 7.5 percentage points in 2002. This is a continued improvement since the last audit in January 2008. Employment rates are fairly low across the comparator areas, with only Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Warrington above the national average. The level of

unemployment in Halton as a proportion of working age population was 3.6 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent nationally, and 3 per cent regionally – a slightly wider gap than previously. Encouragingly, Halton's proportion of long term unemployment compares favourably to National, regional and sub region rates. The Self employment rate has fallen since the previous audit from 7.6% (2007) to 6.1% (2008).

Table 7: Labour Market

LAD	Full-time employ (M) (res) (%) March 2008	Part-time employ (M) (res) (%) March 2008	Full-time employ (F) (res) (%) March 2008	Part-time employ (F) (res) (%) March 2008	Employment rate (res) (%) March 2008	Unemployment rate (%) October 2008	Unemployment - Long-term (%) October 2008	Self employment rate (res) (%) March 2008	IMD - Employment score (Av score) 2007	Economic activity (res) (%) March 2008	Labour market score (GB=100) March 2008	Labour Market Score Rank (of 408)
Warrington	89.52	10.08	57.04	42.96	77.2	2.5	10.3	8.4	0.11	80.1	103.4	185
Ellesmere Port and Neston	89.05	11.44	52.02	48.55	75.8	2.5	7.6	4.8	0.12	78.3	101.5	224
Chester	93.77	6.56	52.42	47.98	75.7	1.8	7.1	12.64	0.1	79.0	101.4	227
Vale Royal	93.18	6.49	53.93	46.44	74.5	2.3	8.9	10.78	0.1	77.8	99.8	258
Sefton	85.46	13.73	57.62	42.38	71.7	3.6	15.5	12.17	0.16	76.1	96.0	320
Halton	**93.82**	**6.18**	**59.45**	**40.55**	**70**	**3.6**	**10.4**	**6.05**	**0.18**	**75.4**	**93.8**	**346**
Wirral	86.68	12.87	54.32	45.68	69.6	3.7	9.9	10.17	0.18	74.8	93.2	351
St. Helens	93.23	6.27	54.27	45.43	66.9	3.6	9.5	8.68	0.19	72.6	89.6	380
Middlesbrough	89.74	9.6	53.93	45.69	66.3	5.4	20.9	6.85	0.21	72.0	88.8	384
Hartlepool	92.27	7.22	56.73	43.27	66.1	4.9	10.7	7.12	0.23	74.7	88.5	388
Knowsley	90.88	8.49	59.93	39.72	65	4.7	11.4	6.12	0.25	71.4	87.1	394
Liverpool	88.91	10.45	63.1	36.9	64.6	5.7	21.8	9.63	0.25	69.9	86.5	397
Greater Merseyside	88.94	10.5	58.58	41.35	67.75	4.39	15.7	9.45	0.21	73.0	90.7	50 (of 53)
North West	89.94	9.9	60.47	39.5	72.3	3	10.5	11.87	0.15	76.8	96.8	8 (of 11)
Great Britain	90.20	9.64	59.26	40.69	74.66	2.55	10.2	11.9	0.11	78.8	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

2.7 Summary

A summary of Halton's economic development profile is presented in Figure 2, comparing it with Greater Merseyside as a whole. The district has a relatively small economy (largely a result of its small geographical area), but productivity is above average. Business density is growing strongly, and the change between 1998 and 2006 for the knowledge driven sectors is above average.

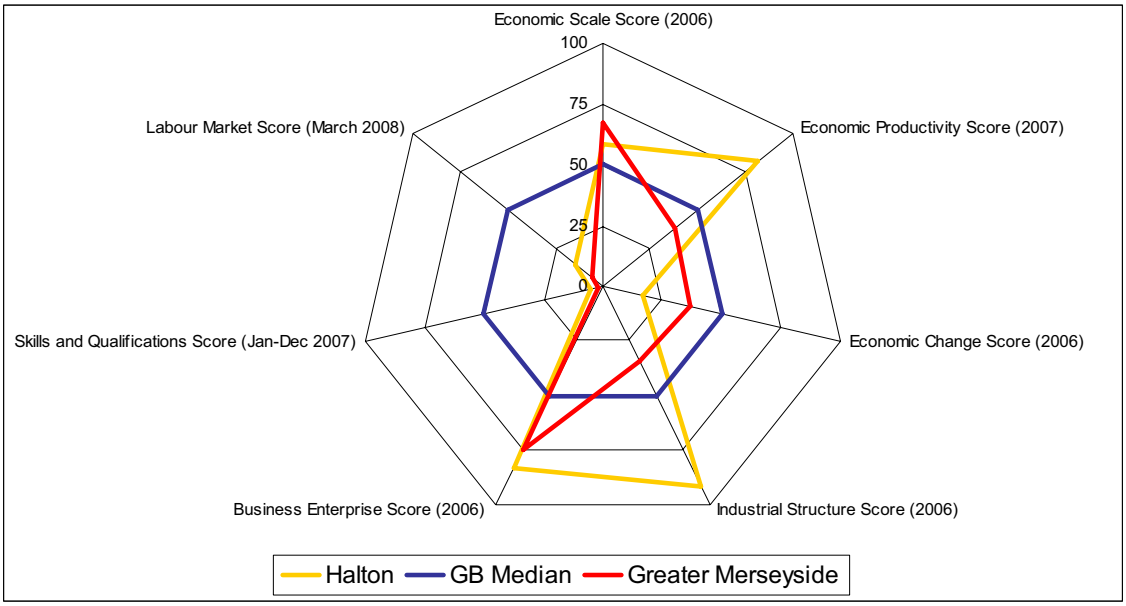
The growth in businesses per 1000 population has been reflected in employment trends. Employment has remained steady, while unemployment has increased slightly. The borough's very low skills base is reflected in the lower than average employment rates and the higher levels of unemployment.

In order to improve levels of growth, further improvements will be needed in the skills and qualifications base of the workforce – the district's human capital. The proportion of the resident population with at least a first degree – more important in a modern knowledge economy than ever before – is well below the national average. The number of people with no qualifications is falling, but not as much or as fast as elsewhere.

One of the strengths of this audit is that it allows for the comparison of geographical areas in order to benchmark relative performance. Most of the comparator districts perform poorly against the national average, particularly on key indicators of economic productivity, industrial structure, skill levels, employment and unemployment. The next

diagram summaries the main points in one diagram to provide an overview of complex issues. .

Figure 2: Economic Development Summary



Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures[5]

[5] This chart displays the national ranking of Halton and Greater Merseyside; converted to a percentile score (i.e. the top ranking district scores 100% and the bottom ranking 0%)

3 Social Profile

3.1 Introduction

Social issues are recognised as important considerations within the Community Strategy for Halton. An understanding of the social profile of the borough ties in with several of Halton's priorities, with the overall aim of "improving the quality of life for today's Halton residents." [6]

This audit assesses six aspects of Halton's social profile that are of relevance to the Council's aims and objectives, including:

- Demography and migration;
- Occupational structure;
- Wealth;
- Deprivation and inequality;
- Health;
- Crime.

The results of this analysis are presented below; at the end of the chapter a composite picture of the findings is provided.

3.2 Demography and Migration

Halton's demographic characteristics have a fundamental influence on the district's social and economic development. Table 8 shows the age profile of the borough.

- The average age in Halton is 38.0 years, placing the Borough in the bottom quintile (20%) out of 408 districts in the country (where the top quintile has the oldest populations).

Halton's younger than average population is a legacy of the Runcorn New Town era when many young families were attracted to the Borough in the 1970s. Despite these families growing up, Halton still has a slightly younger population than Great Britain as a whole (average age 39.2), although the gap between Halton and GB is narrowing. This characteristic is reflected at both ends of the age band spectrum by having a higher proportion of population in the younger age cohorts than the national average, and a lower proportion of population over age 65+. However Halton's proportion of over 50s is changing at one of the highest rates – an increase of 18.9% between 1991 and 2007, compared to a national change of 15.4% and a regional change of just 10%.

[6] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.

Table 8: Age Profile

LAD	Proportion of population aged 0-15, 2001	Proportion of population aged 16-24, 2001	Proportion of population aged 25-44, 2001	Proportion of population aged 45-64, 2001	Proportion of population aged 65+, 2001	Dependency Ratio, 2007 (GB=100)	Change in proportion of population aged 50+, 1991-2007	Average Age (2006)	Average Age Score (2006) (GB=100)
Sefton	18.5	11.4	23.8	26.4	19.8	0.7	5.8	41.5	105.6
Wirral	19.4	11.3	24.4	26.4	18.5	0.7	5.9	40.7	103.7
Chester	17.5	12.5	26.6	25.7	17.9	0.6	13.6	40.5	103.2
Ellesmere Port and Neston	19.3	11.0	26.4	26.0	17.5	0.6	20.2	40.2	102.5
Vale Royal	19.4	9.9	27.1	27.2	16.4	0.6	31.0	40.2	102.5
St. Helens	19.3	11.4	26.8	26.1	16.2	0.6	12.8	39.6	101.0
Warrington	19.5	11.1	28.5	25.7	15.1	0.6	21.6	39.1	99.6
Hartlepool	20.4	12.1	26.3	25.0	16.3	0.6	9.8	38.8	98.8
Halton	**20.4**	**12.4**	**27.1**	**26.3**	**13.8**	**0.6**	**18.9**	**38.0**	**96.8**
Knowsley	20.8	13.1	27.1	23.8	15.2	0.6	9.8	37.9	96.5
Liverpool	17.9	16.7	27.5	22.8	14.8	0.5	-8.0	37.7	96.0
Middlesbrough	20.3	14.7	26.3	23.6	15.1	0.6	6.3	37.7	96.0
Greater Merseyside	19.4	12.7	26.1	25.3	16.4	0.6	3.8	38.7	98.6
North West	19.3	12.4	27.1	25.0	16.3	0.6	9.8	39.2	99.8
Great Britain	18.9	11.9	28.4	24.9	16.1	0.6	15.4	39.2	100.0

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

The second aspect of Halton's demographic profile relates to migration and population change. The results are displayed in Table 9.

- Between 2000-2007 Halton's population increased by 0.34% - the 6th highest in the comparator areas but only 351st nationally.

With a small population increase of 0.34 per cent between 2000-2007, Halton's increase was less than the North West average of 1.3% but more than Greater Merseyside which fell by 1.6% over the same time period. Population increased in seven comparator areas and decreased in five. The highest growth was recorded in Vale Royal and the biggest falls in urban areas such as Sefton, Middlesborough and Liverpool. Between 2001-2007 the migration element of Halton's population increased by 0.17% - the 5th highest of the comparator areas.

Table 9: Migration and Population Change

LAD	Proportion of residents moved into the area from within the UK, 2001	Proportion of residents moved into the area from outside the UK, 2001	Proportion of residents moved out of the area, 2001	Net migration, 2001 % change in resident population, 2006	Net migration, 2001 % change in resident male population, 2006	Net migration, 2001 % change in resident female population, 2006	Change in Net Migration Population Score (GB=100)	% change in population, 2000-2007	Rank of Population Change, 2000-2007
Vale Royal	4.0	0.2	3.4	0.66	0.67	0.64	1,119	4.38	156
Warrington	3.2	0.3	3.1	-0.05	0	-0.1	-85	2.41	250
Hartlepool	1.9	0.2	2.1	0.23	0.23	0.22	390	1.78	283
Chester	5.0	0.7	5.5	-0.08	-0.18	0	-136	1.27	314
St. Helens	2.2	0.1	2.4	0.23	0.23	0.22	390	0.34	349
Halton	**2.1**	**0.1**	**2.9**	**0.17**	**0.18**	**0.16**	**288**	**0.34**	**351**
Ellesmere Port and Neston	2.9	0.3	3.1	0.24	0.25	0.24	407	0.12	364
Knowsley	2.8	0.1	3.0	-0.2	-0.28	-0.13	-339	-0.33	377
Wirral	1.8	0.2	2.1	0.03	0.07	0	51	-1.99	399
Liverpool	3.4	0.6	3.5	-0.86	-0.76	-0.96	-1,458	-2.38	401
Sefton	2.3	0.2	2.8	0.11	0.07	0.13	186	-2.51	403
Middlesbrough	2.9	0.3	3.8	-0.89	-0.93	-0.86	-1,508	-2.53	404
Greater Merseyside	2.5	0.3	2.9	-0.21	-0.18	-0.23	-356	-1.57	53 (of 53)
North West	3.4	0.4	3.5	0.05	0.05	0.04	85	1.33	10 (of 11)
Great Britain	4.0	0.6	4.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	100	3.52	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

The third aspect of Halton's demographic profile assessed in the Audit relates to ethnicity. Table 10 shows the results.

- The non-white population in Halton is relatively small, with the district ranking 337th out of 354 (English LA's) in terms of its ethnic diversity in 2006

Despite a small increase in the proportion of non-white population between 2001 and 2006 from 1.2 to 1.9 %, other areas have increased by a greater amount. The GB average is 10.6% and the North West average 7.1%. Of the comparator areas, Middleborough and Liverpool are still the most ethnically diverse districts, with the proportion of population classed as non white accounting for 7.8 per cent and 7.5 per cent of the total population respectively.

In keeping with many parts of the UK, Halton has seen an influx of migrant workers in recent years, especially from the EU accession countries. Reliable estimates of numbers are not currently possible from official statistics. However, data from the Workers registration scheme suggest there are a total of 1,585 registrations in Halton, representing 22.2% of the total registrations in Greater Merseyside. In comparison Liverpool has the largest number and percentage of WRS applicants in Greater Merseyside, with 2,620 and 36.7% respectively. However the number of migrants within Sefton is rising and they too have over 2,000 within the Borough. The modal age group for migrants to Halton is 18-24 this is also reflected in the Merseyside, North West and national figures.

Table 10: Ethnicity

LAD	Proportion of population classified as White, 2006	Proportion of population classified as Mixed, 2006	Proportion of population classified as Asian or British Asian, 2006	Proportion of population classified as Black or British Black, 2006	Proportion of population classified as Chinese or Other Ethnic group, 2006	Change in proportion of population classified as non-white, 1991-2001	Proportion of population classified as non-White, 2006	Proportion of population classified as non-White, 2006 index (GB=100)	Proportion of population classified as non-White, 2006 rank (of 354)
Middlesbrough	91.7	1.2	5.3	1.0	0.4	42.0	7.8	73.4	100
Liverpool	91.9	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.6	50.7	7.5	70.7	105
Chester	96.0	0.9	1.8	0.5	0.4	88.3	3.6	33.8	204
Warrington	96.7	0.9	1.3	0.4	0.5	62.3	3.0	28.6	246
Wirral	97.3	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	64.9	2.5	23.6	294
Knowsley	97.4	1.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	56.3	2.4	23.0	301
Sefton	97.4	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	66.6	2.4	22.1	305
Vale Royal	97.5	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.4	72.1	2.4	22.4	308
Hartlepool	97.7	0.7	1.1	0.3	0.2	65.1	2.3	21.8	324
Ellesmere Port and Neston	97.8	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.4	94.9	2.1	19.5	329
St. Helens	98.0	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.3	73.2	1.9	18.1	335
Halton	**98.0**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**59.9**	**1.9**	**18.1**	**337**
Greater Merseyside	95.9	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8	55.8	3.8	36.0	34 (of 47)
North West	92.5	1.2	4.2	1.0	0.6	51.6	7.1	66.8	6 (of 9)
Great Britain	88.68	1.63	5.49	2.76	0.74	36.8	10.6	100.0	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

The fourth and final aspect of the Halton's demography to be considered is household structure (see Table 11).

- The average household size in Halton is marginally larger than elsewhere in the country, with the district having a score of 102.1 in 2004 (cp to 102.2 in 2001) and GB=100

The source of most this data is the 2001 census and so the position cannot easily be updated. The average household size in Halton in 2001 was 2.47 people, slightly higher than the regional average of 2.39 people and the national figure of 2.41 people. By 2004, Halton's average household size had dropped to 2.43, but its index score had only changed by 0.1. In terms of household structure, Halton is in line with the national averages for households consisting of married couples with dependent children and married couples with no children. The proportion of one person households is slightly lower than average (27.3 per cent compared to 30.3 percent nationally and 30.9 per cent regionally).

Table 11: Household Structure

LAD	Proportion of one person households, 2001	Proportion of households comprising of married couples with no children, 2001	Proportion of households comprising of married couples with dependent children, 2001	Proportion of one parent households, 2005	Percentage change in average household size, 2001-2004	Average Household Size 2004	Average Household Size Score (GB = 100)
Liverpool	36.9	7.6	12.7	12.5	-2.99	2.27	95.4
Wirral	32.3	11.5	16.6	8.1	-1.28	2.31	97.1
Chester	30.1	14.2	17.8	2.9	-1.27	2.33	97.9
Sefton	30.6	11.1	17.3	6.4	-1.65	2.38	100.0
Warrington	27.5	14.3	20.9	5.4	-2.86	2.38	100.0
Hartlepool	30.5	12.6	16.8	4.1	0.84	2.39	100.4
St. Helens	27.7	12.9	17.9	9.1	-1.23	2.40	100.8
Vale Royal	25.2	16.0	20.9	3.4	-2.44	2.40	100.8
Halton	**27.3**	**12.7**	**18.0**	**5.4**	**-1.62**	**2.43**	**102.1**
Middlesbrough	30.9	10.8	16.7	14.4	-0.41	2.43	102.1
Ellesmere Port and Neston	26.6	14.1	19.9	6.9	0.41	2.47	103.8
Knowsley	29.0	8.8	16.3	14.7	-0.40	2.47	103.8
Greater Merseyside	32.1	10.2	15.8	9.3	-2.09	2.34	98.3
North West	30.9	12.3	17.1	8.7	-1.26	2.36	99.2
Great Britain	30.3	13.0	17.5	7.2[7]	-1.24	2.38[8]	100

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

3.3 Occupational Profile

The occupational profile of Halton is a useful indicator of the district's progress towards developing a diverse, prosperous, knowledge-based economy. Chapter 2 showed that the number of jobs in the knowledge based industries was growing in Halton. This section examines whether local people are employed by these same industries.

Occupational structure is considered in terms of the proportion of the *resident* workforce employed in each of the nine Standard Occupational Groups. Table 12 shows the results.

- Halton is one of the lowest ranking districts in the country (362nd out of 407) in terms of the proportion of knowledge workers in the resident population. In 2006 it was 347th.

Despite Halton having a good level of jobs in the knowledge economy, (see section 2.3), a low proportion of the workforce in Halton is engaged in knowledge intensive activities and occupations. In 2008, 32.5% per cent of the employed workforce was

[7] England

engaged in knowledge intensive occupations down from 38.5% in 2006, the regional and national figures are 40.2% and 43.1% respectively.

Closer analysis of the occupational breakdown reveals that 'higher end' occupations (managerial, professional) have almost closed the gap to the regional and national averages. In 2008, 11.9 per cent of the employed workforce were working in managerial and senior official occupations (compared to 14.2 per cent in the North West). With the technical occupations, the gap is still significant with 11.7% in Halton and 14.6% for Great Britain. The proportion of lower skilled (and by implication, lower paid) occupations has increased in Halton since the last audit. In 2008 the proportion of the employed workforce working in elementary occupations was 13% compared to 11.7 per cent in 2006.

Table 12: Occupational Profile

LAD	Proportion of Manager and Senior Official occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Professional occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Associate Professional and Technical occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Administrative and Secretarial occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Skilled Trades occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Personal Service occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Sales and Customer Service occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Process, Plant and Machine Operatives amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of Elementary occupations amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Proportion of 'Knowledge Workers' amongst employed workforce, March 2008	Change in 'Knowledge Workers', Jan-Dec 2005	Knowledge Worker Score (March 2008) (GB=100)	Knowledge Worker Score Rank (of 407)
Chester	17.02	18.25	17.89	10.35	9.12	3.51	11.4	4.21	8.25	53.16	4.3	123.26	53
Warrington	17.71	15.52	14.17	12.4	7.08	6.46	8.75	7.4	10.52	47.4	-6.29	109.9	108
Wirral	13.73	15.01	17.27	13.35	7.09	7.24	5.58	8.22	12.52	46	-1.27	106.67	128
Sefton	17.3	13.01	12.51	13.18	8.56	8.23	9.74	6.3	11.17	42.82	8.69	99.29	173
Vale Royal	13.2	14.33	12.24	8.86	10.95	10.79	8.37	7.25	14.01	39.77	-1.86	92.23	241
St. Helens	11.95	11.29	14.48	9.56	11.29	9.16	9.43	9.16	13.68	37.72	-6.37	87.46	278
Hartlepool	11.41	10.08	15.92	9.81	12.2	9.02	10.88	8.22	12.47	37.4	7.27	86.72	284
Ellesmere Port and Neston	9.43	15.14	11.17	11.41	8.19	9.18	11.91	10.17	13.4	35.73	24.55	82.86	316
Liverpool	10.51	10.67	14.04	14.43	9.74	9.53	8.33	7.68	15.08	35.22	10.35	81.67	326
Halton	**11.93**	**8.81**	**11.74**	**13.21**	**9.17**	**8.44**	**13.03**	**10.64**	**13.03**	**32.48**	**-1.18**	**75.31**	**362**
Middlesbrough	7.72	9.43	14.75	12.35	9.43	10.46	7.2	11.32	17.32	31.9	-3.89	73.98	371
Knowsley	9.08	6	13.78	13.29	12.16	10.86	9.56	11.35	13.94	28.85	5	66.9	398
Greater Merseyside	12.63	11.49	14.26	13.16	9.33	8.79	8.68	8.33	13.34	38.38	3.49	88.99	42 (of 53)
North West	14.18	12.11	13.94	12.44	10.46	8.24	8.48	8.46	11.68	40.24	2.06	93.3	6 (of 11)
Great Britain	15.42	13.11	14.6	11.67	10.87	8.02	7.62	7.62	11.47	43.13	1.22	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

3.4 Prosperity

Maintaining and enhancing existing levels of prosperity in Halton are seen as key goals for the Borough, as set out in both the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. This audit considers prosperity in terms of a range of indicators, including: total income, house prices, and social data such as the number of cars per household. Table 13 shows the results.

- Halton's prosperity is improving, albeit slowly. Its current ranking of joint 284th is higher than the 298 ranking it had last year. (out of 408 LAs in Great Britain)

In 2005-06 the average income in Halton was £20,400, lower than the regional figure of £21,700 and the national figure of £24,241. House prices are relatively low by national standards, £134,703 compared to £223,976 in Great Britain, although this

advantage is off set somewhat by the lower average incomes of the district. Deprivation, measured by the Income Deprivation Domain Average (SOA) score is higher than the national average at 0.21, compared to the national average of 0.16, though again the gap has closed to half it was 3 years ago (0.05 points cp to 0.10 points 3 years ago.).

Table 13: Prosperity

LAD	Average Total income, 2005-06	Average house prices, September 2008	Proportion of all households with 2+ cars, 2001	Average number of rooms per household, 2001	Indices of Deprivation, Income Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Prosperity Score 2005-06 (GB=100)	Prosperity Score Rank (of 408)
Chester	£26,900	£218,168	34.7	5.7	0.12	111.0	89
Warrington	£25,700	£179,239	35.7	5.5	0.12	106.0	114
Vale Royal	£25,300	£194,869	41.0	5.8	0.12	104.4	120
Ellesmere Port and Neston	£22,800	£176,006	32.7	5.6	0.13	94.1	186
Sefton	£22,300	£167,915	25.0	5.7	0.17	92.0	198
Wirral	£21,300	£167,360	25.4	5.7	0.2	87.9	246
Halton	**£20,400**	**£134,703**	**26.2**	**5.3**	**0.21**	**84.2**	**=284**
St. Helens	£20,400	£132,125	26.2	5.3	0.19	84.2	=284
Liverpool	£20,300	£129,382	13.5	5.2	0.3	83.7	292
Knowsley	£18,800	£126,144	17.4	5.2	0.29	77.6	367
Hartlepool	£18,700	£118,486	18.3	5.3	0.24	77.1	372
Middlesbrough	£18,500	£107,035	18.4	5.2	0.27	76.3	380
Greater Merseyside	£20,754	£145,195	21.1	5.4	0.23	86.7	43 (of 53)
North West	£21,700	£160,063	26.3	5.4	0.18	90.6	=7 (of 11)
Great Britain	£24,241	£223,976	28.8	5.3	0.16[9]	100.0	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

3.5 Deprivation and Inequality

Deprivation and inequality is a priority for the Borough which aims to "increase wealth and to narrow the gap for those who are most disadvantaged if residents of the Borough are to enjoy the quality of life …."[8]
The Government's standard measure of deprivation and inequality in England is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), recently updated in 2007. The IMD covers a number of aspects of deprivation including disadvantage in: education; income; employment; health; and housing. In this audit we consider the IMD as a whole, as well as each of the individual aspects. Table 14 displays the results.

- Halton is still one of the most deprived districts in England, but its ranking has improved from 21st in 2004 to 30th in 2007 (out of 354 districts in England).

Using the average score of all SOAs in the district[9], Halton ranks as the 30th most deprived district in England. The average SOA score – 32.6 – is higher than the figure

[8] Halton Borough Council's Community Strategy
[9] SOAs (Super Output Areas) are small geographical units used as the building blocks for the IMD. Since they are smaller than wards, SOAs enable a finer level of data analysis to be carried out.

for the North West (27.7) and England as a whole (21.7), indicating a high level of deprivation in the district. Most comparator areas have higher than average SOA scores for overall deprivation.

Inequality within Halton – measured by the difference in ranking places between the most and least deprived SOAs – is higher than in England as a whole (105 against the national benchmark of 100), suggesting the presence of some pockets of less fortunate areas within the district. Comparator areas, with the exceptions of Knowsley and Liverpool are above the national bench mark, indicating greater inequality.

Table 14: Deprivation and Inequality

LAD	Index of Multiple Deprivation, Average SOA Score, 2007	Inequality (range of IMD ranks), 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Income Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Employment Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Crime Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Indices of Deprivation, Living Environment Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Inequality Score (Eng=100)	Deprivation Score Rank (of 354)
Liverpool	46.97	25,812	0.30	0.22	1.59	36.31	17.10	1.05	48.06	97.0	1
Knowsley	43.20	21,007	0.29	0.21	1.50	41.76	16.98	0.64	32.11	78.9	5
Middlesbrough	38.94	30,277	0.27	0.18	1.16	39.35	12.00	1.02	19.08	113.8	9
Hartlepool	34.10	29,325	0.25	0.19	1.06	31.74	9.85	0.40	13.68	110.2	23
Halton	**32.61**	**27,926**	**0.21**	**0.17**	**1.16**	**31.79**	**16.81**	**0.36**	**19.05**	**105.0**	**30**
St. Helens	29.82	28,247	0.19	0.16	0.93	27.10	13.51	0.40	22.19	106.2	47
Wirral	27.90	31,842	0.19	0.16	0.84	19.79	10.91	0.10	23.71	119.7	60
Sefton	25.13	31,045	0.17	0.14	0.78	18.75	9.82	0.00	21.66	116.7	83
Ellesmere Port and Neston	19.92	30,171	0.13	0.11	0.35	25.64	12.47	0.15	12.07	113.4	147
Warrington	17.89	31,199	0.12	0.10	0.28	17.19	12.71	-0.15	18.96	117.3	165
Chester	16.86	31,676	0.12	0.09	-0.01	14.65	21.37	-0.09	14.61	119.0	184
Vale Royal	16.18	31,511	0.11	0.09	-0.03	17.44	14.51	-0.18	17.77	118.4	196
Greater Merseyside	35.21	28,043	0.23	0.18	1.15	28.59	13.95	0.47	30.83	105.4	1 (of 47)
North West	27.60	28,293	0.18	0.14	0.67	25.08	15.78	0.22	25.15	106.3	2 (of 9)
England	21.67	25,626	0.16	0.10	0.00	21.69	21.69	0.00	21.69	100.0	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

3.6 Health

Health is a key determinant of a good quality of life and the first priority of Halton's Community Strategy states that 'statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country and single it out as the aspect of life in the Borough in most urgent need of improvement.'[10]

Table 15 presents a set of key indicators relating to health in Halton.

- Halton remains relatively unhealthy, ranked 371st out of 408 districts in the country, compared to 384th four years ago. .

Average life expectancy in Halton was 76.7 years in 2004-06, compared to 78.1 years regionally and 78.6 years nationally. Life expectancy was relatively low among most comparator areas as it's linked to deprivation and low incomes. Only in 5 comparator areas do residents live longer than the national average. In all the other health indicators used in this audit, Halton performs below average. For example, Halton's mortality ratio in 2006 was 127 (GB=100), and its health index was 97.5 compared to Great Britain being 100, meaning its rank is little changed since 2004.

Table 15: Health

LAD	Infant Mortality Rate, 2003-2005	Standardised Mortality Ratio, (GB=100) 2006	Share of all persons with limiting long-term illness, 2001	Average life expectancy (years) 2004-2006	Average hours worked, residence based, 2008	Indices of Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Health Score, 2004-2006 (GB=100)	Health Score Rank (of 374)
Chester	6.8	95	17.5	80.1	32.6	-0.01	101.9	190
Vale Royal	5	98	18.1	79.7	33.5	-0.03	101.4	224
Ellesmere Port and Neston	4.6	101	18.9	79.7	32.4	0.35	101.3	230
Sefton	4.6	100	22.21	78.9	33.6	0.78	100.4	287
Warrington	5.8	114	17.9	78.8	34.7	0.28	100.3	292
Wirral	5.2	106	22.52	78.5	34.7	0.84	99.9	306
St. Helens	7.2	110	23.56	78.1	35.0	0.93	99.3	333
Middlesbrough	5.9	116	22.31	77.2	32.7	1.16	98.1	365
Knowsley	4.9	124	24.66	77.1	33.3	1.50	98.0	366
Hartlepool	4.3	123	24.36	76.8	35.9	1.06	97.7	369
Halton	**6.2**	**127**	**21.52**	**76.7**	**34.8**	**1.16**	**97.5**	**371**
Liverpool	6.5	128	24.64	76.3	33.2	1.59	97.0	373
Greater Merseyside	4.87	115	23.4	77.6	34.0	1.2	98.7	47 (of 49)
North West	5.9	109	20.7	78.1	34.0	0.7	99.3	9 (of 10)
Great Britain	5.07[11]	100	18.4	78.6[11]	34.0	0.0[11]	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

[10] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.
[11] England

3.7 Crime

"Crime is a major concern according to a survey of Halton residents." [12]

As another important quality of life factor, crime and personal safety are identified as key considerations within the Community Strategy for Halton and in its latest Community Strategy. Table 16 considers a set of indicators regarding crime within Halton.

- Levels of crime in Halton are fairly high; in 2007-08 Halton's rank is 65th out of 376 in terms of total offences per 1000 population. This is compared to 140th for 2003-04.

By 2007-08, the total crime score had risen from 103.6 to 118.7 a figure just above the regional average and 18% above that for England and Wales. Middlesborough and Liverpool record the highest proportions of crime at 5th and 30th highest in the country. Halton's offences per 1000 residents and violent crimes per 1000 population are both higher than the regional averages.

Table 16: Crime

LAD	Offences per 1000 population (incl. Vehicle Crimes, Violent Crimes, Burglaries) (2007-2008)	Vehicle crimes per 1000 population, (2007-2008)	Violent crimes per 1000 population, (2007-2008)	Dwelling Burglaries per 1,000 residents (2007-2008)	Indices of Deprivation, Crime Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Total Crime Score (2007-2008) (E&W=100)	Crime Score Rank (of 376)
Middlesbrough	102.3	17.7	34.1	11.8	1.02	190.4	5
Liverpool	78.2	15.4	22.8	10.3	1.05	145.6	30
Halton	**63.7**	**10.8**	**20.0**	**4.9**	**0.36**	**118.7**	**65**
Hartlepool	62.6	10.3	22.4	5.6	0.40	116.7	77
Ellesmere Port and Neston	56.2	10.0	18.1	3.8	0.15	104.6	107
Warrington	52.8	11.1	17.2	4.5	-0.15	98.2	133
Knowsley	52.6	13.5	10.2	5.2	0.64	97.9	135
Chester	49.8	8.7	17.0	4.4	-0.09	92.7	155
St. Helens	48.1	8.9	13.9	4.7	0.40	89.6	162
Vale Royal	42.4	8.6	13.1	3.3	-0.18	79.0	211
Sefton	40.5	7.7	10.8	4.7	0.00	75.5	227
Wirral	40.4	6.4	12.2	3.2	0.10	75.2	230
Greater Merseyside	55.7	10.7	15.7	6.1	0.47	103.7	16 (of 49)
North West	56.8	11.8	19.7	6.0	0.22	105.7	4 (of 10)
England & Wales	53.7	25.0	17.6	5.2	0.00	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

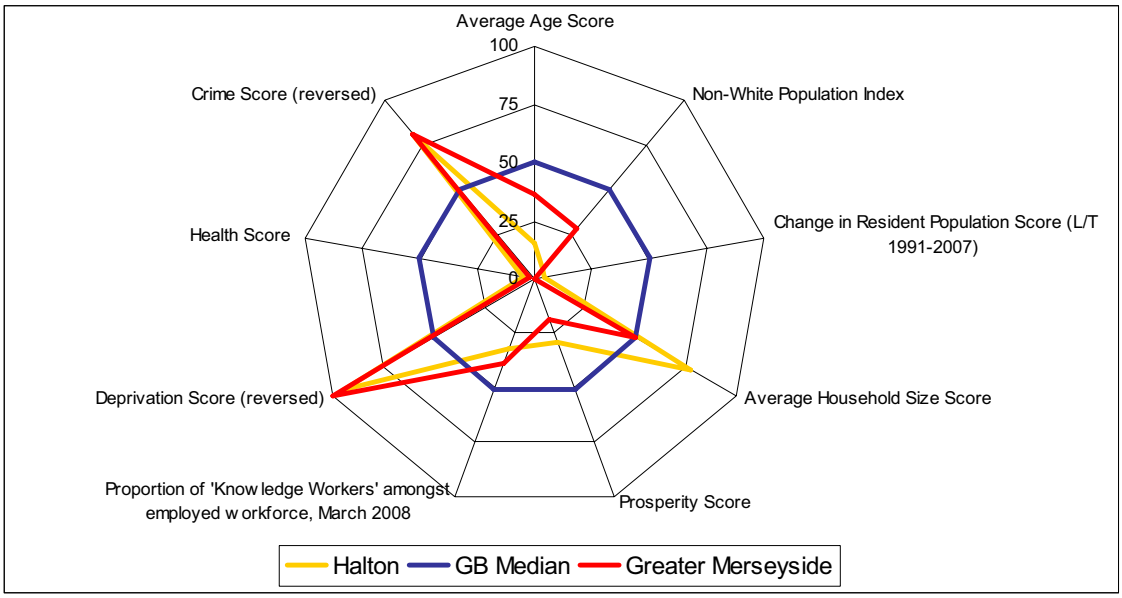
[12] Halton Borough Council, Halton Community Strategy,

3.8 Summary

Figure 3 presents a summary spider diagram showing key indicators of the social profile of Halton compared to the Greater Merseyside and GB median positions.

The social profile of Halton is very much tied to the economic profile of the borough, as set out in Chapter 2. The diagram can be confusing as both its crime and deprivation scores are reversed- in other words they are both near the worse positions rather than the top that the others show. Prosperity, crime, health, deprivation and population growth are all in the bottom quartile. The proportion of knowledge workers among the workplace employment is healthy, but as chapter 2 showed, they are not necessarily occupied by local people.

Figure 3: Social Profile Summary



Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures[13]

[13] The chart displays the national ranking of the district; converted to a percentile score (i.e. the top ranking district scores 100% and the bottom ranking 0%)

4 Environment

4.1 Introduction

The third and final section of this audit looks at a number of aspects of the environment and quality of life in Halton. It considers:

- Housing;
- Commercial and industrial property;
- Transport and connectivity;
- Access to services and amenities;
- The natural environment.

The results of this analysis are presented below. As previously, we provide a composite picture of the environment in Halton at the end of the chapter, together with a short summary of the key points.

4.2 Housing

In this audit, housing is considered in terms of affordability (assessed on the basis of the ratio between average earnings and average house prices), housing tenure, and housing condition information. Table 17 shows the results.

- Halton still contains some of the most affordable housing in the country, its ranking has risen from 30th in 2004 to 16th in September 2008, out of 361 LAs in England and Wales.

The average house price in Halton was £134,703 in September 2008, below the regional average of £160,063 and the national average of £223,976. The comparator areas as a whole are quite affordable, with the exception of Vale Royal and Chester. The source for housing tenure is still the 2001 census, so these proportions won't have changed in this analysis, but in reality there have been changes due to the number of new houses built in the Borough being almost exclusively for sale rather than rent.

Table 17: Housing

LAD	Average house prices, September 2008	Proportion of Local Authority housing stock declared non-decent, 2005/06	Indices of Deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Housing Affordability score (GB=100) 2007	Proportions of rented households (2001)	Housing Affordability Score Rank (of 361)
Knowsley	£126,144	-	16.98	190.8	62.8	6
Halton	**£134,703**	**59**	**16.81**	**169.2**	**26.9**	**16**
Liverpool	£129,382	59	17.10	164.2	50.5	20
Hartlepool	£118,486	-	9.85	164.0	36.4	21
Middlesbrough	£107,035	-	12.00	155.3	36.5	33
St. Helens	£132,125	-	13.51	150.3	30.9	37
Ellesmere Port and Neston	£176,006	15	12.47	141.9	22.3	60
Warrington	£179,239	28	12.71	138.4	24.0	69
Wirral	£167,360	-	10.91	131.0	27.1	87
Sefton	£167,915	64	9.82	110.7	25.8	165
Vale Royal	£194,869	-	14.51	105.4	22.4	184
Chester	£218,168	-	21.37	103.6	33.9	188
Greater Merseyside	£145,195	34.58	13.95	148.4	35.1	4 (of 53)
North West	£160,063	24.35	15.78	134.9	30.7	2 (of 10)
England & Wales	£223,976	21.51	0.00	100.0	31.7	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

4.3 Commercial and Industrial Property

Table 18 considers land use within Halton, showing how the amount of industrial and commercial floorspace has changed over time.

- Halton experienced the 50th highest rate of growth in commercial and industrial floorspace between 2003 and 2007 out of 375 districts in England & Wales.

Between 2003-07, the amount of industrial and commercial floorspace in Halton grew by 6.5 per cent, higher than the national rate (1.7% per cent) and the regional rate (1.1 per cent). This growth has primarily been driven by big increases in the amount of office and industrial floor space in the district.

Looking in more detail at the floorspace profile of Halton shows that there is a slightly above average proportion of commercial and industrial space. In 2007, industrial floorspace made up 76.1 per cent of the total in Halton, compared to 66.3 per cent in the North West and 62.1 per cent in Great Britain as a whole. Retail and office space are under represented, at 9.5 per cent and 12.6 per cent of the total respectively. Its substantially lower than the national average of 17.7 per cent of the total in retail floor space and 16.9 per cent of the total in office floor space.

Table 18: Commercial and Industrial Property

LAD	Retail floorspace as a proportion of all commercial & industrial floorspace, 2007	Office floorspace as a proportion of all commercial & industrial floorspace, 2007	Industrial floorspace as a proportion of all commercial & industrial floorspace, 2007	% change in retail floorspace, 2003-2007	% change in office floorspace, 2003-2007	% change in industrial floorspace, 2003-2007	% change in commercial and industrial floorspace, 2003-2007	Proportion of total area that is derelict land and buildings, 2006	Commercial and industrial floorspace score (2007) (GB=100)	Commercial and Industrial Floorspace Score Rank (of 375)
Knowsley	7.2	5.3	85.3	8.1	15.3	-1.4	2.3	0.80	525.84	4
Halton	**9.5**	**12.6**	**76.1**	**-9.6**	**6.4**	**6.3**	**6.5**	**0.82**	**252.1**	**50**
Hartlepool	17.7	6.3	72.7	-12.7	-3.7	5.9	4.8	0.00	226.13	65
Vale Royal	13.2	10.4	72.4	-7.7	28.0	-12.5	-4.9	1.20	135.91	148
Ellesmere Port and Neston	11.5	4.2	81.4	-11.9	-1.6	26.7	22.6	2.32	100.38	200
Warrington	14.6	16.0	67.0	-7.5	-1.8	-4.9	-2.5	0.40	64.72	257
Wirral	23.3	11.2	61.5	-1.2	-2.4	-4.5	0.5	0.84	60.6	262
Middlesbrough	24.6	21.5	49.0	-21.2	1.0	-2.6	-2.7	0.01	34.43	303
Sefton	29.1	17.9	49.2	-5.9	12.4	-5.0	1.4	1.48	25.71	316
Chester	26.3	26.5	43.8	-3.8	6.4	-16.2	-4.2	0.06	11.54	325
Liverpool	24.4	23.1	48.4	-6.1	-4.8	-10.2	-3.9	3.01	-2.82	335
St. Helens	16.0	8.0	72.4	-8.0	-2.4	-18.1	-12.4	1.47	-99.02	369
Greater Merseyside	19.2	14.6	62.9	-4.9	0.4	-6.0	-1.6	1.42	83.52	39 (of 49)
North West	17.3	13.3	66.3	-2.4	4.5	-3.2	1.1	0.31	50.74	10 (of 10)
Great Britain	17.7	16.9	62.1	-4.0	0.8	-1.8	1.7	0.91	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

4.4 Transport: Accessibility and Mobility

This audit assesses an area's accessibility and connectivity using a composite of measures including distance from London, the 'Local Hub' Index (the concentration of transport hubs such as motorway junctions, airports, ports and mainline railway stations), and the 'Contiguity Index' (a score based on an area's proximity to transport hubs in neighbouring districts). The Community Strategy for Halton sees the borough as having 'an excellent network of roads and footways that provide safe and accessible transport routes for motor vehicles, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.'[14]. Table 19 shows the results for Halton.

[14] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.

- Halton is ranked 138th out of 408 districts in Great Britain, for accessibility and connectivity, down slightly from its 2002 rank of 120th.

Using our composite measure, Halton has an overall connectivity score of 60.4 (indexed against Great Britain), slightly below the regional figure of 66.7, and below the national benchmark of 100.

The Audit also sheds some light on commuting patterns in Halton. The 2001 census commuting data is used to get an index score between local employment and the local resident workforce, indexed against Great Britain as a whole. The 2001 score for Halton was 96.3 which indicates that the area is likely to be a net exporter of labour (a score above 100 would indicate that the number of local jobs exceeds the available workforce, accepting that people can hold more than one job). Of the comparator districts, Liverpool, Warrington, Middlesbrough and Chester are all net importers of labour.

Analysis of data on the mode of travel to work show that use of the car is more common in Halton than in either Great Britain or the rest of the North West; in 2001, 71.5 per cent of people travelled to work using a car in Halton, compared to 65.9 per cent regionally and 61.2 per cent nationally. The proportion travelling to work by public transport, at 8.4 per cent is below the national average of 14.8 per cent. Of the comparator districts Liverpool in particular has a high proportion travelling by public transport (24.6 per cent) as is expected in a large urban area.

Table 19: Transport: Accessibility and Mobility

LAD	Proportion of people who travel to work by car, 2001	Proportion of people who travel to work by public transport, 2001	Proportion of people who travel to work by foot or bicycle, 2001	Net Commuting, 2001 (GB=100)	Average travel to work time (in minutes), 2002- 2003	Connectivity Score (2005) (GB=100)	Connectivity Score Rank (of 408)
Middlesbrough	64.8	12	14.3	101.5	21	121.5	83
Knowsley	62.9	17.5	10.9	86.4	24	106.4	95
Liverpool	55.1	24.6	12.3	111.5	20	104.8	97
Warrington	72.7	6.6	10.4	133.3	20	91.2	108
Wirral	65.9	13.9	10.1	77.2	21	77.3	121
Ellesmere Port and Neston	73.6	6	10.7	92.1	17	67.8	133
Sefton	63.1	14.1	12.4	90	24	65.0	134
Halton	**71.5**	**8.4**	**11.8**	**96.3**	**22**	**60.4**	**138**
St. Helens	71.1	10.1	10.2	86.2	17	38.0	186
Vale Royal	74.9	3.3	9.9	83.5	20	26.2	215
Chester	66.1	7.7	14.2	133	19	19.1	249
Hartlepool	66.5	9	14.4	90	19	12.7	276
Greater Merseyside	63.3	16.2	11.4	95.2	21.3	157.7	7 (of 53)
North West	65.9	11	12.5	102.3	19.4	66.7	3 (of 11)
Great Britain	61.2	14.8	13	100	20.2	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

4.5 Services and Amenities

Easy access to quality services is one of the key aims of the Halton Strategic Partnership, as set out in the Community Strategy. In particular this relates to the quality of the services that the Partner agencies themselves provide. Good local amenities are another objective, including high quality accessible historical, arts, recreational and entertainment facilities. This is particularly relevant to Urban Renewal Priority of the Community Strategy which aims to transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.'[15]

In this audit, a number of indicators are used to assess the quality or attractiveness of local services and amenities. For services, we take account of school results, recycling levels, and CPA results. Amenities are considered in terms of a combination of indicators including the density of National Heritage Sites and Listed Buildings, the availability of cultural amenities (such as cinemas, theatres and libraries), employment in hotels and restaurants, and what has been termed the 'café culture'. The results are presented in Table 20.

[15] Halton Borough Council Halton Community Strategy,

- In 2007, Halton ranks as the 199th best performing district out of 352 in terms of the quality of its services, down from 158th in 2004, primarily because of the choice of putting GCSE results in the package defining local services. Its rank for local amenities rose from 318th to 109th out of 376 for the quality of its local amenities- reflecting the new Brindley theatre.

With an index score of 99, Halton is just below par with the national average in terms of the quality of the local services. School performance in 2006/07 was slightly below the national average, as is the level of household recycling (13.6 per cent of waste was recycled in 2005/06 compared to 14.3 per cent in Great Britain as a whole). Of comparator districts Chester scores well on local services ranked 47th out of 354.

In terms of the quality of its local amenities, Halton performs well, with an indexed score of 137 (compared to 100 nationally). Cultural amenities in Halton are now well-represented in comparison to the national average (207.7 amenities per 1000 sq km, against the national benchmark of 100). Listed buildings at 3.4 per 1000 km, match the national average, whereas Liverpool is ranked 16th out of 376 in terms of local amenities as is expected of a large urban area.

Table 20: Services and Amenities

LAD	Percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*-C, 2006-2007	% household waste recycled, 2005-2006	CPA Scores 2007[18]	Local services score (GB=100) 2007	Local Services Score Rank (of 352)	National Heritage sites per 1000 sq km, 2007	Cultural Amenities per 1000 sq km, GB=100 2007	Proportion of employment in Hotels and Restaurants, 2007	Listed Buildings per 1000 sq km, 2007	Café culture (number), June 2007	Local amenities score (GB=100) 2008	Local amenities score Rank (of 376)
Chester	61.1	14.22	4	117.89	47	8.93	199.1	10.2	7.9	3	103.4	142
Hartlepool	61.6	13.84	4	115.75	61	10.64	294.2	5.6	3.4	0	71.5	227
Vale Royal	67.1	18.3	4	110.78	93	0	130.7	6.5	3.8	0	88.0	181
Ellesmere Port and Neston	54.9	21.35	3	110.31	98	0	287.7	6.8	4.5	1	88.2	180
St. Helens	62.3	9	4	108.42	113	0	317.6	7.4	2.1	0	179.0	81
Warrington	69.7	13.58	4	104.92	139	0	226.8	5.6	4.1	2	160.8	92
Sefton	64.1	13.78	4	103.26	154	6.54	453.3	7.4	9.7	2	201.8	64
Knowsley	50.8	7.35	3	102.65	157	0	251.1	3.3	2.2	0	143.3	104
Halton	**61.9**	**13.58**	**4**	**99**	**199**	**0**	**207.7**	**4.4**	**3.4**	**0**	**137.4**	**109**
Middlesbrough	53.9	11.47	4	94.38	225	18.52	741.3	5.9	4.9	0	201.3	65
Liverpool	58.3	8.64	1	92.52	240	107.14	1010.8	6.8	28.4	6	481.8	16
Wirral	60.9	7.87	2	78.76	313	25.48	485.0	6.8	9.2	0	195.4	68
Greater Merseyside	59.95	9.8	2.6	99.3	37 (of 47)	23.5	470.1	6.4	9.5	8	540.3	5 (of 49)
North West	60.13	14.0	2.9	107.9	8 (of 9)	10.4	171.5	6.8	3.8	33	1394.5	1 (of 10)
Great Britain	62	14.3	2.9	100		65.4	100	6.7	3.4	689	100	

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

4.6 Natural Environment

The final aspect to be considered under the Environment section of the Local Futures Audit is the quality of the natural environment in Halton. Clearly, the natural environment is a subjective topic which makes benchmarking problematic; nevertheless it is an important consideration in any attempt to carry out a comprehensive audit of conditions in an area. The knowledge economy is characterised by a more decentralised geography of employment and population change. Behind this counter-urbanisation trend is house price inflation and a range of quality of life and work-life balance factors that influence residential and business location decisions. In this context, an area's natural environment has become an important consideration in economic development. The natural environment is important to Halton, which aims to create an attractive borough with quality accessible open space that is valued by the local community, and strategic routes through the borough which are well landscaped and create an image which will be attractive to new investors and potential new residents.[16]

Table 21 shows the results of this part of the audit of the natural environment in Halton. Indicators of weather, tranquillity (population density) and natural beauty (the presence of woodland and special landscape designations such as AONBs) have been included.

[16] Halton Borough Council (2006) Making it happen in Halton – A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton.

- Halton scores 72 as an index where the English average is 100, ranking it 249th out of 354 districts in England for the quality of its natural environment.

Halton has a low score in terms of the quality of its natural environment, with its overall score on the natural environment being 72 (indexed against England). Halton scores 100.1 for natural beauty, and 68.2 for tranquillity, both indexed against England. The weather is slightly below the English average at 97.9 compared to 100 for England.

Table 21: Natural Environment

LAD	Natural Beauty - access and contiguity (GB=100) 2007	Tranquility (GB=100) 2004	Average Weather Score (GB=100) 2006	Indices of Deprivation, The Living Environment Deprivation Domain Average SOA Score, 2007	Natural Environment Score (GB=100) 2007	Natural Environment Score Rank (of 354)
Sefton	543.39	63.07	97.85	21.66	170.11	37
Liverpool	209.15	25.62	97.85	48.06	85.87	181
Hartlepool	103.91	96.58	90.86	13.68	83.62	196
Chester	3.81	362.68	91.63	14.61	83.58	197
Vale Royal	45.64	270.83	92.58	17.77	82.93	200
St. Helens	112.62	80.81	97.85	22.19	82.43	203
Knowsley	96.53	64.65	97.85	32.11	76.12	232
Warrington	82.99	89.49	100.05	18.96	73.83	241
Halton	**100.09**	**68.2**	**97.85**	**19.05**	**71.99**	**249**
Wirral	64.35	62.29	92.58	23.71	66.69	275
Middlesbrough	64.35	43.76	90.86	19.08	63.45	288
Ellesmere Port and Neston	19.25	105.65	91.71	12.07	63.35	290
Greater Merseyside	562.23	50.76	96.74	30.83	160.91	5 (of 47)
North West	154.53	55.98	96.45	25.15	91.59	3 (of 9)
Great Britain[20]	100	100	100	21.69	100	

[20] IMD Rank for England only

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

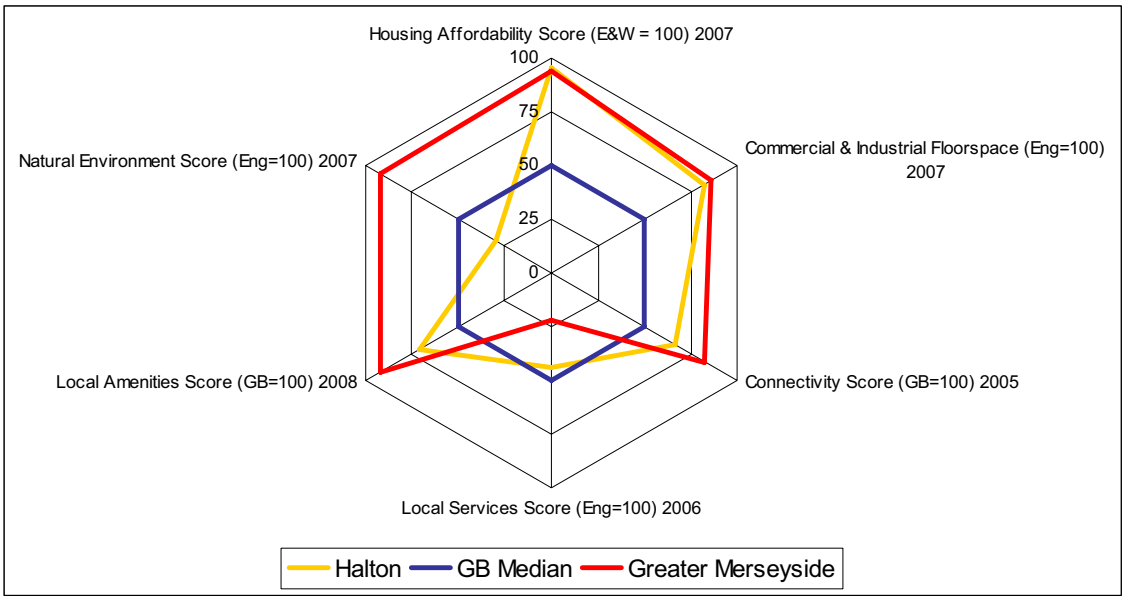
4.7 Summary

A summary of Halton's environmental profile is presented as a spider chart in Figure 4.

Overall the environmental performance of Halton is mixed. By national standards, housing in the area is affordable, although the slightly lower levels of home ownership attest to an imbalance of house prices and wages. The supply of commercial property, although weighted towards industrial space, is expanding. Most growth has been in industrial floorspace, followed by office floorspace.

The borough performs quite well on accessibility and connectivity, although there is a slightly larger proportion of workers' commuting out of the borough, than in. Local services are more limited when compared to the national average, although local amenities are more accessible. The quality of the natural environment is as expected of a built up area, falling below the national average, with limited tranquillity and limited access to areas of natural beauty.

Figure 4: Environment Summary



Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures[17]

[17] The chart displays the national ranking of the district, converted to a percentile score (i.e. the top ranking district scores 100% and the bottom ranking 0%)

5 Conclusions: The Final 'Scorecard' and Policy Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This audit of Halton has captured the 'state of the district' at a particular point in time. It is basically a set of snapshots of local economic, social and environmental conditions, for the latest data available, which varies between 2001 and 2007, but concentrates on 2005 and 2006. It also provides a different perspective on the state of Halton by looking at how it compares with other districts, how it rates within the North West region, and also how it performs compared to the country as a whole. The results of this audit, therefore, provide a basis for an informed discussion on the challenges and issues facing Halton – now and over the coming years.

This final chapter of the report provides a synthesis of the audit findings in the form of a final 'scorecard' which shows how the district stands within Britain (compared to a total of 408 districts), and within the North West region (compared to 43 districts). These different levels of assessment and benchmarking should be helpful in Halton's discussions with Government on developing the new Local Area Agreement, NWDA, and other public sector funding bodies.

5.2 The Final 'Scorecard'

The final 'scorecard' – shown in Table 22 – assesses the state of Halton in terms of the three main dimensions of sustainable development. The scores represent the quintile where the district falls on each of the measures ('A' representing the strongest performance, ranging to 'E' representing the weakest).

- Economic Development – Halton scores a 'C' overall, and against the region, however, its performance is mixed. Halton scores well on aspects of economic development relating to productivity (A – up from B in 2004), business and enterprise (A) and industrial structure (A). The Borough performs less well in terms of its human capital where the scores slip to an 'E'. There may be implications for future economic development, and the continued low score of an 'E' on economic change is still a cause for concern. The results in this sector are very similar to 2004.
- Social Development – In the context of Great Britain as a whole, Halton scores an 'E'. However Halton still performs poorly on most indicators of social profile. The borough also performs poorly when compared regionally, recording lower scores for all indicators except inequality where it is in the mid quintile.
- Environment – Halton's performance is mixed for the environment, with an overall score of a 'B'. It performs well in terms of housing affordability and floorspace change, scoring an 'A' in both, The Borough also performs above average in terms of connectivity, with a score of a 'B' when compared to the nation. It performs less well in terms of services, amenities and the natural environment, although it's mostly better than the region for these measures.

Table 22: The Sustainable Development 'Scorecard' for Halton

Sustainability Indicators	National Grade (408 Districts)	Regional Grade (43 Districts)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	**C**	**C**
Economic scale	C	C
Productivity	A	A
Economic change	E	E
Industrial structure	A	A
Business & enterprise	A	A
Skills & qualifications	E	E
Labour market	E	D
SOCIAL PROFILE	**E**	**D**
Knowledge workers	E	E
Prosperity	D	D
Deprivation	E	D
Inequality	D	B
Health	E	E
Crime	E	E
ENVIRONMENT	**B**	**C**
Housing affordability	A	A
Floorspace change	A	A
Connectivity	B	C
Services	C	C
Amenities	B	C
Natural environment	D	E

Source: Halton Data Observatory, Local Futures

5.3 Policy Implications

Although much progress has been made over the past three to four years, the Halton Strategic Partnership (HSP) still needs to include the knowledge economy at the heart of Halton's modernisation and economic development agenda. In practical terms this would mean building policy and capacity in four competitiveness areas of the knowledge economy:

- Entrepreneurship, business clusters and networks – strengthening the supporting economic institutional framework (economic partnerships, NWDA, and service agencies such as the Small Business Service/ Business Link, and Jobcentre Plus);
- Local innovation – improving product and process innovation across the business economy, based on collaboration between firms, the public sector, universities, colleges and other key players;
- An educated, skilled and flexible workforce – built around the LSC strategic area reviews and workforce development strategies, as well as the NWDA-led

Framework for Skills and Employment Action, including improvements in IT skills and reducing education deprivation;

- Infrastructure – although not covered by the Audit, Halton's knowledge economy will require an advanced electronic infrastructure and a variety of e-services for a more technology-based economy and society.

Importantly, these four 'pillars' of Halton's modern and future knowledge economy need to be synchronised – that is, policies need to be joined up across all four areas of economic development strategy. In addition, any inter-area disparities within the borough also need to be considered – something we have not been able to explore as part of this borough-level analysis – so that problem areas do not cause the economical, social and environmental gaps between the best and worst performing areas to become wider still. Any future economic benefits need to be distributed fairly.

As the current Community Strategy for Halton makes clear, the future knowledge economy of the district needs to be socially inclusive. Recent years have seen increasing recognition of the link between poor economic performance and wider social problems; indeed the main underlying objectives of the Community Strategy are to maximise local wealth creation whilst ensuring that any benefits are distributed fairly.

This audit reinforces the need for priority to continue to be given to addressing worklessness. Actions are needed on job creation, education and skills, and job brokerage to connect local people into the wealth being created in the increasingly vibrant local economy.

The final strategic imperative is improving the quality of Halton's environmental assets. Housing and the environment are some of the key determinants of social well-being, health, safety and overall quality of life. Improving the level of services and amenities, particularly housing, schools and shops, and upgrading the quality of the natural environment are all important in order to attract key knowledge workers.

5.4 Next Steps

The completion of this audit provides an opportunity for Halton Borough Council to revisit its existing Community Strategies to ensure they are still relevant and pertinent to the needs of the district. We have demonstrated that the borough is performing well in terms of its current economic performance and structure. However, the level of human capital and trends in economic growth may present problems for the future. This is particularly so given the districts poor performance in terms of social and environmental indicators, which may create difficulties attracting the best qualified people to the borough. Halton's performance on education and skills, and low levels of home ownership points to problems of inclusiveness, with groups of residents not sharing in the current levels of economic prosperity.

Finally, we have touched on the need to ensure that Halton takes its place within the modern knowledge economy and part of this process may require a more detailed and thorough understanding of the borough's knowledge economy as it currently stands. Thus far we have not touched on the geographical extent of the physical infrastructure

that underlies the knowledge economy, nor have we considered research strengths in and around the district, and how well these are being transferred to local businesses (part of what we term the 'knowledge infrastructure'). Does the skills profile of the borough reflect the fact that people live in Halton but work elsewhere? What does this mean for the quality of local job opportunities and the ability of Halton to retain young people?

Research & Intelligence Unit
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
Cheshire WA8 7QF
Tel: 0151 424 2061
www.halton.gov.uk/research

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway – Sustainable Transport Strategy – KEY DECISION

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval by the Board, of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS), which sets out how the proposed Mersey Gateway Project (The Project) can enable improvements in integrated transport across the Borough that will further the economic, transport and sustainability objectives of the Council. By adopting this report as Council policy, the document will have significant weight in the consideration of the various planning applications for Mersey Gateway that are now with Government.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The Board approves the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy to support the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project, subject to any minor amendments being delegated to the Strategic Director Environment, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration & Renewal

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Project is central to the achievement of the environmental and economic regeneration aspirations of Halton and is key to those of the sub-region.

3.2 At the local level the Project will bring about a step change in improvements to the transport connections between Runcorn and Widnes via the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). By transferring around 80 percent of traffic from SJB to the New Crossing, the existing SJB will be available for local transport services and facilities. The Project will also deliver amendments to the SJB carriageway and approach roads that are in part intended to improve the integrity of the bus network by reducing journey times, improving reliability and supporting and underpinning improved bus services across the Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes.

3.3 Although the key changes to the road system in Halton will be delivered through the Mersey Gateway scheme, as submitted to the Secretary of State for planning approval, to take full advantage of the opportunity presented by these changes will require coordinated intervention in the form of better connecting bus services and improved facilities for cycling and walking.

3.4 The combined programme within the MGSTS will also address existing concerns over accessibility and connectivity as part of the wider sustainable transport and sustainability agenda for all residents of Halton, particularly those living in the most deprived wards in the Borough.

3.5 The MGSTS and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS) are integrated initiatives by the Council to support the delivery of the Project objectives and together set out a rigorous and clear approach to maximising the benefits across the borough. The Project has seven high level strategic objectives, two of which relate directly to sustainable transport as follows:-

- To improve public transport links across the River Mersey; and
- Encourage the increased use of cycling and walking

3.6 The MGSTS aims to deliver the following key vision for sustainable travel options within Halton:-

- To identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of the LTP and the Project

4.0 KEY SECTIONS OF THE STRATEGY

4.1 The full strategy is at **Appendix 1** and comprises 5 key sections:-

1. Setting the Scene.
2. Halton's Story of Place and its Existing Transport Network.
3. National, Regional and Local Policy Context.
4. Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS).
5. Measuring progress for the Sustainable Transport Strategy.

4.2 **Setting the Scene**

This section emphasises the significance of the MGSTS in relation to the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy in the context of economic development/regeneration. It also summarises the improvements to

transport connections between Runcorn and Widnes and the development of sustainable travel via public transport, cycling and walking, as well as setting out how the MGSTS has been developed.

4.3 **Halton's Story of Place and its Existing Transport Network**

This section explores the historical context of Halton, its transport system and key issues that it faces, and how addressing the issues will be key to the Project.

4.4 The section also includes analysis of socio-economic and demographic trends and an assessment of existing public transport provision in the borough and associated infrastructure. Existing cycling, walking and equestrian provision are assessed and opportunities for introducing road safety measures and opportunities to enhance waterways are explored.

4.5 **National, Regional and Local Policy Context**

The MGSTS has been developed to be fully aligned with the wider transportation and planning policies, strategies and frameworks at the national, regional and local levels.

4.6 At the national level this has included the highly important discussion document entitled: *Towards a Sustainable Transport System Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World (TaSTS*). TaSTS sets out the Government's response to the Stern Review on the Economics of climate change (October 2006) and The Eddington Transport Study -The Case for Action (December 2006).

4.7 *Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)* is the Government's consultation document on the transport goals, challenges and process involved in taking TaSTS forward, and sets out how regions can influence Government decision making on transport investment from 2014 onwards. The consultation ends on 27 February 2009.

4.8 The development of the MGSTS has considered the LTP policies of neighbouring authorities including Cheshire County Council, Warrington Borough Council and the 5 Merseyside Authorities as well as Merseytravel.

4.9 At the local level the MGSTS has drawn upon a number of comprehensive and integrated local policy and strategy documents. Key to these were the Halton Local Transport Plan 2006/2007-2010/11 and the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted by Halton in April 2005.

4.10 Other key local policy and strategy documents included the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will eventually replace the

saved UDP policies to become Halton's statutory development plan.

4.11 Finally, at the local level, both the Halton Local Area Agreement (LAA) (June 2008 - April 2011) and Halton Draft Economic Review 2008 have also been considered.

4.12 **Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy**

This section sets out how the MGSTS aims to deliver the key vision for sustainable travel options within Halton by:

- further improving accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards in Halton;

- reducing the future reliance on carbon intensive modes of travel through encouraging promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options; supporting the continued regeneration of Halton, by ensuring that new, high quality, sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Project and associated MGRS;

- improving the mode share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres of Halton (Runcorn town centre, Widnes town centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby, supporting the regeneration of the centres

- further developing new, strategic, high quality, sustainable transport links/corridors through Halton utilising the opportunities provided by the Project and, thereby, improving key Mersey Belt and Liverpool City Region linkages; and

- mitigating the impact of tolls on vulnerable groups by providing attractive alternatives to private vehicles for cross-river travel within Halton and neighbouring communities.

4.13 The MGSTS has drawn upon the findings of the First Stage Public Transport Options Study (PTOS) for Halton. A key conclusion of the PTOS was that a bus based strategy is the most effective, affordable and deliverable option for Halton that builds on existing and valuable transport facilities, particularly the Runcorn Busway (the Busway).

4.14 Tolling provides an opportunity to fund sustainable transport improvements. The impact of tolls on the New Bridge and the SJB has been forecast using the Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Transport Model. The model has been used to assess the impact of congestion and reflect the re-assignment and behavioural changes brought about

by increasing congestion over the traffic evaluation period of the Project (15 years after opening) and the effects of imposing tolls.

4.15 The Project delivery objective is to base toll charges at levels similar to those imposed by the Mersey Tunnels. The procurement process will determine the success of this objective and Halton is required to take a prudent view on the amount of toll revenue likely to be available to fund discount schemes for local and regular users of SJB and for sustainable transport initiatives.

4.16 The implementation of the MGSTS covers two distinct phases. Phase One includes initiatives that, potentially, could be funded through the minimum tolling share from the Project, the LTP, private developers and bus operators over years 2014/15 to 2024/25. Phase Two will incorporate the longer-term projects that will draw on the variety of public and private sector funding that may be available at the time, after 2024/25 although Phase Two projects may be brought forward should funding become available in the meantime (as is currently expected to be the case for the Halton Curve – Improvement Theme 9.

4.17 **Proposed Improvement Themes**

A total of 9 improvement themes have been developed and these are summarised below.

Phase One for implementation 2014/2015 to 2024/25

4.18 **Improvement Theme 1: First stage bus based rapid transit network for Halton.** The focus of this Improvement Theme is the development of the first stage of a new bus based rapid transit network for Halton, based on the foundation of the Busway (marketed *as Halton Rapid Transit Network - HRTN).*

4.19 **Improvement Theme 2: The further development of proposed new Halton Rapid Transit Network (HRTN).** This will include the introduction of a new network of complementary public transport service improvements designed to better connect key development and regeneration areas.

A key component of Improvement Themes 1 and 2 is the provision of step change improvements to cross river bus services, using the SJB.

4.20 **Improvement Theme 3: The further development and launch of an integrated ITSO (Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation) compatible mobility Smartcard.** This will be developed for use by local residents and users of the SJB and the New Bridge, enabling residents, visitors and transit vehicles/passengers to easily access and use the sustainable transport network.

Detailed feasibility work is proposed to establish the estimated cost of this improvement theme.

4.21 **Improvement Theme 4: The further development of mobility management initiatives.** This theme focuses on the on-going development of further mobility management measures across the Borough to be delivered by Halton's award winning Neighbourhood Travel Team.

4.22 **Improvement Theme 5: Walking and cycling improvements**. The development of step change improvements to facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists across Halton. Integral to this is the development of improved links to key centres in neighbouring authorities. This theme includes the proposed Sustainable Transport Corridor between Widnes West Bank and Runcorn Old Town on the SJB and the linking of NCN62 and NCN5.

4.23 **Improvement Theme 6: Improvements to bus/rail interchange and railway stations in Halton.** This will include improved booking office facilities, passenger infrastructure, information, signage and secure cycle parking.

Phase Two for implementation beyond 2024/25

4.24 **Improvement Theme 7: The development of new strategic Park and Ride facilities across Halton**

Halton, in partnership with the Concessionaire and other key stakeholders including Warrington Borough Council, propose to carry out a comprehensive set of feasibility studies to evaluate the potential to introduce new strategic P&R sites across Halton, taking advantage of enhanced levels of local and regional accessibility afforded by the opening of the Project.

4.25 **Improvement Theme 8: Canal and waterway improvements**

The MGSTS also identifies further improvements to canals and waterways to support the development of further strategic transport/access improvements for passengers and freight during the longer time frame of the Strategy.

4.26 **Improvement Theme 9: Improvements to the Halton Curve**

In addition, to the above themes, the Strategy has identified improvements to the Halton Curve as a further theme important to the objectives of the Project. Halton Curve links Halton Junction (on the West Coast Main Line) to Frodsham Junction on the Manchester to North Wales coast line. The proposal involves the introduction of a new local passenger service linking to Liverpool Lime Street, Liverpool

South Parkway, Widnes Waterfront, Runcorn, Beechwood, Frodsham and Chester.

4.27 **Consultation**

The MGSTS was the subject of a stakeholder consultation during September and October 2008. More than 160 stakeholders, representing a wide range of interests were invited to engage in this key stakeholder exercise. An integral component of the stakeholder consultation was a consultation seminar held at the Stobart Stadium in September 2008. The consultation seminar which was well attended, included comprehensive presentations covering the MGSTS in the context of the Project, and a workshop and feedback session.

4.28 The final part of Section 4 discusses the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS). This explores a wide range of economic, social, physical and environmental opportunities for Halton that result as a direct consequence of the Project. Significantly, the MGRS recognises that the Project is much more than just a bridge across the River. The MGRS identifies five specific areas of the borough, of which two – Widnes West Bank and Runcorn Old Town have been designated as key regeneration areas.

4.29 **Measuring Progress for the Sustainable Transport Strategy**

The final section of the strategy identifies a framework for measuring the effectiveness of the MGSTS, both in terms of outputs and inputs. To assist with the measuring of progress, the output indicators and impact targets are grouped under each of the key objectives of the MGSTS.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The cost of modifying the SJB and approach roads is allowed for in the Project financial model. In addition it is proposed that a contribution of £500k per annum towards delivering the proposed MGSTS is included in the costs to be met from toll revenue combined with the PFI Credits agreed with government. The financial analysis undertaken using the model based on these proposals forecast that the Project remains affordable assuming toll charges are similar to those for Mersey Tunnels but at this stage it would not be prudent to commit any higher contribution towards the MGSTS than the £500k per annum proposed. During procurement the Council will have a clearer view of the overall toll revenue that could be available for MGSTS and toll discount schemes.

5.2 The projected total costs of the various Improvement Themes which constitute Phase One of the Strategy are £24.57 million, of which £9.145m would be provided through the LTP bid process. The

£500,000 per annum contribution from tolling revenue would be dedicated towards the Improvement Themes.

5.3 The second phase of Improvement Themes for implementation beyond 2024/25 incorporates the longer-term projects that will draw on the variety of public and private sector funding that may be available at the time. The opportunity, will be taken however to accelerate all themes, where new funding sources become available.

5.4 The Project when combined with the proposed MGSTS would deliver improvements across all transport modes, assisted by a road charging regime that is very similar to a package of measures required to qualify for government funding under the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF). The Project team is investigating the merits of making a formal bid for TIF funding and the results of this investigation are expected to be reported to the Mersey Gateway Executive Board later in the year.

6.0 MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

6.1 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of revisions of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and for new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

6.2 Although not a statutory requirement for the Project, an SA of the MGSTS was commissioned as a way of checking that the objectives of the MGSTS are likely to contribute to sustainability.

6.3 As part of the SA process, two options were assessed:

- Option One – 'Do Nothing' – business as usual/without MGSTS option. If the Project does not proceed, this scenario would result in adoption of the Local Transport Plan (LTP2)
- Option Two – Implement MGSTS – assumes that the Project goes ahead

6.4 As statutory consultees, the SA scoping report was considered by the Environment Agency; English Heritage; and Natural England and details of their responses are included in the full Sustainability Appraisal report in **Appendix 2**.

6.5 The SA of MGSTS, suggests that implementation will have mainly positive impacts. The appraisal process has prompted a number of enhancements to the MGSTS, including increased emphasis on the issue of air quality and climate change and; the proposed introduction of a SMART card to facilitate flexible travel to help address issues of

deprivation and low incomes in Halton.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Project is supported by local policy contained in the UDP and, in particular, strategic policy S14 which states:

"A scheme for a new crossing of the River Mersey east of the existing SJB will be promoted to relieve congestion on the existing bridge as part of an integrated transport system for Halton and the wider regional transport network. Any proposed route of the new crossing will be the subject of an environmental assessment**."**

8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

9.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The enhancements to public transport will improve accessibility and mobility for children and young people in the borough and the enhanced cycling and walking provision will contribute to improving their health.

9.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The delinking of the SJB and improvements to public transport will assist in removing any real or perceived barriers to employment opportunities for residents.

9.3 A Healthy Halton

The enhanced walking and cycling provision, arising from the MGSTS, will have a direct bearing on influencing the health and physical wellbeing of the boroughs residents, regardless of their age.

The MGSTS also has an important part to play in reducing vehicle emissions by encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

9.4 A Safer Halton

The reduction in demand on the SJB, brought about by the delinking, will assist in reducing accidents and resultant casualties.

9.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The proposed MGSTS will further the Council's Urban Renewal overall aim:

"To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families."

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

10.1 The MGSTS provides a one-off opportunity to create the step change improvements and the development of a sustainable transport corridor across the SJB. Without the new bridge this core component of the proposed improvements will not happen.

10.2 The proposed improvements to public transport and facilities for cycling and walking will mitigate the adverse impact of tolling on the Council's social inclusion objectives by offering better travel choices for all residents of Halton and particularly those who do not have access to private vehicles.

10.3 During the construction phase, consideration will need to be given to maintaining effective transport links within the borough to minimise disruption for both the borough's residents and businesses.

11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

11.1 The new Mersey Crossing will improve accessibility to services, education and employment opportunities for all.

12.0 REASON FOR DECISION

12.1 By adopting this report as Council policy, the document will have significant weight in the consideration of the various planning applications for Mersey Gateway that are now with Government.

13.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

13.1 The recommended strategy embraces a range of transport interventions and initiatives, which have been prioritised based on funding projections and assumptions. Implementation will be flexible taking into account a more detailed assessment of specific projects and options prior to committing proposals.

14.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

14.1 MGSTS is designed to deliver integrated transport improvements facilitated by the new crossing due to open in late 2014.

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

15.1 None.

Report No. B4027C/STS/01

12th February 2009

MERSEY GATEWAY

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

GATEWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY

Halton Borough Council

Environment Directorate

Rutland House

Halton Lea

Runcorn

WA7 2GW

C O N T E N T S

1 INTRODUCTION..... 3

2 HALTON'S STORY OF PLACE..... 8

3 THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT..... 45

4 THE MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY..... 61

5 MEASURING PROGRESS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY..... 99

6 SUMMARY……102

REFERENCES

APPENDIX A REVIEW OF RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting the Scene

1.1.1 The transport policies, strategies and implementation programmes of Halton Borough Council (the Council) are contained within its second Local Transport Plan (LTP) (Reference 1), which covers the period 2006/7- 2010/11. This Plan has been assessed by the Department for Transport (DfT) and graded as being 'Excellent'. LTP2 was the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) the outcome of which (as well as the LTP itself) was rated as "Excellent" by the Department for Transport (DfT). The mid-term review of progress against the plan has recently been reported to the DfT.

1.1.2 One of the key issues identified within the LTP are the problems resulting from congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB), which, due to the high levels of demand, is unable to satisfy its dual role of providing for both strategic inter-urban movement and local trips between Runcorn and Widnes. The breakdown of service affects all users of SJB including public transport and commercial transport.

1.1.3 The impact of this congestion on the SJB is felt locally and sub-regionally through the constraints it places on economic development and regeneration, due to its adverse impacts on local and sub-regional highway networks when incidents occur, and in the inability to adequately provide sustainable transport to address accessibility and connectivity issues within the administrative area of Halton Borough Council (the Borough).

1.1.4 Local policies contained within the Council's Unitary Development Plan 2005 (Halton UDP) (Reference 2) provide for the Mersey Gateway Project (The Project). Strategic policy S14 of the Halton UDP states that a new crossing of the River Mersey (the River), east of the SJB, will be promoted to relieve congestion on the existing bridge.

1.1.5 The supporting text states that the existing severely congested SJB is considered to represent a "constraint on the economic development of the Merseyside Region, and severely restricts the development of an integrated transport Strategy for Halton." It goes on to note that a strategic aim of the Council's LTP2 (Reference 1) and the UDP is therefore to pursue the provision of a new and sustainable crossing of the River. The policy states:-

"A scheme for a new crossing of the River Mersey east of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge will be promoted to relieve congestion on the existing bridge as part of an integrated transport system for Halton and the wider regional transport network. Any proposed route of the new crossing will be the subject of an environmental assessment."

1.1.6 The Council has, therefore, invested heavily in developing proposals for a new crossing, known as the Mersey Gateway Bridge (the New Bridge), works to the SJB and associated remote highway works. All of these works constitute the Project which is programmed to be delivered in 2014/15. The Council considers that the aims and objectives of the Project will be better achieved by the promotion of policy initiatives in parallel with the Project. In this respect, the Council is promoting this Sustainable Transport Strategy

1.1.7 The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS) sets out how the Project can both facilitate and encourage sustainable transport in the Borough, and both provides for, and enables sustainable interventions and initiatives to be developed and implemented.

1.1.8 An important component of the Project is the proposed works to de-link the SJB (the SJB de-linking works) and change its status from a strategic highway route to a route designed primarily for local movement, public transport, walking and cycling in the Borough.

1.2 Impact and Opportunities for Promoting Sustainable Transport as part of the Project

1.2.1 The Project aims to eliminate the bottleneck that is created by the SJB and enable strategic traffic movement that passes through the Borough to connect with the wider network and attractors including the Liverpool City area and other parts of the UK.

1.2.2 At the local level the Project aims to facilitate step change improvements to the transport connections between Runcorn and Widnes via the SJB. For example, reduced congestion on the SJB will facilitate improvements to the integrity of the bus network by reducing journey times, improving reliability and supporting and underpinning improved bus services across the River between Runcorn and Widnes.

1.2.3 In terms of walking and cycling, the creation of a sustainable transport corridor over the SJB will facilitate safe, reliable and attractive local connections between Widnes West Bank and Runcorn town centre and connect the existing and highly strategic multi user routes namely the Trans Pennine Trail National Cycle Network Route Number 62 (NCN 62) in Widnes, and NCN 5 and the Bridgewater Way in Runcorn.

1.2.4 The Project helps to improve the integrity and efficiency of the movement of goods and materials and strengthen the role and attractiveness of strategic multi modal transport facilities in the Borough such as the Mersey Multi Modal Gateway site (3MG), the new name for the Ditton strategic rail freight park, discussed in Section 2.

1.3 Links Between the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS) and The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS)

1.3.1 The Project is central to the achievement of the environmental and economic regeneration aspirations of the Council, and is key to those of the sub-region. It is also important in delivering the step change improvements required in sustainable transport provision to address concerns over accessibility and connectivity as part of the wider sustainable transport and sustainability agenda.

1.3.2 The MGSTS and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS) (Reference 3) are part of a highly integrated, multi-disciplinary approach adopted by the Council to enhance the Project and its outcomes. These two strategies are highly complementary and supportive of each other, and together set out a rigorous and clear approach to maximising the benefits that the Project will deliver.

1.3.3 Other work streams undertaken as part of the Project include extensive environmental and ecological studies and assessments, civil engineering design and feasibility work, and traffic appraisal. The latter has focused on transport economics and modelling and has included the development of the strategic Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Model (VDM). The MGSTS is informed by the results of these assessments and designs.

1.3.4 The Project has seven strategic objectives of which 2 relate directly to sustainable travel as follows:-

- To improve public transport links across the River Mersey (the River); and
- To encourage the increased use of cycling and walking.

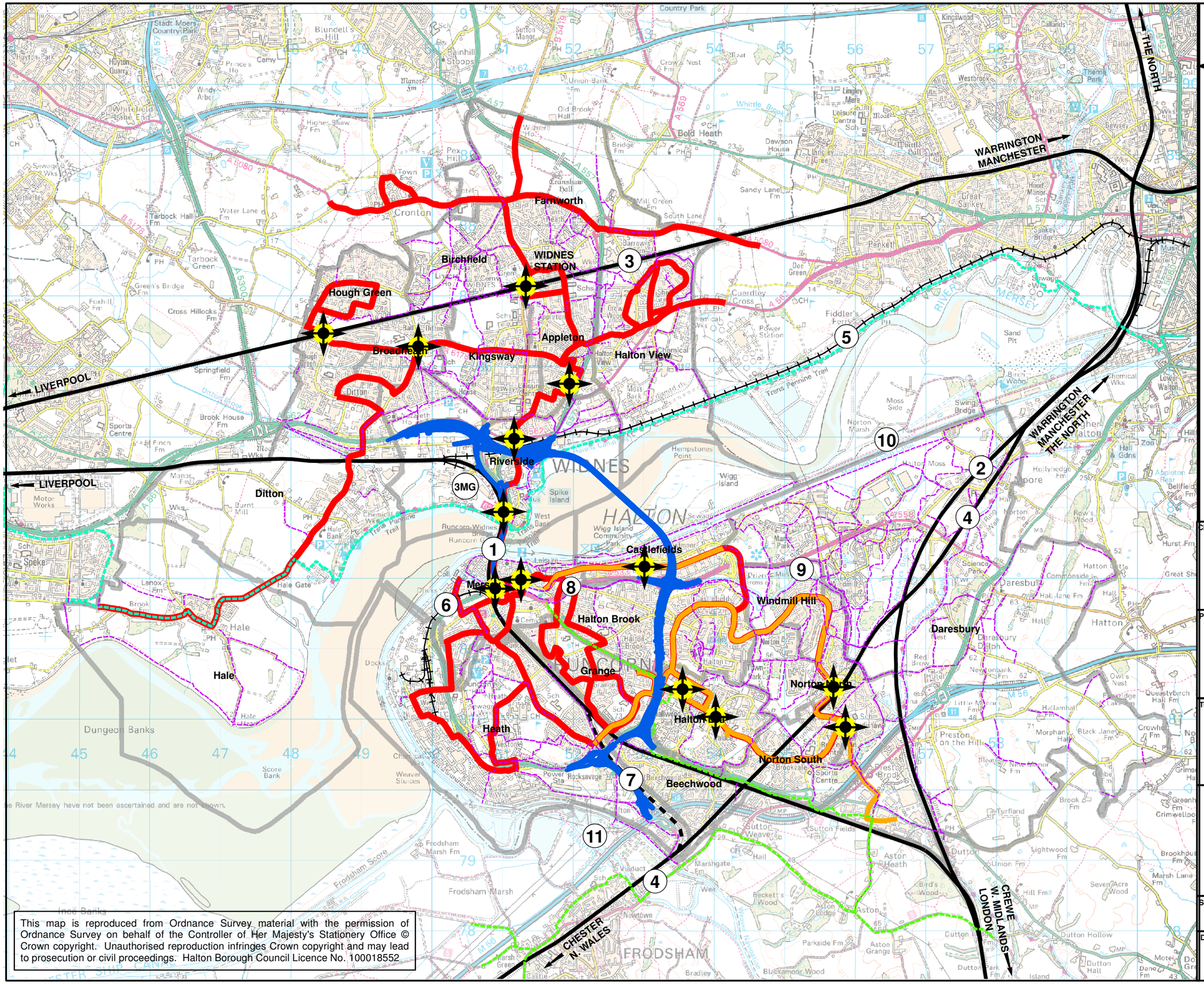
The project also supports other objectives as set out in the MGSTS Sustainability Appraisal Report (Reference 45).

1.3.5 The tolling proposals, linked to the delivery, traffic management, and integrated transport objectives of the Project, are also highly relevant to the proposed sustainable transport improvements. The tolling proposals will influence how people choose to travel in the Borough. Bus services, cycling and walking present a toll free alternative for cross-river trips, and the aim of MGSTS is to make these alternatives a more attractive option for travel within the Borough and the adjacent communities.

1.3.6 The Borough existing transport network, and the proposed alignment of the New Bridge and associated infrastructure is shown in Figure 1.1.

1.3.7 The objectives discussed above form the cornerstone of the MGSTS, which clearly identifies the aim to significantly improve the sustainable transport offer in the Borough. A range of potential actions and interventions designed to achieve the MGSTS objectives has been assessed where the delivery of potential initiatives has been a central consideration in formulating which proposals are to be taken forward. The delivery programme has been divided into two distinct phases. The first phase focuses on those sustainable transport initiatives that will be delivered and funded, as a direct result of the Project. These initiatives will lay the foundations for a Borough-wide Strategy, which will be implemented as a second phase.

1.3.8 The following diagram illustrates how the MGSTS has been developed:-



Legend

- Local Interchanges
- The Mersey Gateway Project
- PROW
- NCN 5
- Trans Pennine Trail (NCN 62)
- Runcorn Busway
- Halton Core Bus Network
- Freight Railway Route
- Proposed Halton Curve
- Passenger Railway Route
- Halton Ward Boundaries

1 Liverpool Branch of West Coast Main Line (via Runcorn).
2 Main spur of West Coast Main Line (between Weaver Junction and Warrington Bank Quay Station).
3 Liverpool Lime Street to Warrington Central and Manchester Piccadilly route.
4 Manchester and North Wales coast line.
5 Section of the Garston to Timperley route.
6 Runcorn Docks Branch.
7 Halton Curve.
8 Bridgewater Expressway.
9 Bridgewater Way
10 Manchester Ship Canal
11 River Weaver
3MG Formerly known as Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park.

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project
MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Title
THE BOROUGH'S EXISTING TRANSPORT NETWORK

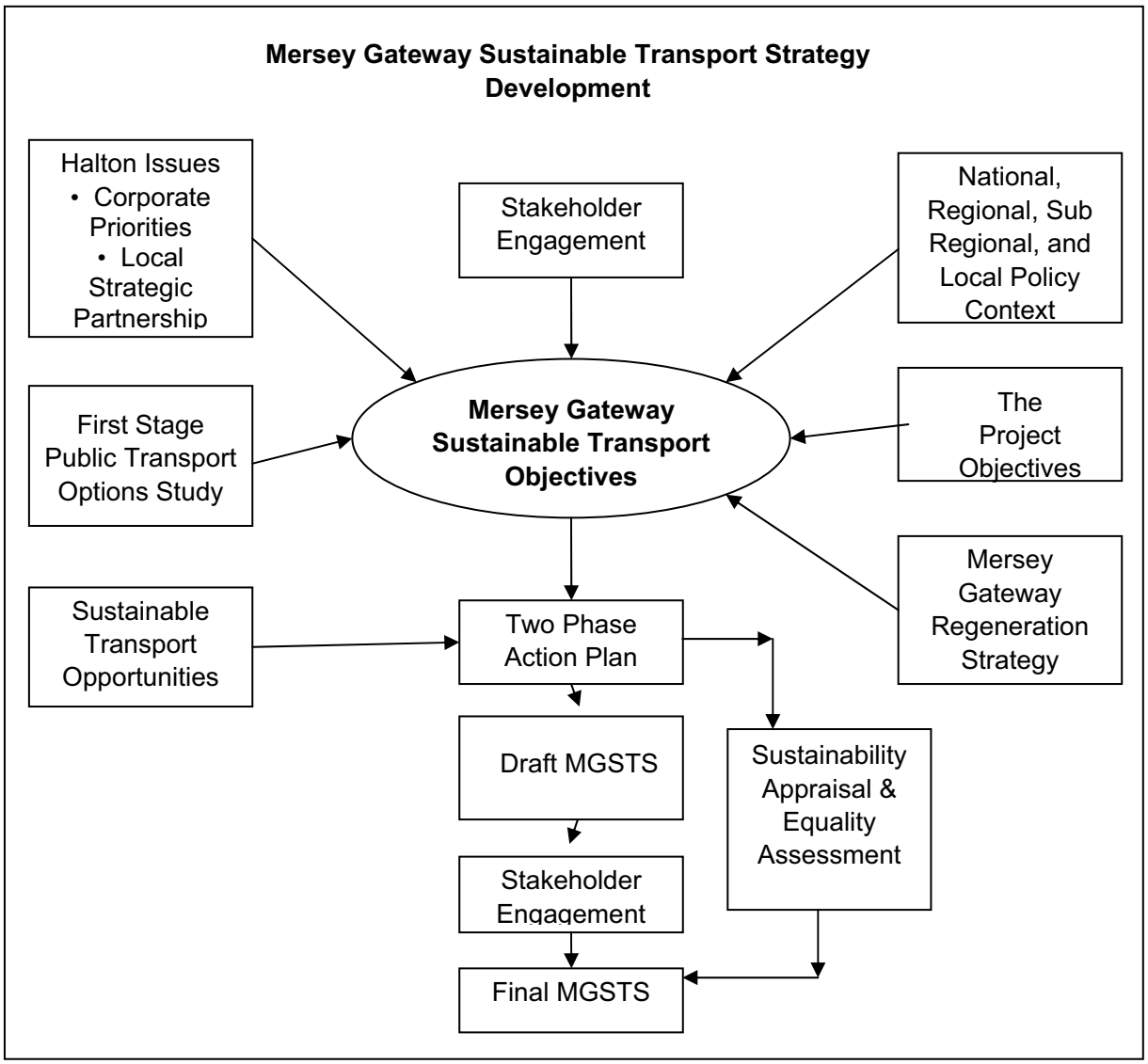
Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:50,000	15/12/2008	Jane Hunter

Drg No: FIGURE 1.1
Rev.: -

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297

How the MGSTS has been developed



1.4 This Report

1.4.1 This report for the MGSTS incorporates the following inter-related sections:-

- **Section 2 - Halton's Story of Place and Existing Transport Network:** This section explores the historical context of the Borough, its transport system and key issues that it faces.

- **Section 3 - National Regional and Local Policy Context:** This section summarises key national, regional and local sustainable planning and land use policies and strategies that support both the MGSTS and the MGRS. Recent policy changes that have arisen during the course of the development of the MGSTS have also been addressed in this section, and a summary of changes can be found in Appendix A.

- **Section 4 - Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS):** This section describes the vision of the MGSTS and its objectives, before proceeding to specify a themed approach to delivering a step change in sustainable transport in the Borough, utilising a two phase Action Plan. It can be seen that the MGSTS is heavily influenced by the issues identified in section 3, national, regional and local policies and key areas of work undertaken as part of the Project. Integral to the MGSTS has been stakeholder consultation. The outcome of this and the actions and responses of the Council in relation to the MGSTS can be found in Appendix B. In particular, the Strategy draws heavily on the findings of the MGRS and seeks to address the issues raised in the context of the First Stage Public Transit Options Study (Reference 5). The MGSTS has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment.

- **Section 5 - Measuring Progress:** This final section identifies challenging targets and a rigorous monitoring regime to assess progress.

2 HALTON'S STORY OF PLACE AND EXISTING TRANSPORT SYSTEM

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section considers the historical development and provision of transport infrastructure and services in the Borough. It also identifies key issues for the future development of sustainable transport and the role it can play in the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the Borough and the wider sub region.

2.2 Historical Context and Character of Halton

2.2.1 Halton is a unique administrative area in the United Kingdom (UK) based around its town centres of Widnes and Runcorn, which are separated by the Mersey Estuary (the Estuary) and connected by a single internal road link – the SJB. From a historical perspective, transport has had a dominating influence in shaping the Borough's spatial characteristics, appearance and levels of urbanisation, as well as providing a foundation that has underpinned its economic base.

2.2.2 Since the mid-19th century, canals and railways, coupled with the natural transport resource that the River provides, have helped to put the towns of Widnes and Runcorn clearly on the map, both in the UK and overseas. For example, the world's first railway dock was established at Spike Island in Widnes. Spike Island was also the site of the UK's first major chemical factory. This opened in 1862 and was quickly followed by many more. This industrial legacy has also produced a range of problems that the Borough still has to deal with.

2.2.3 In more recent times, the opening of the iconic Runcorn – Widnes bridge in 1961, as a replacement for a Transporter Bridge, led to immediate, step change improvements in terms of road access across the Estuary between Widnes and Runcorn at the point known as the Runcorn Gap. The bridge greatly strengthened the strategic highway connections between Widnes and Runcorn and the surrounding region. This helped to further open up access and provide continued support for economic activity as well as underpin the development of the Runcorn New Town (the New Town). This was designated in 1964 with the aim of providing improvements in housing and living environments for people displaced from slum clearance areas in Liverpool.

2.2.4 The New Town was designed and developed using town planning and urban design principles that were progressive for their time, particularly in respect of transport and accessibility. The design principles that were adopted were based on the Radburn housing layout principles. These design principles led to a high degree of segregation between vehicular traffic and housing. In terms of land use, a carefully planned and integrated zoning strategy was developed, with residential development sited on or near the UK's first Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) known as the Runcorn Busway. The Runcorn Busway was designed to provide high penetration and access to key community facilities, including the Shopping City, which was the UK's first American style shopping mall, and which was established at Halton Lea.

2.2.5 Land zoned for industrial and employment use was introduced on the periphery of the residential land in the New Town, for example at Astmoor and Whitehouse Industrial Estates. These were in turn connected to the Runcorn Busway.

2.2.6 Integral to the layout and functioning of the New Town was the development of a well-defined network of expressways throughout Runcorn that had connections to Widnes via the bridge and the surrounding strategic highway network. These are discussed later in

this Section.

2.2.7 Typically, the bridge currently carries 83,000 vehicles per weekday, exceeding the Congestion Reference Flow (CRF) of 70,915 vehicles. This relationship shows that the peak flows will exceed capacity on an average day. Traffic flow data collection has shown that peak traffic demand on the bridge is often in excess of capacity, being over 5000 vehicles per hour in each direction. This issue is despite the 1977 change to its current configuration of 2 lanes in each direction and it's renaming as the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB).

2.2.8 The SJB is at the heart of the Borough's transport network, connecting its communities either side of the Estuary at the Runcorn Gap. It is part of a strategic network linking the inter-urban M56 and the M62, and is recognised by the DfT as a congestion hotspot. It provides a fragile level of network resilience as the only major crossing of the River between the M6 at Thelwall in the east, and the Mersey tunnels to the west. It also provides access to the ports of Liverpool and Manchester and their airports, as well as access to freight terminals.

2.3 Population in Halton

2.3.1 The 2001 National Census (Reference 6) indicated that the total population in the Borough in 2001 was 118,208 (with 57,135 males and 61,073 females). Government data suggests that this figure rose to 118,900 in 2004 and 119,500 in 2006. The Council's UDP identifies that the population declined from a peak of 124,900 in 1991 to 118,208 in 2001. The UDP (Reference 2) also notes that population forecasts are projected to fall to 114,600 by 2010. However, recent population estimates for 2006 have shown an increase in population numbers of 1,292 people from the 2001 Census level (Reference 6).

2.4 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

2.4.1 The Government's standard measure of deprivation and inequality in England is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), recently updated in 2007 (Reference 7). The IMD covers a number of aspects of deprivation including disadvantage in education, income, employment, health, and housing.

2.4.2 The IMD for 2007 (Reference 7) not only contains some of the latest data available, but also is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used.

2.4.3 Overall, the Borough was ranked as the 39th (worst 12%) most deprived Borough in England in 2007 (based on the average rank), out of 354 local authorities, (with 1st being the most deprived and 354th the least deprived), which is an improvement on its 2004 ranking of 21st most deprived (Reference 7). This indicates that, based on the average IMD rank, deprivation levels within the Borough are improving. In a sub-regional context, the Borough is less deprived than the neighbouring Boroughs of Liverpool and Knowsley, which are designated within the top most deprived Boroughs, but is not as prosperous as most others.

2.4.4 In addition, the 'concentration' of deprivation in the Borough went down from 20th position in 2004 to 27th worst in England in 2007 (Reference 7). 'Concentration' is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. However, there is still room for improvement.

2.4.5 Within the Borough there are 8 Super Output Areas (SOA's) in the top 975 SOA's in

England, i.e. within England's top 3% most deprived. This is up from 6 in 2004. The most deprived neighbourhood is ranked 306th out of 32,482 and is situated in the Windmill Hill area of Runcorn (Reference 7).

2.4.6 Figure 2.1 shows the IMD rankings in the Borough in relation to income deprivation. Income deprivation is one of a wide number of indicators of social deprivation. Figure 2.1 shows the key areas of income deprivation in relation to the Core Bus Route Network including the Runcorn Busway, which connects the concentrated areas of social deprivation in Runcorn. This is an important attribute of the Runcorn Busway.

2.5 Car Availability in Halton.

2.5.1 It should also be noted that the 2001 National Census (Reference 6) identified that 29.4% of households within the Borough do not have access to a car or van compared to the combined average of 26.8% for England and Wales. These figures are the latest available and will not be updated until 2011 (Reference 6). The wards of Castlefields and Windmill Hill in Runcorn, and Riverside and Appleton in Widnes contain the greatest percentage of households without access to a car/van.

2.5.2 Figure 2.2 shows the levels of car ownership by ward in the Borough.

2.6 Business and Economic Prospects

2.6.1 The economy of the Borough has been performing well relative to the sub region and it is forecast that this level of performance will continue subject to the recent general deterioration in economic conditions that are now being experienced across the UK. However, there is a concern with regard to the supply of skilled labour.

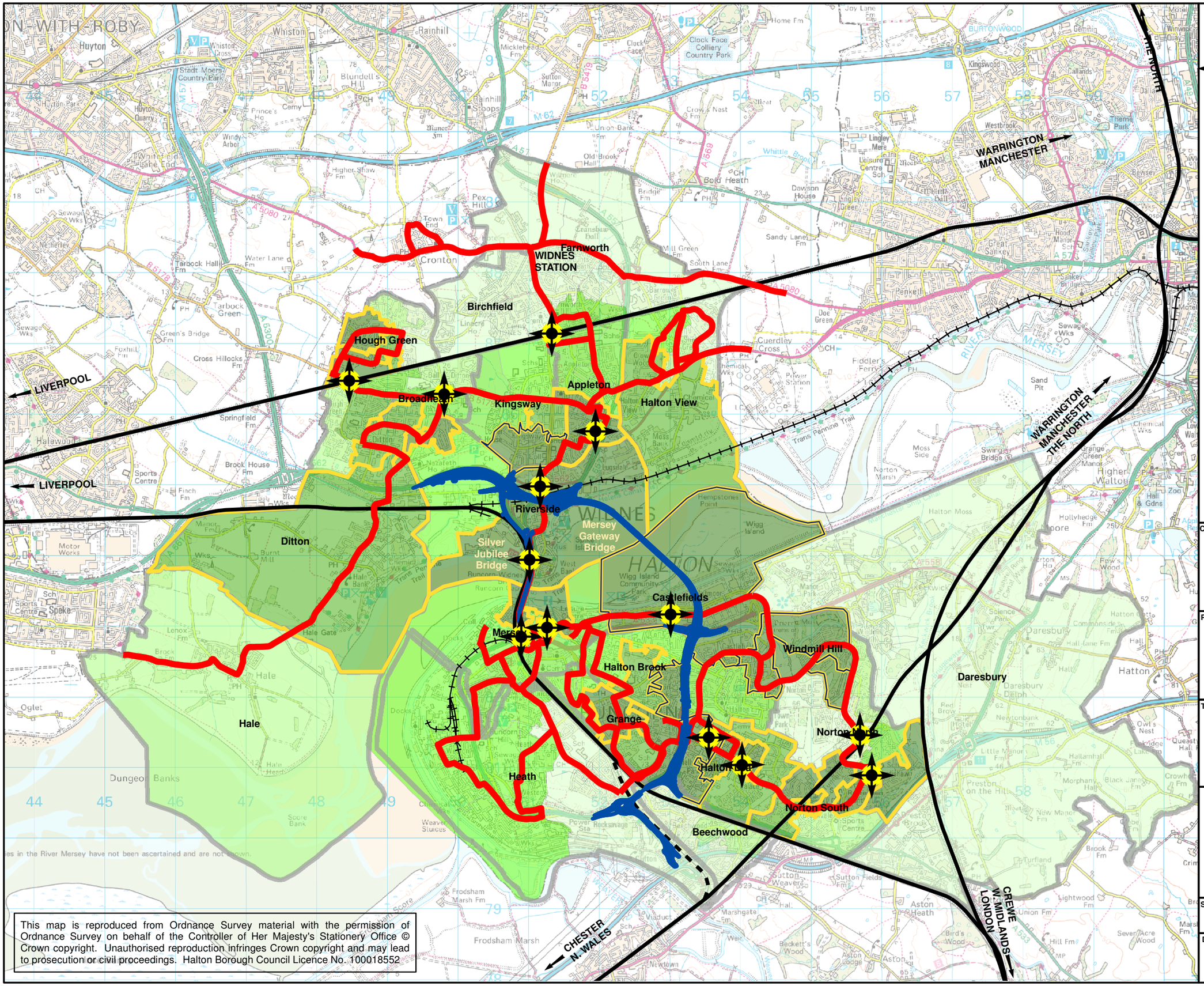
2.6.2 It is forecast that by 2020 there will be an increase in demand for employees of around 6,000 positions, which is likely to result in a supply shortfall of 3,000 employees (Reference 2). The inability to meet the demand locally implies that there will be a need for substantial net commuting, alongside a growth in population.

2.6.3 Therefore, if the economic aspirations are to be realised, then the Project proposals and associated sustainable transport measures are extremely important for the area's development, particularly as there is evidence of a miss-match between local future employment opportunities and the local supply base of labour.

2.7 HALTON'S TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND KEY ISSUES

2.7.1 The following section considers the key issues related to the transport modes in the Borough including the network, services and facilities under the following headings:-

- Highway network;
- Current railway network;
- Buses;
- Cycling and pedestrian networks;
- Focus groups;
- Road safety;



Legend

- Local Interchanges
- The Mersey Gateway Project
- Halton Core Bus Network
- Freight Railway Route
- Proposed Halton Curve
- Passenger Railway Route
- Income IMD 2007 Worst 4%
- Income IMD 2007 Worst 20%
- Halton Ward Boundaries

Income IMD 2007 Rank

- 232 - 3429
- 3430 - 6689
- 6690 - 11480
- 11481 - 17395
- 17396 - 25896
- 25897 - 32131

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project
MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

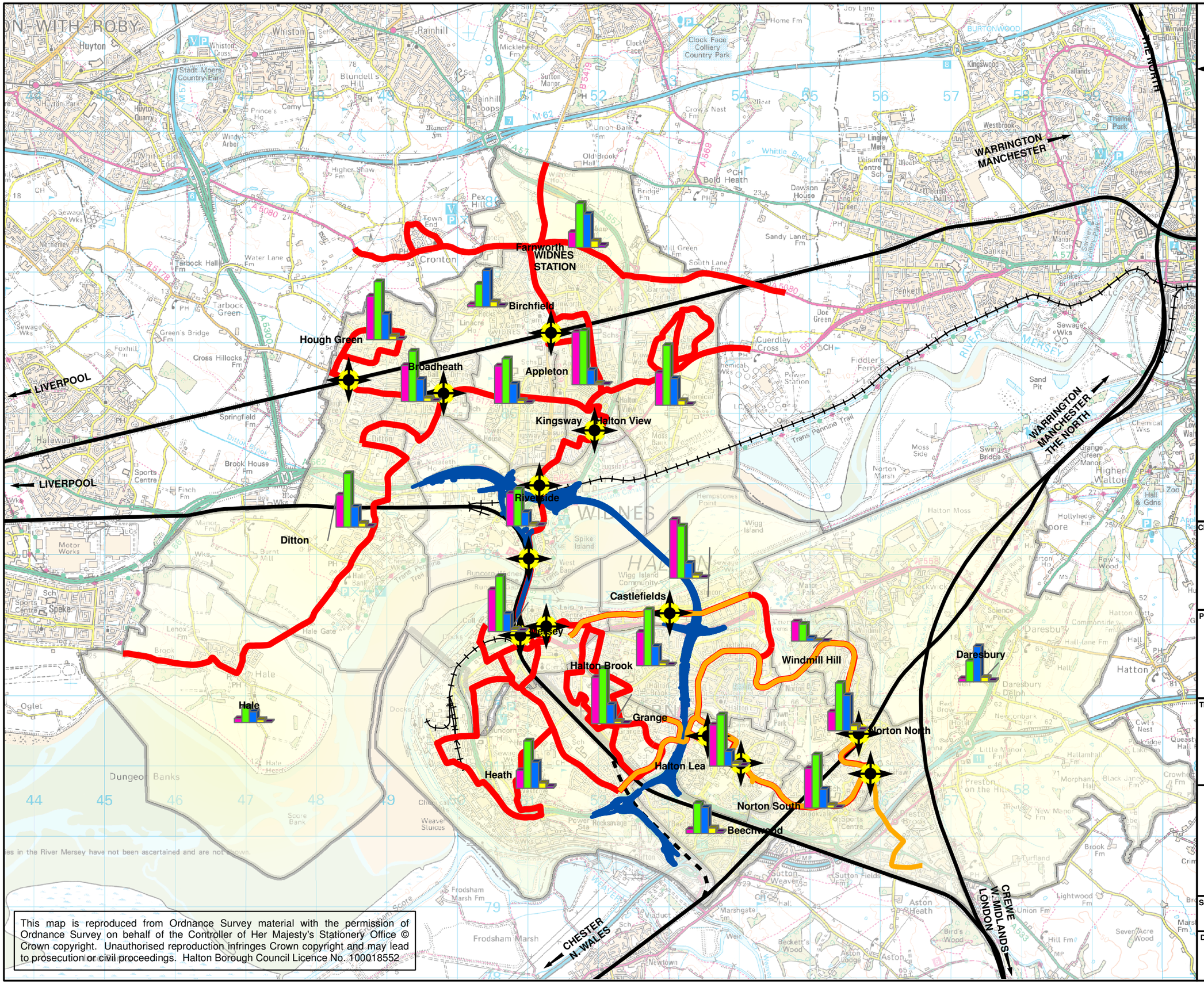
Title
INCOME INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION RANKINGS

Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:50,000	10/12/2008	Jane Hunter

Drg No	Rev.
FIGURE 2.1	-

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297



Legend

- Local Interchanges
- The Mersey Gateway Project

Id

- Runcorn Busway
- Halton Core Bus Network
- Freight Railway Route
- Proposed Halton Curve
- Passenger Railway Route

Car Ownership Levels

690

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more
- Halton Ward Boundaries

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client: HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project: MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Title: CAR / VAN OWNERSHIP BY WARD

Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:50,000	15/12/2008	Jane Hunter

Drg No: FIGURE 2.2 Rev.: -

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297

- Freight;
- Canals and waterways;
- Mobility management; and
- Real time passenger information (RTPI) intelligent transport systems and signage.

2.7.2 The Project offers significant opportunities for sustainable transport as part of the much wider regeneration programme, discussed in Section 4.

2.7.3 The Borough is a very compact urban area whose physical and socio-economic characteristics provide a fertile medium for sustainable travel. Communities across the Borough are generally linked by a comprehensive network of walking, cycling and public transport routes.

2.7.4 An analysis of local area statistics from the 2001 Census (Reference 6) reveals that many journeys are relatively short within the Borough. For example 49.41% of economically active people, aged 16-74 years, travel less than 5km to work (Reference 6).

2.8 THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

2.8.1 The highway network in Runcorn, which largely evolved as part of the development of the New Town, is significantly different in character from that in Widnes, which has evolved in a similar way to most industrial towns in the UK. In Runcorn, the SJB connects with an extensive and well defined network of Expressways designed primarily for motor vehicles. It is the dominant highway infrastructure which includes the following major links:-

- A558 Daresbury Expressway;
- A533 Bridgewater Expressway;
- A533 Central Expressway;
- A553 Southern Expressway;
- A533 Eastern Expressway; and
- A577 Weston Point Expressway.

2.8.2 The Expressways were designed, where possible, to provide a high degree of segregation between motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Local bus services mainly use the local highway network (with Sections of bus priority measures at key locations mostly introduced as part of the Council's first and current LTP). However, a dedicated segregated Busway system was developed in the 1960's and 1970's by the previous Runcorn and Warrington and Runcorn New Towns Authorities. The highway network and the Runcorn Busway is managed and maintained by the Council.

2.8.3 In Widnes the principal roads are as follows:

- The A562 primary route connecting the SJB with the southern route into Liverpool which serves Liverpool John Lennon Airport (Liverpool Airport) and Liverpool Port; and

- The A577 Widnes Eastern bypass primary route constructed to link the SJB with M62 at Junction 7, and onwards to St. Helens. Construction on Phase 1 M62 Junction 7 to Ashley Way started in November 1992, and opened in 1994. Phase 2 between Ashley Way and the SJB was competed in 1996.

2.8.4 The key issue affecting the highway network is one of congestion resulting in delay and poor journey time reliability. Without doubt the worst Sections of the highway network for delays are the approach roads to the SJB and the connecting junctions.

2.9 THE CURRENT RAILWAY NETWORK

2.9.1 The Borough is dissected by 7 railway routes, two of which are currently assigned to railway freight traffic only. The railway routes are shown on Figure 1.1. These consist of the following:-

- The Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line which serves Runcorn railway station and Liverpool;

- The main spur of the West Coast Main Line (between Weaver Junction and Warrington Bank Quay railway station) used by the main Scottish, West Midlands and London Euston Virgin rail services. No local railway stations are currently located on this section of the West Coast Main Line within the Borough;

- The route linking Liverpool Lime Street to Warrington Central and Manchester Piccadilly, with stations at Hough Green and Widnes in the Borough;

- The Manchester and North Wales coast line linking Manchester to Warrington Bank Quay and on to Chester, Llandudno and Holyhead, with a local railway station at Runcorn East;

- The section of the Garston to Timperley railway freight line linking Ditton roundabout junction (A562 and A533) in the Borough to Fiddlers Ferry power station. Although this route is currently used exclusively for freight traffic, it passes through the heart of the Widnes Waterfront regeneration area, and, therefore, has a potential role to play in providing local passenger railway services as part of improved services and provision arising from the Mersey Belt linkages Strategy;

- The Runcorn Docks branch, which caters for freight traffic to and from the western Runcorn docks system. This branch is linked to the West Coast Main Line Liverpool branch south of Runcorn railway station; and

- The Halton Curve linking Halton Junction (on the West Coast Main Line) in the Heath ward of Runcorn, to Frodsham Junction, on the Liverpool to North Wales coast railway line. This short section of the railway network is currently used by occasional freight trains however a Parliamentary passenger train operated in 2008 on summer Saturdays and comprised of one journey from Chester to Runcorn direct with no advertised stops at Helsby or Frodsham.

2.9.2 Although this railway network provides a comprehensive series of external linkages for residents and businesses within the Borough, the various lines do not connect and, therefore, interchange opportunities are poor. Significantly, following the closure of Ditton railway station in the mid 1990's, there is no direct passenger railway service linking Widnes and Runcorn together. The only direct local railway line linking stations within the Borough is the Liverpool to Manchester route which links Hough Green and Widnes railway stations.

2.9.3 It is important to stress that existing public transport and walking and cycling linkages

between the various railway stations in the Borough are underdeveloped and poorly differentiated. Figures released by the Office of the Railway Regulator ORR (Reference 8), show that passenger railway travel to and from railway stations within the Borough is greatly suppressed when compared with other similar areas across the North West. This is mainly due to the following:-

- Limited Park and Ride (P&R) facilities at stations with the exception of Runcorn railway station on the West Coast Main Line Liverpool Branch;
- Poor passenger facilities at stations (old and underused railway station buildings – Widnes and Hough Green) and limited booking office opening hours (Runcorn East and Widnes);
- Poorly sited stations on the edge of the urban area, especially Widnes and Runcorn East that are sited in remote locations relative to the nearest commercial centres.

2.9.4 The latest published information on railway station usage in the Borough for 2006/7 is as follows (Reference 8):-

- Runcorn railway station: 429,706 passengers;
- Runcorn East railway station: 108,787 passengers;
- Widnes railway station: 264,634 passengers; and
- Hough Green railway station: 143,556 passengers.

2.9.5 The current passenger railway operators on the rail routes that serve the Borough are as follows:

The West Coast Main Line

- Virgin West Coast operates an hourly train service between Liverpool Lime Street and London via Runcorn, Crewe and Stafford on the Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line;
- Virgin West Coast also operate regular services on the Weaver Junction to Warrington Bank Quay section of the West Coast Main Line through the Borough. However no local railway station exists on this route; and
- London Midland operate a half hourly semi-fast service on the Liverpool branch line of the West Coast Main Line linking Liverpool Lime Street to Birmingham via Liverpool South Parkway, Runcorn, Acton Bridge, Winsford and Hartford, and Crewe and then on to Stafford, Wolverhampton and finally Birmingham New Street.

Liverpool to Manchester Route

- Northern Rail operates local stopping services between Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Oxford Road via Liverpool South Parkway, Hough Green, Widnes, Warrington Central and Irlam;
- East Midland Trains operate a service linking Liverpool Lime Street to a wide range of destinations across South Yorkshire, East Midlands and East Anglia via Widnes, Warrington Central and Manchester Piccadilly; and

- First Trans Pennine operate a service linking Liverpool Lime Street to Warrington Central and Manchester Piccadilly with Leeds, York and the North East, although the majority of trains do not call at stations within the Borough.

2.9.6 Northern Rail and East Midlands Trains combine to provide a basic three trains per hour service through Widnes railway station in each direction (Monday to Saturday daytimes) to both Liverpool and Manchester city centres.

Manchester and North Wales coast line

- Arriva Trains Wales (Arriva) provides an hourly service linking Manchester Piccadilly to Warrington Bank Quay, Chester, Llandudno and Holyhead along the North Wales line. The only railway station on this line within the Borough is Runcorn East, which is located on the eastern edge of the New Town. The railway station is located next to the Runcorn Busway and has recently been designated as a Community Railway Station as part of a national initiative promoted by Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACORP).

2.9.7 Rail currently accounts for a very small percentage share of work related journeys within the Borough, estimated at 1.25% (Reference 6).

2.9.8 In summary, in terms of key railway issues, the Borough enjoys excellent railway links to neighbouring areas within the Liverpool City area and Merseyside Region, and is well placed for express services to and from London. However, significant issues remain as follows:-

- Limited internal passenger railway market in the Borough, due to the nature of the network;
- Limited P&R facilities;
- Railway demand is suppressed due to poor facilities at local railway stations;
- Bus links between stations to facilitate interchange are not well publicised and are poorly differentiated for example at Runcorn East railway station;
- Widnes railway station is remote from Widnes town centre; and
- Relatively poor marketing of services locally.

2.10 BUSES

2.10.1 Local bus services provide the foundation of the local public transport network within the Borough, and the vast majority of all local public transport trips. The Council's accessibility model shows that most of the Borough's population live within 400m of a bus stop (Reference 1). Despite the extensive nature of the network, local bus services account for 7.12% of Journey to Work trips within the Borough, below the North West regional average of 8.56% (Census Data, 2001).

2.10.2 Given the high density of population, the high level of accessibility to the bus network and comparatively low car ownership within the Borough, this may be regarded as a disappointingly low return. Comparative Journey to Work data for other local authority areas (Table 2.0) suggests that, although bus use in the Borough is relatively strong, there would appear to be significant opportunity to grow the market share and achieve mode shift.

Table 2.0 Comparative Journey to Work data: People aged 16 - 74 who usually travel to work by bus, minibus or coach.

Local Authority	Region	Percentage
North West England Average	-	8.56
England Average	-	7.51
Kingston upon Hull Unitary	Yorkshire & The Humber	12.81
Middlesbrough Unitary	North East	11.24
Ipswich Unitary	East of England	10.40
Newport Unitary	Wales	9.86
Blackpool Unitary	North West	9.72
Portsmouth Unitary	South East	8.59
Redcar & Cleveland Unitary	North East	7.97
Swindon Unitary	South West	7.65
Halton Unitary	**North West**	**7.12**
Peterborough Unitary	East of England	6.53
Medway Unitary	South East	5.47
Warrington Unitary	North West	5.23
Milton Keynes Unitary	South East	4.74
Telford & Wrekin Unitary	West Midlands	4.29

2.10.3 Based on information provided by the bus operators, services are generally under utilised with an average passenger occupancy rate of only 15% (Monday to Friday inter peaks). The nature of the demand for bus travel within the Borough is very fragmented with the majority of passengers making relatively short trips.

2.10.4 There are two major bus operators in the Borough. Arriva (North West and Wales) is the principal operator of commercially operated bus services, providing over 60% of the registered bus mileage within the Borough. Halton Transport Ltd, the municipal owned operator, accounts for approximately 34% of the operated mileage share in the Borough.

2.10.5 In addition, there are a further 10 smaller operators providing local bus services within the Borough, mainly on contracted services for the Council. This suggests that competition for tendered service work within the Borough is relatively healthy. The Council currently spends in the region of £730,000 per annum on securing socially necessary bus services, (i.e. those not provided commercially by bus companies). The most significant of these are:-

- Runcorn evening services (Runcorn Town Centre to Weston Point and Halton Lea to Murdishaw via Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Norton, Runcorn East Station);
- Murdishaw Bus Interchange to Runcorn East employment areas, especially Whitehouse Industrial Estate, Daresbury Business Park, Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre (Daresbury SIC) and Manor Park. This service was originally introduced in 2002 using DfT Urban Bus Challenge funding and is now funded by the Council; and
- Evening and Sunday services linking Widnes to Warrington town centre.

2.10.6 In addition, approximately 40% of the Council's revenue budget for supported local bus services is assigned to fund "de minimis" agreements, which are permitted under the terms of the Transport Act 1985. These agreements are typically used to divert or alter existing commercial bus services to operate in certain areas or times of the day, without

the need to go through the usual competitive tendering process.

2.10.7 Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the Core Bus Route Network in the Borough as defined by the Council's Bus Strategy 2006/7 – 2010/11.

2.10.8 Currently, the three main bus corridors (on the Core Bus Route Network) with the highest bus frequencies are:-

- Runcorn Busway Circular – (Halton Lea – Castlefields – Windmill Hill - Runcorn East – Murdishaw – Brookvale and Palacefields) every 6 minutes in each direction (Monday to Saturday daytime);
- Hough Green – Chestnut Lodge – Widnes Town Centre every 5 minutes in each direction (Monday to Saturday daytime);
- Halton Lea – Runcorn High Street Bus Station via Halton Lodge and Grangeway (Cherry Tree) every 15 minutes (Monday to Saturday daytime); and
- The cross river corridor comprises of all services that currently operate over the SJB as part of the Core Bus Route Network between Runcorn Old Town and Widnes West Bank. This comprises 7 services, including the X1 express service that operates between Windmill Hill and Liverpool. In summary, up to 19 buses per hour currently operate in each direction over the SJB, Monday to Saturday daytime.

2.10.9 Both main operators have invested heavily in recent years, and as a consequence, the Borough is served by a high quality network of modern, low floor, fully accessible vehicles (95% of buses are now low floor within the Borough).

2.10.10 Whilst Arriva is the principal commercial operator within the Borough, both Arriva and Halton Transport Ltd operate competing services on much of the Core Bus Route Network. The only significant Sections of the network uniquely served by one of these two operators are as follows:-

- Runcorn Busway Loop North – Castlefields – Windmill Hill: Arriva;
- Hale Village: Arriva;
- Beechwood (Runcorn): Arriva;
- Weston Point and Village (Runcorn): Arriva;
- Crow Wood and Weates Close areas of eastern Widnes; Halton Transport Ltd; and
- Sandymoor (Runcorn); Halton Transport Ltd.

2.10.11 Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the Core Bus Route Network in the Borough, as defined by the Council's Bus Strategy in the LTP2 (Reference 11).

Figure 2.3 Core Bus Route Network - Widnes

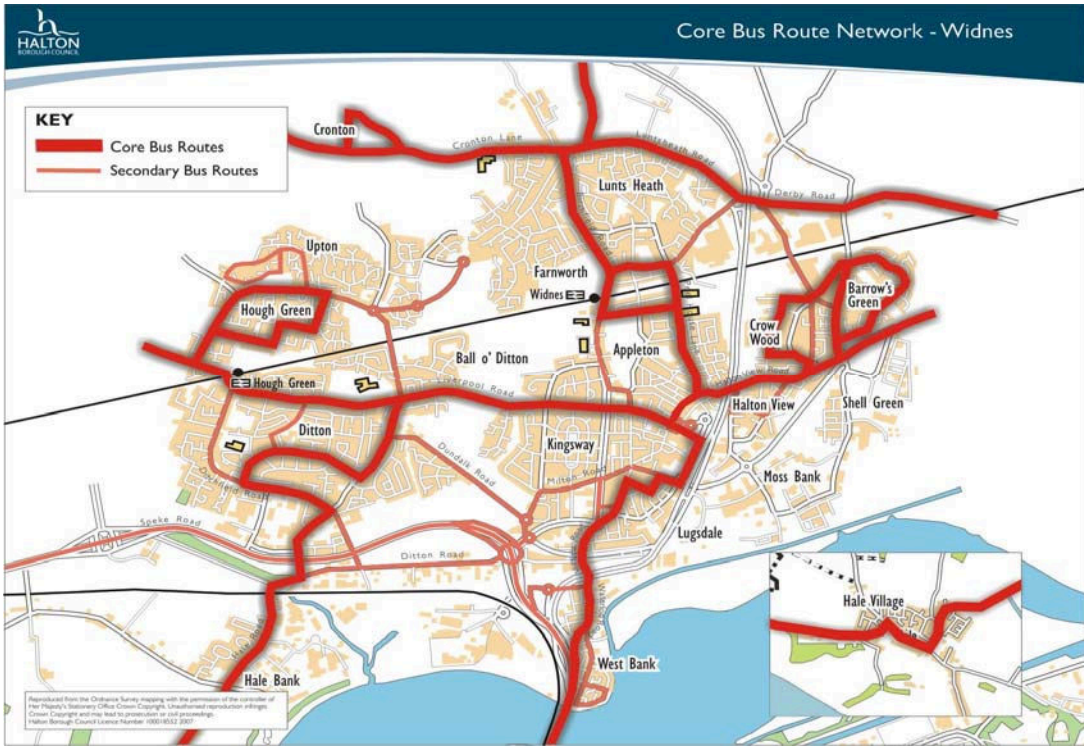
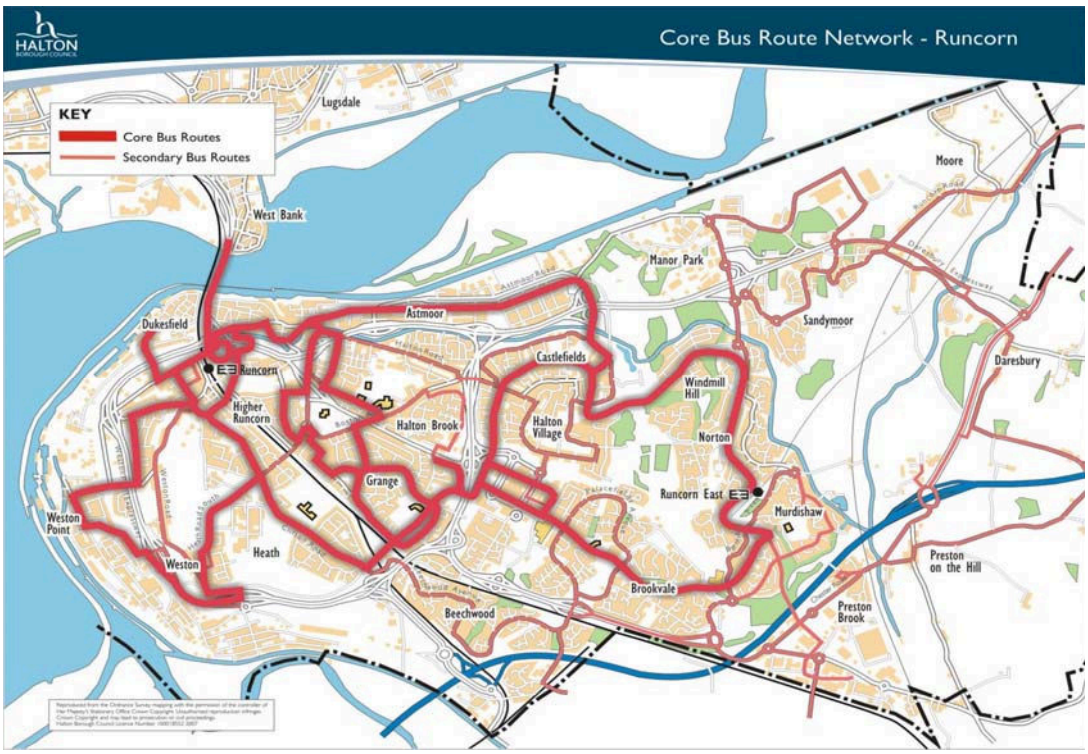


Figure 2.4 Core Bus Route Network - Runcorn



2.10.12 Improvements to the Bus Network in Halton during LTP2 (2006/7-2010/11)

2.10.13 The Council's Bus Strategy (Reference 11) defines a hierarchy of local bus services within the Borough as follows:-

- Core Bus Route Network;
- Strategic employment links;
- Local community services; and
- Cross boundary links.

2.10.14 The foundation stone of the local bus network is the Core Bus Route Network as shown in Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4. (Reference 11). For this part of the bus network the following service quality standards have been agreed with the bus companies, and are now being delivered as part of a voluntary quality partnership:-

- 'Turn up and go' frequencies of every 15 minutes (or better) between 07.00 and 19.30 (Monday to Saturday daytimes);
- At least 30 minute frequency of service, evenings and Sundays; and
- All services to be operated by low floor, easy access buses supported by improvements to key passenger facilities and information.

2.10.15 Table 2.1 below summarises some key outcomes from the Council's Bus Strategy (Reference 11) and provides an indication of progress and success achieved to date.

2.10.16 Network Performance - Core Bus Route Network Monday to Saturday Daytime

2.10.17 Figures 2.5 and 2.6 (Reference 11) show the extent to which existing Monday to Saturday daytime frequencies on the Core Bus Route Network meet the service requirement thresholds as set out in the Council's Bus Strategy. It shows that all parts of the Core Bus Route Network in Widnes meet the minimum quality thresholds, whereas in Runcorn the part of the network serving Weston Point and Weston Village in the Heath ward still fails to meet the minimum quality threshold requirements, both in terms of service frequency and vehicle quality.

2.10.18 Evenings and Sundays

2.10.19 Figures 2.7 and 2.8 (Reference 11) show the current provision of service on the Core Bus Route Network during evenings and Sundays. At these times, large areas of northern and eastern Widnes are under-served, as are Weston Point and the northern Runcorn Busway loop. In addition, although the minimum service threshold has been reached on the main Runcorn Busway loop on Sunday daytimes, evening services on the Runcorn Busway remain poor (hourly or less on the northern Section). These areas of the Borough exhibit high levels of social deprivation.

Figure 2.5 Level of Service on Core Bus Route Network-Widnes (Daytime)

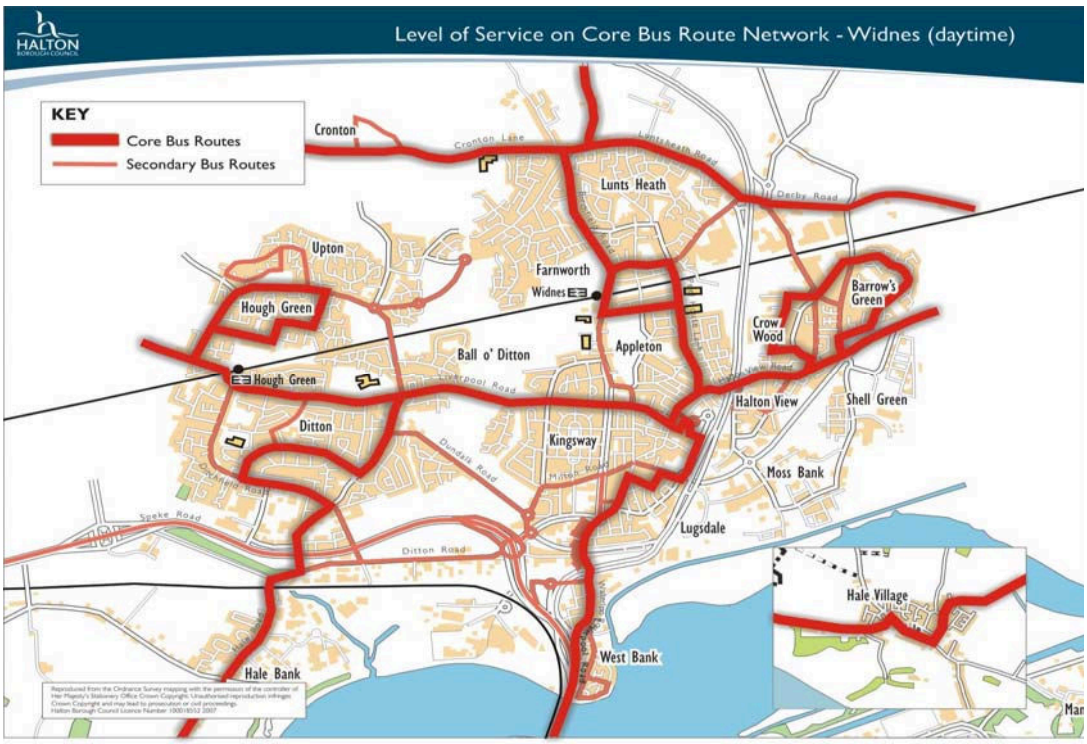


Figure 2.6 Level of Service on Core Bus Route Network-Runcorn (Daytime)

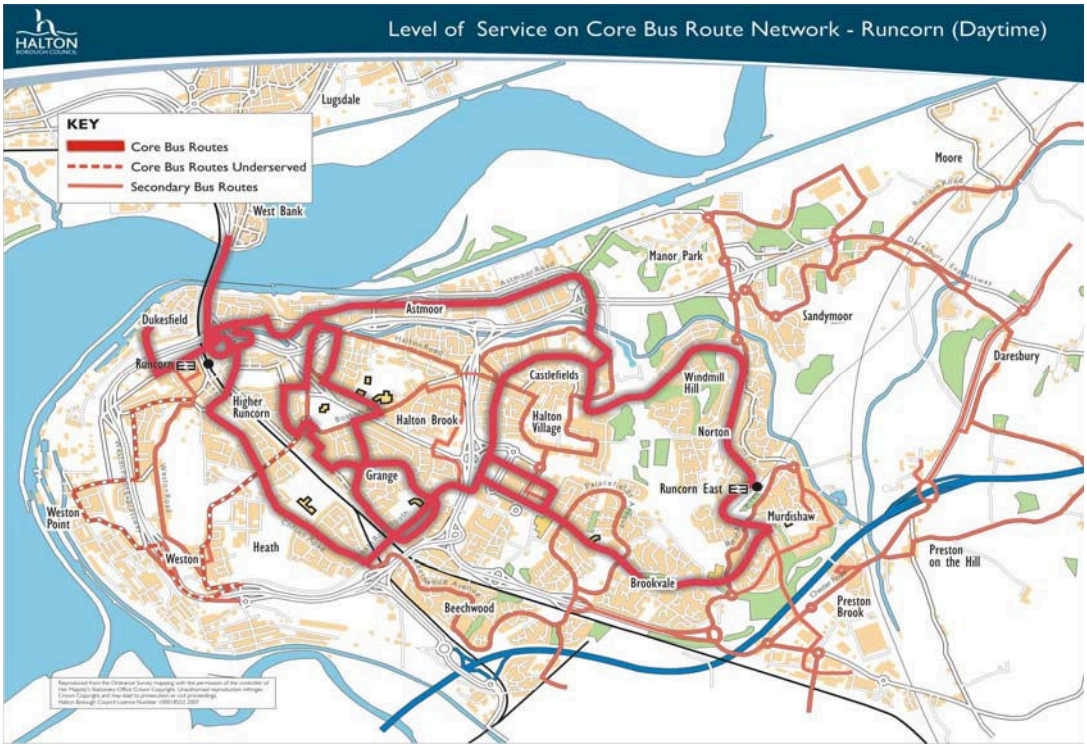


Table 2.1 Progress on the Network since 2005/6

Issue raised in 2006 at the start of the Council's Bus Strategy 2006/7 – 2010/11.	Now June 2008
"*Lack of a multi operator ticket covering the whole of Halton.*	New "Halton Hopper" multi operator ticket introduced in June 2006. Ticket retailed through the Council's Direct Link Shops, Contact Centre and Internet. Ticket sales approaching 1,000 per month. Discounted versions introduced for learners and NEET (not in employment, education or training) young people.
"Currently there are a number of services within Halton that are not fully accessible."	Over 95% of buses within the Borough are now low floor and fully accessible. The Council continues to work with local operators to ensure the goal of 100% low floor operation is achieved by the end of 2010/11. Arriva introduced a fleet of 39 low floor buses in 2006 at a cost of £4.5m.
"Relatively good cross boundary services on certain corridors"	This remains the case, and has recently been improved following • The introduction of a 15 minute daytime and 30 minute nighttime frequency on the service 79C by Arriva in January 2006; • Introduction of a frequent service by Halton Transport Ltd on the service 14 linking Widnes to Liverpool. • Introduction of improved daytime service linking Widnes – St Helens by Arriva; • Enhanced service between the Borough and Warrington; and • New service 700 introduced linking Widnes to Liverpool Airport and Manchester city centre.
"Relatively stable commercial bus network with frequent services throughout the day on most key routes within the Borough."	The bus network remains relatively stable within the Borough. The two main operators, Halton Transport Ltd and Arriva restrict registrations changes to one major change per year.
"Poor interchange opportunities/ facilities between the railway and local bus network."	Bus/railway connections have been improved at Runcorn railway station as part of the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) initiative funded as part of the LTP2. The national "Plus Bus" ticketing scheme was extended to serve Halton from May 2008 allowing through bus/railway ticketing within the Borough.
"Potential funding opportunities for improved new services through "Kickstart" funding etc."	The Council was successful in securing DfT 'Kickstart' funding in 2006 to improve the service 61 in north Widnes. This scheme introduced a 10 minute service in each direction between Farnworth and Widnes town centre.

(Source: Reference 11)

Figure 2.7 Level of Service on Core Bus Route Network - Widnes (Evenings and Sundays).

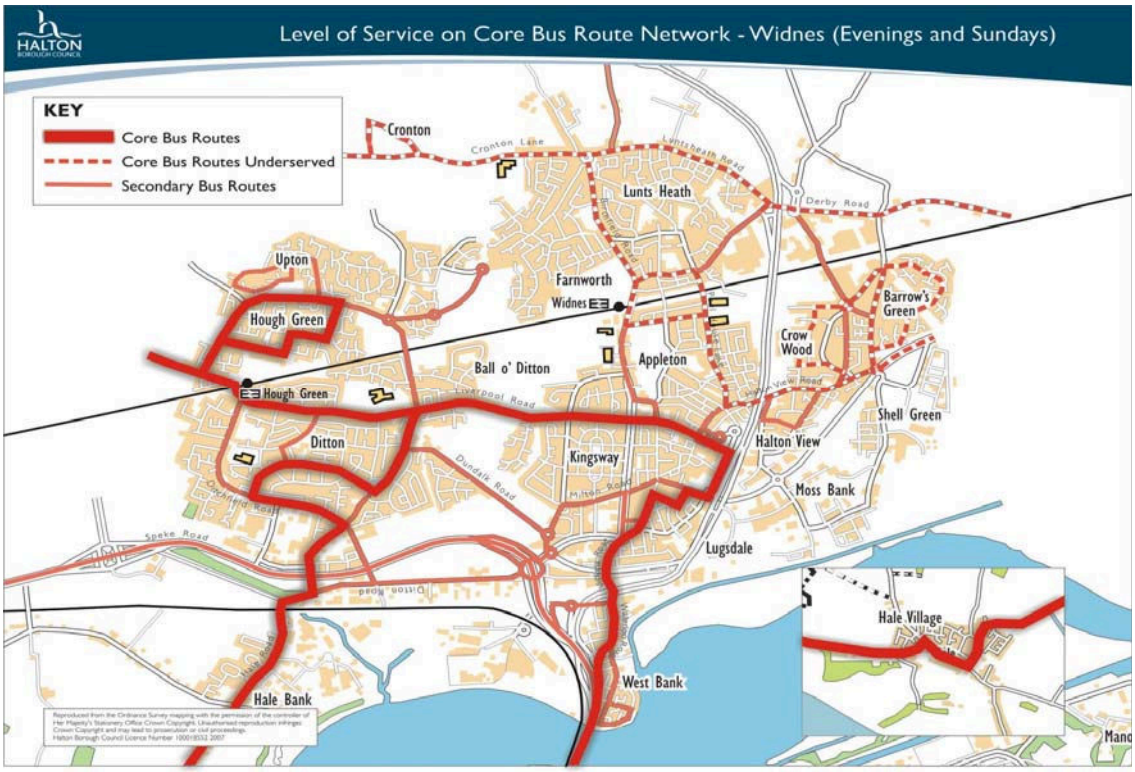
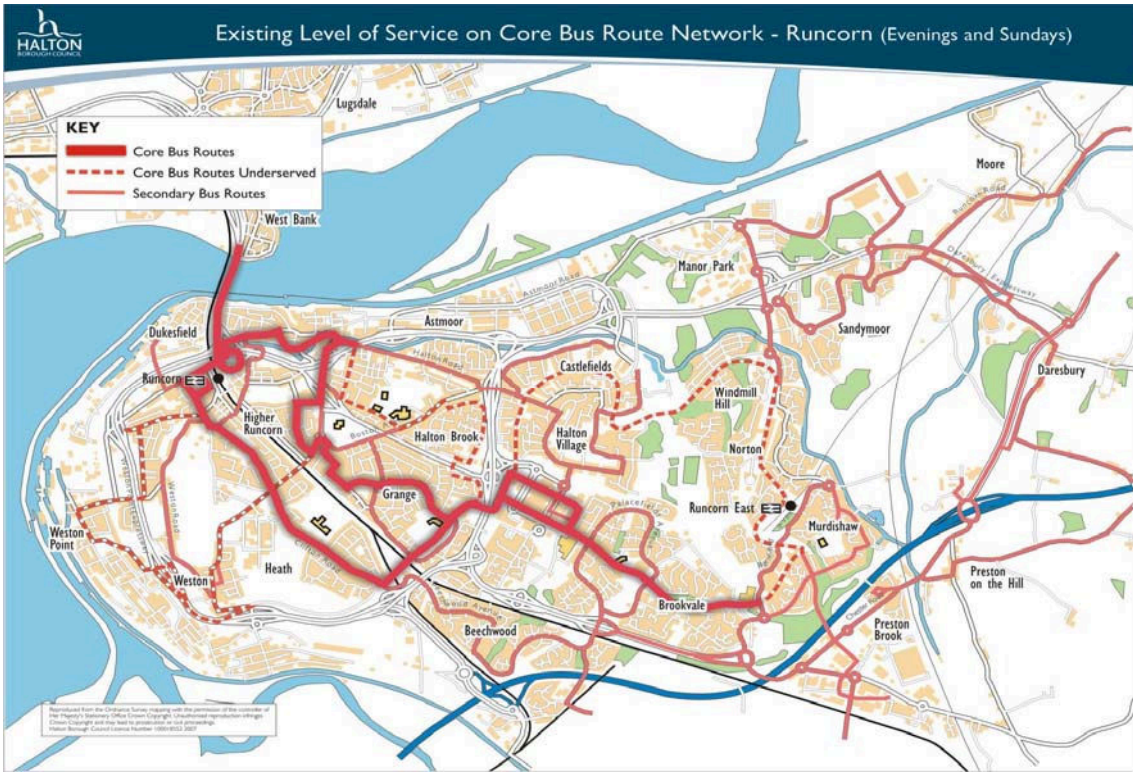


Figure 2.8 Existing Level of Service on Core Bus Route Network - Runcorn (Evenings and Sundays.



2.10.20 Strategic Employment Links

2.10.21 The majority of bus services providing strategic employment links are financially supported by the Council. The services comprise of the following:-

- Service 200 linking Murdishaw and Runcorn East railway station to key employment sites in eastern Runcorn including Daresbury; and
- Service 13 linking Widnes Town Centre to the Widnes Waterfront economic development zone.

2.10.22 Patronage on both services is relatively subdued due to the dispersed nature of employment locations within the two areas and varied and flexible employment patterns, resulting in difficulties in operating conventional fixed route services in these areas. Halton Transport Ltd also provides a limited number of commercial peak hour services to Whitehouse Industrial Estate.

2.10.23 Local Community Services

2.10.24 These services are mostly operated by Halton Community Transport (HCT) under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council. Services funded to date include the following:-

- Dial a Ride;
- Women's Safe Transport;
- Accessible Learners Service for post 16 learners; and
- Volunteer driver's scheme.

2.10.25 The services offered by HCT are greatly valued in the community and have consistently outperformed targets set for accessible travel in both LTP's.

2.10.26 Following a recent best value review, the Council and HCT are currently in the process of better integrating these services as part of the new 'Door2Door' service.

2.10.27 Cross Boundary Services

2.10.28 The majority of the commercial bus services within the Borough operate across the boundaries into neighbouring local authority areas. Details of cross boundary links provided from the main centres within the Borough are shown in Table 2. 2 below.

2.10.29 As can be seen in Table 2.2 below, there is an excellent service linking the Borough to Liverpool City Centre, with all major centres served. However the following key gaps remain:-

- Runcorn to St. Helens (particularly St. Helens Hospital); and
- Widnes to Chester (only served on a Sunday).

2.10.30 Furthermore, the only cross boundary bus corridor, not directly served by passenger railway services is between the Borough and St. Helens town centre. There are also very poor cross boundary local bus services to urban areas in Vale Royal (Cheshire East and Chester Shadow Authority), in particular Northwich and Winsford, although Frodsham and

Helsby are well served on the Manchester to North Wales railway line (services call at Runcorn East Station) and local bus services linking Runcorn (Halton Lea) to Chester.

2.10.31 The commercial viability of key bus services within the Borough is heavily dependent upon cross boundary patronage levels in other neighbouring authority areas, particularly Merseyside.

Table 2.2 Summary of Cross Boundary Bus Services that operate within the Borough from Widnes Town Centre, Halton Lea and Runcorn Town Centre

Key cross boundary destination	Number of services per hour	Service numbers	Combined Monday – Saturday peak hour Frequency (buses per hour in each direction)	Direct service from Widnes town centre	Direct service from Halton Lea	Direct service from Runcorn town centre
Liverpool	7	X1, 82A, 82B, 79C, 14, 61, 6	16	✓	✓	✓
Warrington	4	62,110,66, X30	5	✓	✓	✓
St. Helens	2	17/ A and 33A	3	✓	×	×
Chester	2	X30, 21	2	×	✓	×
Huyton	2	6, 61	4	✓	✓	✓
Whiston Hospital	2	6B,61	2	✓	✓	✓
Manchester city centre	1	700	1	✓	×	×

2.10.32 The Mersey Dee Alliance

2.10.33 The Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) was born out of the recognition of shared economic and community interests across the West Cheshire, Wirral and North East Wales Area. The Alliance is led by the local authorities of Cheshire, Chester, Denbighshire, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and Merseytravel

2.10.34 The partnership recognises that the area represents a single economic sub-region with a population of approximately 930,000, which is divided by a national boundary. Partners agree to work together on common strategic interests to sustain the economic future of the travel-to-work area, and facilitate a coherent approach to social, economic and environmental issues.

2.10.35 MDA project areas include transport and accessibility, labour market skills, and business investment. Examples of recent MDA successes include the Workwise initiative and the Sub-regional Spatial Strategy for West Cheshire and North East Wales.

2.10.36 The MGTS recognises the role of the MDA in terms of developing and promoting access across the region particularly in cross boundary movement and associated services and facilities that can underpin employment opportunities for people who live in the Borough but work outside the Borough, and people who wish to travel into the Borough from the Mersey Dee Alliance area by sustainable modes.

2.10.37 Bus Patronage

2.10.38 Approximately 5.94 million passenger journeys were reported to have been made on the local bus network within the Borough during 2007/8 compared with 6.07 million in 2006/7. (Reference 32). This figure indicates a 2% fall in local bus passenger journeys during 2007/8. This follows the unprecedented reported 10% growth in 2006/7 following the introduction of the improved concessionary travel arrangements and significant improvements to commercial services by Arriva in January 2006 (Reference 32). Evidence appears to point to, at best, a stabilisation or slight fall in bus patronage following strong growth in 2006/7.

2.10.39 The Runcorn Busway

2.10.40 The Runcorn Busway was developed as an integral part of the Runcorn New Town over 30 years ago, and is the first example of a segregated Busway or BRT system to be introduced in the UK. Its location is shown on Figures 1.1 and 2.9. The Runcorn Busway is classed as highway, and its use is largely restricted to buses, council maintenance vehicles and emergency service vehicles, only.

2.10.41 There are 4 component Sections to the Runcorn Busway as follows:-

- A loop taking in Halton Lea including its two bus stations (North bus station and South bus station), Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Runcorn East railway station, Murdishaw Interchange and Palace Fields;
- A branch between Murdishaw Interchange and the Whitehouse Industrial Estate;
- A branch from Halton Lodge to Beechwood which links Beechwood Avenue to Halton Lea via the Arriva Runcorn bus garage; and
- A branch running through the Astmoor Industrial Estate, between Bridge Street in Runcorn Old Town and Arkwright Road.

2.10.42 The Council has implemented several key improvements to infrastructure on the Runcorn Busway system as part of its programmes through LTP1 and LTP2 as follows:-

- Modernisation and upgrade of Halton Lea north bus station;
- Improvements to key interchanges and stops including Halton Hospital, Brookfields and Halton high school;
- Castlefields district centre proposals;
- Removal of poorly maintained vegetation and landscaping; and
- Removal of pedestrian bridges with low clearances, and unpopular pedestrian subway crossings.

2.10.43 Although the Runcorn Busway system remains a key part of the Borough's Core Bus Network, parts of the system require considerable upgrade and maintenance/ management issues remain challenging. Key issues include:-

- Poor pedestrian connections between Halton Lea north and south bus stations when Halton Lea shopping centre is closed;

- A number of stops still require upgrading especially Halton Brow and Murdishaw Interchange;
- Poor information and signage across the Runcorn Busway system;
- Poor perceptions of safety and personal security on segregated Sections of the Runcorn Busway system; and
- Under-utilised Sections of Runcorn Busway, particularly the Murdishaw to Whitehouse Industrial Estate link.

2.10.44 Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) Strategy in Halton

2.10.45 A Strategy of introducing Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) improvements has been integral to both of the Council's LTP's, and continues to be an effective way of bringing about a highly integrated range of public transport, highway and urban realm improvements and interventions encompassing the following:-

- Improvements to bus stops and the passenger waiting environments;
- Bus priority measures to improve reliability and regularity of services and reduce journey times;
- Integrated walking and cycling facilities;
- Traffic calming; and
- Improved street lighting and safety and security measures.

2.10.46 The QBC Strategy and programme has been integral to improvements on several corridors including Widnes to Runcorn via the SJB and the Liverpool corridor in Widnes on Liverpool Road. This has been undertaken in conjunction with bus operators and has included step change improvements and enhancements to on-street passenger facilities and information, as well as some real time information displays linked to the real time information system and associated technology platform that is being taken forward by Merseytravel.

2.10.47 Key Interchange Points

2.10.48 The key bus interchange points on the local bus network shown in Figure 2.1 are as follows:-

- Halton Lea north and south bus stations;
- Runcorn High Street bus station;
- Widnes Vicarage Road;
- Widnes Green Oaks;
- Murdishaw Interchange;
- Halton Hospital; and
- Chesnut Lodge (Widnes).

2.10.49 Issues Identified in The Halton Access Plan 2006/7 - 2010/11

The Halton Access Plan (Reference 11) identifies the need for improvements to local bus services to key out-of-borough health facilities namely Warrington General Hospital and Whiston Hospital in Knowsley. The latest accessibility indicators from the DfT (Reference 11) reaffirm that general levels of accessibility to a range of key facilities are high within the Borough. However, further key improvements are needed to local bus services to ensure better levels of accessibility to out-of-borough hospital sites.

2.11 CYCLING, PEDESTRIAN AND EQUINE NETWORKS

2.11.1 Cycling is a key mode of transport that can offer a sustainable alternative to the car and has many of the same benefits as walking. The Government's 2004 White Paper, The Future of Transport (Reference 12), states that 'there is huge potential for levels of walking and cycling to increase" and "while there will always be some short trips for which a car is the most convenient choice (carrying heavy shopping, for example), many of these short journeys could be done on foot or by bike". It goes on to recognise that 'concerns about safety deter many people from choosing to cycle or walk" and that it is the Government's aim "that people are safer, and feel safer, whether riding a bike or walking.

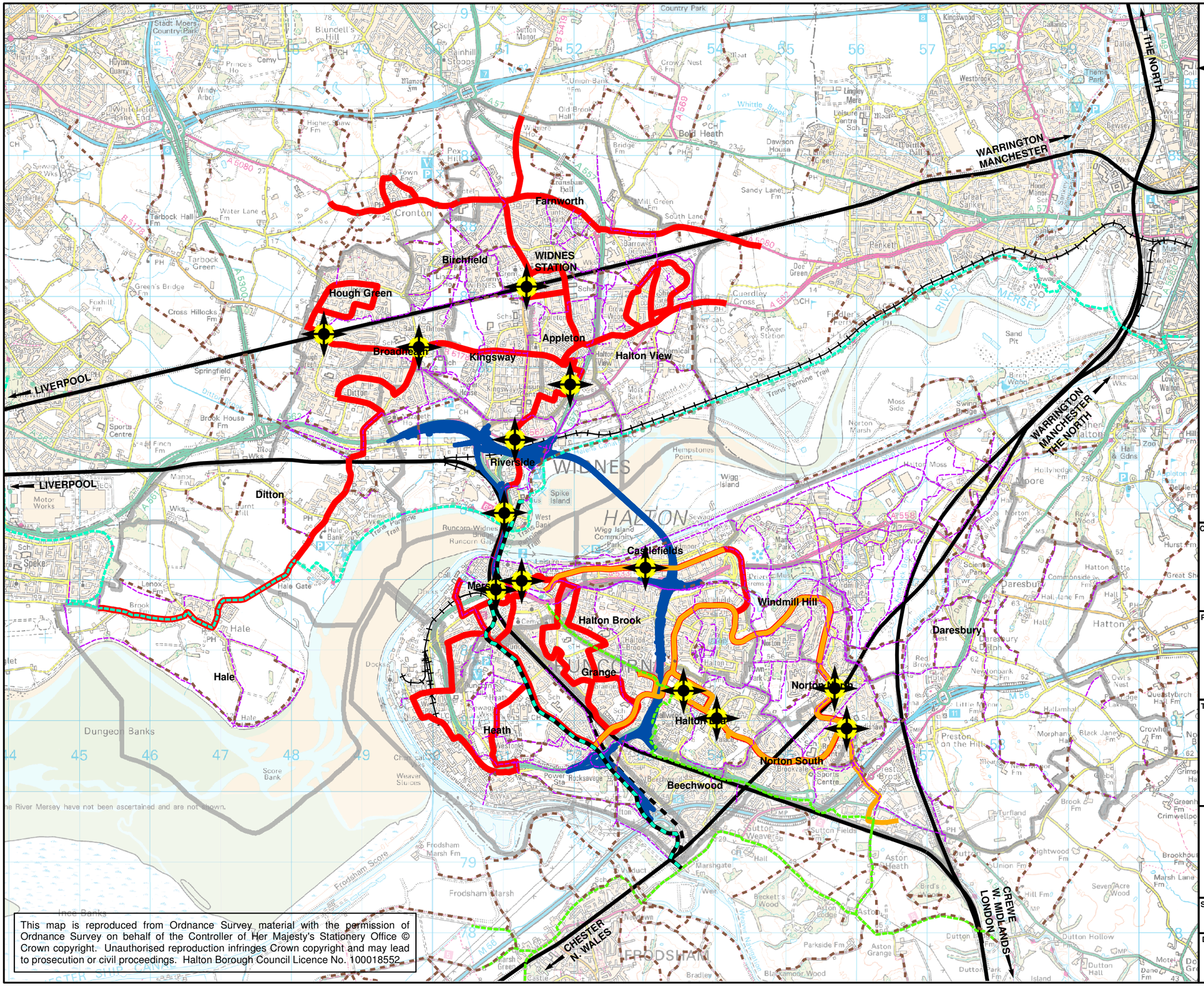
2.11.2 The Borough possesses an extensive network of walking networks, cycling networks, bridleways and public rights of way that extend beyond its boundaries into neighbouring areas.

2.11.3 Halton's Cycle Network

2.11.4 The Borough affords excellent potential for cycling journeys (both recreational and utility). However, currently only 2.03% of work journeys are made by bicycle within the Borough. Given that nearly 50% of local residents travel less than 5km to their place of work (Reference 6), there is significant potential to encourage a greater number of short journeys to be made by walking and cycling. Given the relatively advantageous topography and mild climate, cycling offers a realistic option for shorter journeys within the Borough.

2.11.5 Sustrans claims that 75% of the UK's population lives within 2 miles of a route on the National Cycle Network (Reference 13). This gives some indication of the potential demand for these types of routes and facilities. Two key strategic routes run through the Borough. These are the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 in Widnes, and NCN 5 in Runcorn. The routes of NCN 62 and NCN 5 in the Borough are shown on Figure 2.9. This figure also shows the proposed route NCN 82, which could connect Widnes with Runcorn via the SJB. This NCN route has not been introduced to date because of the inherent deficiencies of the existing facilities on the SJB, and poor connections into Widnes West Bank and Runcorn Town Centre.

2.11.6 The Borough already has an excellent network of cycle routes, which are particularly well developed within central and east Runcorn. The Council has inherited a comprehensive network of segregated cycle routes, which were specifically designed around the Radburn housing layout principles by the previous Runcorn Development Corporation discussed earlier. In Widnes, which has a more traditional highway network, the corresponding cycle network mostly relies on the use of shared road space. Over the last 10 years, the Council has made considerable progress in upgrading the cycle network through the LTP process and funding mechanisms.



Legend

- Local Interchanges
- The Mersey Gateway Project
- Public Right of Way
- PROW
- NCN 5
- Trans Pennine Trail (NCN 62)
- Proposed future route for NCN

Id

- Runcorn Busway
- Halton Core Bus Network
- Freight Railway Route
- Proposed Halton Curve
- Passenger Railway Route
- Halton Ward Boundaries

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client: HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project: MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Title: LOCAL INTERCHANGES AND BUS, CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:50,000	15/12/2008	Jane Hunter

Drg No	Rev.
FIGURE 2.9	-

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297

2.11.7 The current cycle network can best be described as a hierarchy of interlinking and complementary routes and corridors, consisting of:-

- Longer distance strategic routes of which the majority are part of the defined National Cycle Network and include the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 in Widnes and NCN 5 in Runcorn;
- Core intra-borough cycle routes linking key commercial centres with the secondary commercial centres and other key facilities such as health, leisure and employment; and
- Neighbourhood routes which branch off the core cycle network.

2.11.8 As part of LTP2 all three hierarchies of the cycle network have been progressively updated and improved. However, there are currently poor and undefined strategic cycle links between the Borough and the neighbouring boroughs of St. Helens and Knowsley.

2.11.9 Scope for Increasing Cycling Trips in Halton

2.11.10 Work undertaken by Gifford in 2006 (Reference 37) indicated that higher proportions of cycle use might be anticipated in wards with high proportions of journeys to work of between 2km and 5km in length. However, it was further noted that for travel to work journeys of less than 2km, walking might be a better alternative.

2.11.11 Table 2.3 compares Journey to Work data for the Borough and a sample of other authorities for people aged 16-74 who usually travel to work by bicycle.

Table 2.3 Comparative Journey to Work data: People aged 16 – 74 who usually travel to work by bicycle.

Local Authority	Region	Percentage
North West England Average	-	2.27
England Average	-	2.83
Kingston upon Hull Unitary	Yorkshire & The Humber	11.65
Peterborough Unitary	East of England	7.70
Portsmouth Unitary	South East	7.08
Ipswich Unitary	East of England	5.72
Swindon Unitary	South West	5.08
Warrington Unitary	North West	3.22
Blackpool Unitary	North West	3.19
Milton Keynes Unitary	South East	3.02
Middlesbrough Unitary	North East	2.54
Telford & Wrekin Unitary	West Midlands	2.51
Halton Unitary	**North West**	**2.03**
Redcar & Cleveland Unitary	North East	1.94
Newport Unitary	Wales	1.46
Medway Unitary	South East	1.36

Source: (Reference 6) 2001 census

2.11.12 Given the high density of population, particularly in wards near the SJB, the comparatively low car ownership within the Borough and the poor facilities across the SJB for cycling (including poor linkages into West Bank and Runcorn Old Town), there would appear to be significant opportunity to grow the market share for Journey to Work trips by cycle. Whilst there are a number of factors that influence cycle use, there is strong evidence to

suggest that improvements to facilities, information and training do stimulate growth in cycling.

2.11.13 Cycling England claims that the 6 cycling town demonstration projects have experienced an average increase in trips by bicycle of 20%. (Reference 44)

2.11.14 Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 in Widnes and NCN 5 in Runcorn

2.11.15 The Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 in Widnes is a multi-user route that runs across the North West from Southport in Merseyside to Hornsea in East Yorkshire. NCN 62 passes under the SJB in Widnes West Bank. It runs along the northerly side of the Mersey Estuary in an east to west alignment alongside the 3MG site and onto Spike Island. It then continues east following the St Helens Canal and then heads towards Warrington, Lymm and Stockport before crossing the Pennines and into South Yorkshire.

2.11.16 NCN 5 is the strategic multi user route that exists in the south of the Borough in Runcorn and provides strategic connections between Runcorn Old Town, Vale Royal, Weaver Valley, Chester and North Wales. NCN 5 comes into the south easterly quadrant of the Borough near the Whitehouse Industrial Estate and runs parallel with the Southern Expressway. At Beechwood, it turns north to connect with Halton Lea shopping centre and then turns North West to Runcorn Old Town where the route currently terminates.

2.11.17 The Bridgewater Way

2.11.18 A key component of the existing cycling and walking networks in the Borough is the Bridgewater Way, which provides extensive connections to the sustainable transport network, both within and outside the Borough, on the south side of the Mersey Estuary. The Bridgewater Canal towpath, which is 65km long, forms the multi-user route known as the Bridgewater Way trail which is also a cycle track.

2.11.19 The Bridgewater Way has been developed as part of a multi agency initiative including the Bridgewater Canal Trust and 8 local authorities including Halton Borough Council.

2.11.20 This highly strategic, multi-user route presents major opportunities in terms of sustainable transport, leisure and the local economy in both the District and the region, particularly as the towpath connects Runcorn Old Town with key centres including Daresbury Park and Daresbury SIC, Warrington, Altrincham and the westerly quadrant of the Greater Manchester conurbation including Leigh, Worsley and central Salford.

2.11.21 The network of long distance strategic routes and core cycle network is shown in Figure 1.1.

2.11.22 Table 2.4 below summarises locations in Runcorn and Widnes where formal cycle parking provision is in place. The issues and opportunities in relation to cycle parking and promoting and supporting cycle use and interchange between cycling and bus and railway travel are identified and discussed in more detail in Section 4. In addition, the Council has recently installed secure cycle lockers at Widnes and Hough Green railway stations.

Table 2.4 Locations in Halton where formal cycle parking exists.

Widnes	Runcorn
Albert Road (Junction with Marzhan Way)	Church Street
Albert Road (Junction with Cooper Street)	Halton Lea (Trident Entrance)
JJB Car Park	Brindley Arts Centre
Widnes Market Entrance (by car park)	Phoenix Park Visitors Centre
Morrison's	Runcorn Station
Widnes Road	Norton Priory
ASDA Entrance (trolley bays)	Asda
Victoria Square	
Kingsway Learning Centre	
Widnes Health Centre	
Victoria Park	
Liverpool Road (Junction with Hale Road) Chesnut Lodge	
Liverpool Road (Junction with Hale Road) Co-op	
Halton Stadium (secure, covered storage)	

2.11.23 Key Cycle Issues

2.11.24 Key cycle issues have been identified as follows:-

- The lack of a formal cycle route across the SJB between Widnes West Bank and Runcorn and connections between the local and strategic networks including NCN 62, NCN 5 and the Bridgewater Way;
- The routes from Runcorn railway station are inadequately maintained and signposted. There is a direct link from the railway station to Runcorn Riverside College. However, the link to Runcorn Old Town is considered indirect and unattractive;
- The lack of strategic cycle routes and links between Widnes and St. Helens and key parts of southern Knowsley, especially Huyton and Prescot;
- The lack of a new strategic cycle link between northern Widnes and Penketh in Warrington to complement NCN 62;
- A need for improvements to the core cycle network in the western Runcorn area to better link Rocksavage, Weston Point and Frodsham areas to central and eastern Runcorn and across the SJB to Widnes and the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62;

- A need for improvements to key orbital cycle routes in Widnes to better directly link suburbs, commercial and employment areas to leisure and education facilities;
- Measures to improve access to cycles for households, businesses and visitors in the area are needed, for example, short term cycle hire facilities;
- Lack of revenue has affected the maintenance of cycle lanes/off road cycle facilities and greenways; and
- Cycleway signing needs improving and integrating with the wider sustainable transport network.

2.11.25 Walking/Pedestrian Routes

2.11.26 The Borough has two distinct types of pedestrian provision as follows:-

- A network of footways alongside public highways; and
- An independent network of footpaths that is separate from the public highway network, mainly in the Runcorn New Town area.

2.11.27 The 2001 Census (Reference 6) indicates that the modal split for journeys to work by the Borough's residents in employment is as follows:

- Private car 71%;
- Public transport 9%;
- Pedestrian 10%;
- Cycle 2%; and
- Other 8% (work from home/no fixed place of work).

2.11.28 The 2001 Census (Reference 6) also found that the trip length to work by the Borough's residents in employment was as follows:-

- Less than 5km: 49%;
- 5km – 9km: 16%;
- Greater than 9km: 25% and
- Other 10% (work from home/no fixed place of work).

2.11.29 Since 2004, when 'Walking and Cycling - an Action Plan' was published by the DfT (Reference 14) there has been increasing Government encouragement to promote and support projects for pedestrians that provide a real alternative to using the private car for short journeys.

2.11.30 Given increasing investment in walking, awareness of climate change issues and the positive health implications of increasing physical activity, it is important that walking is actively promoted as a viable alternative to the car for short journeys, and that challenging targets for mode share are set. A survey conducted by Gifford on Tuesday 4th December 2007 between 7am and 7pm identified a total of 104 pedestrians using the footway on the SJB to walk between Runcorn and Widnes West Bank.

2.11.31 The increased accessibility resulting from the proposed SJB de-linking works will facilitate direct access to Runcorn and the Widnes Waterfront regeneration areas and remove many of the physical barriers to walking that are currently experienced by pedestrians.

2.11.32 Once tolling is introduced on both the SJB and the New Bridge, walking will gain a competitive advantage. Over the longer term, this is likely to be set against a background of rising fuel costs, making walking and cycling even more attractive to those who currently use their car. National Travel Statistics 2005 (Reference 9) indicate that over 40% of car users would walk more 'if road user charging is introduced. This factor may be more relevant in the Borough with its low car ownership levels and a significant proportion of its population living in deprived areas.

2.11.33 The traffic modelling undertaken using the Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Model (Mersey Gateway VDM) suggests that the Road User Charging Order under the (provisions of the) Transport Act 2000 will have an effect on travel behaviour. A change in mode is one of the key potential impacts.

2.11.34 Key Walking Issues

2.11.35 The key walking issues are summarised as follows:-

- Lack of an attractive, well connected and integrated pedestrian link across the SJB between Widnes, West Bank and Runcorn Old Town;
- Poor permeability of existing pedestrian routes and connections in West Bank, particularly areas to the West of Victoria Road and Waterloo Road and over Queensway towards 3MG; and
- Poor permeability and lack of clear and direct pedestrian routes and connections between Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn railway station and Runcorn Riverside College and the proposed housing growth point area at Weston.

2.11.36 Equine Issues

2.11.37 As part of the stakeholder consultation for the MGSTS, the British Horse Society requested that the Council permits ridden horses to use the proposed improved pedestrian and cycle facilities over the existing SJB following the opening of the New Bridge in 2014. In response to this, and recognising the importance of providing good quality equestrian routes, the Council will fully evaluate the potential of allowing equestrian access as part of the proposed improved pedestrian and cycling facilities on the SJB and its approaches. To this end, the Council will work with the British Horse Society to ensure that a full safety audit is carried out, and appropriate facilities provided as set out in Section 4.

2.12 FOCUS GROUP CONSULTATION ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

2.12.1 An in-depth focus group consultation initiative was commissioned by the Council and conducted in January and February 2008 to help support and inform the development of the MGSTS (Reference 15).

2.12.2 The research consisted of six in-depth focus group discussions, conducted between 28th January 2008, and 4th February 2008. With between seven and nine respondents per group, the research interviewed a total of 46 people. Each group lasted a minimum of 90 minutes. Discussions were held in convenient and accessible locations in the Borough. All groups were moderated by an experienced market researcher in accordance with the

Market Research Code of Conduct.

2.12.3 The focus group research was concerned solely with issues associated with sustainable transport as opposed to the project and examined the following in detail:-

- Attitudes and opinions on sustainable transport, to travel as a whole, and to individual aspects, for example public transport. This included in-depth probing for reasons, motivations and influences on people's attitudes and opinions; and
- Behaviour and usage in terms of current travel patterns, for example, the impact of a New Bridge and usage of different forms of transport.

2.12.4 The groups comprised:-

- 3 groups of males; 3 groups of females;
- 3 groups in Runcorn and 3 in Widnes;
- 3 groups of respondents with access to a car/van and 3 without access to a car/van; and
- 3 groups of older respondents (40-60); 2 younger (20-40) and 1 of older teens (16-21).

2.12.5 In addition to open-ended questions, a series of stimulus materials were used in the groups including maps of the Borough, photographs of the SJB and the New Bridge.

2.12.6 In summary, the headline findings from the focus groups as a whole were as follows:-

- Personal safety and security and fear of crime and attack is a major deterrent to using public transport, especially buses;
- Public transport is limited in the service it can provide;
- Convenience and comfort are key reasons for using cars; and
- Participants, most of whom were residents of the Borough, demonstrated a low level of awareness of wider environmental issues and carbon footprints.

2.12.7 Safety And Security

2.12.8 Respondents stated they wanted to 'make it safer to walk around', 'to walk to bus stops', and 'to train stations.'

2.12.9 Specific areas identified for improvement included the under-passes. For example, those in Runcorn New Town to be better lit/made safer to walk through.

2.12.10 Bus Stops in the Borough are identified as a major inhibitor to the use of public transport. Comments included, 'more lighting needed at bus stops', and 'make them safer, more welcoming, then more people would use them.'

2.12.11 The Runcorn Busway was identified as 'dangerous', a 'real danger', and that 'the stops on the Busway are not attractive or welcoming' and that 'lighting is poor.'

2.12.12 The railway stations were also heavily criticised. Runcorn East was identified as 'unfriendly,' 'unwelcoming' and 'very poorly lit.' It was also noted that 'no-one there/no

security/no staff' and that the car park is insecure,' 'wouldn't leave my car there,' Hough Green and Widnes were also identified as 'need for better lighting' and 'better security.' Even the taxi office 'looks uninviting/unwelcoming/dark/unsafe.' Runcorn Railway station was viewed slightly more positively as 'bright' and 'well maintained.'

2.12.13 Walking routes improvements were identified as follows:-

- More walkways along the River to be opened; and
- The walkway across the SJB should be made more user friendly,' 'more attractive to use,' 'have better access/better signage from both sides of the River,'

2.12.14 Improved road safety suggestions for pedestrians and cyclists included the following:-

- More separation of pedestrians from cars;
- Better control of buses/coaches/cars stopping/parking outside schools;
- More speed bumps;
- More speed cameras;
- Better policing;
- Give more priority to pedestrians;
- Better road planning at entrances/exits to some car parks; and
- Introduce more dropped kerbs.

2.12.15 The respondents who owned cars were very positive about the advantages of having access to a car which was generally perceived as quicker, easier, more comfortable and more convenient than using public transport. Other comments included the necessity of a car for transporting disabled relatives, or large families. Again, many mentioned the safety and security that the car offered compared to public transport.

2.12.16 Cars were typically not viewed as a problem in the area, and it was viewed that their use was having a limited individual impact on the environment.

2.12.17 Those problems which were identified by respondents who had access to a car/van included:-

- Congestion on the SJB exacerbated by the closure of the SJB to road traffic due to incidents, and road works;
- The cost of driving;
- Speed bumps;
- Other drivers;
- Road works; and
- No health benefits.

2.12.18 Public Transport

2.12.19 The general perception of respondents who were bus users was that public transport is unreliable and involves a lot of waiting around.

2.12.20 Key comments included the following:-

- *'Buses don't go where I want to go'*
- *'Need more routes'*
- *'More destinations'*
- *'Limits where you can live'*
- *'It limits where I can go'*
- *'It limits where I can work'*

2.12.21 Instances of buses driving past passengers waiting at the stops, especially at night and concerns over the safety on board buses were also raised including:-

- Overcrowding at peak times;
- Letting passengers stand in the bus;
- People falling over on the bus;
- Driving off before get chance to sit down;
- Drivers always in a rush;
- Pulling out in front of cars; and
- Stop thugs getting on.

2.12.22 Suggestions to improve personal safety and security of passengers on buses in the Borough included the re-introduction of bus conductors.

2.12.23 Similarly, suggestions also included improving the comfort of buses, improved courtesy from drivers, better information, discount tickets and lower fares.

2.12.24 Comments also included 'if public transport was better, cars would not be used as much,' that 'public transport would cut the traffic' and that 'you can get more people in a bus than in a car.'

2.12.25 A number of respondents cited specific routes that they had used and had experienced problems as follows:-

- Widnes to Manor Park/Daresbury;
- Runcorn to Whitehouse employment area for the evening shift;
- Widnes to Whiston hospital;
- Widnes to Warrington; and

- Runcorn Old Town to Warrington.

2.12.26 Evening and night time services in particular were criticised, comments included:-

- *'During day time services - they are quite regular'*
- *"Need later services'*
- *'So they can be used to go out'*
- *'Especially Fridays/weekends'*
- *'Would encourage me to use buses more/use car less/less drinking and driving'*

2.12.27 Trains

2.12.28 The times of trains were criticised as inconvenient. Other issues included the inaccessibility/lack of attractiveness of the train stations.

2.12.29 Summary of Key Bus Issues Arising From the Focus Group Consultation

2.12.30 Although great strides have been made to improve the quality of bus services within the Borough and have resulted in patronage growth, a number of key issues remain to be addressed including:-

- The bus network remains very traditional with services primarily focused on existing commercial and town centres;
- Communities in western Runcorn are relatively poorly served by local bus services compared to other comparable areas (stimulus to improve services is provided by a new Housing Growth Point proposal in western Runcorn);
- The Runcorn Busway is under utilised, requires upgrading in terms of information, signing and facilities, is perceived as unsafe in parts and the connections between Halton Lea north and south bus stations are poor;
- The northern section of the Runcorn Busway serving wards of high income deprivation in Castlefields and Windmill Hill is poorly served in the evenings;
- Bus services to peripheral employment areas remain relatively poor and difficult to sustain on a commercial basis due to relatively low passenger numbers and dispersed nature of journey patterns;
- In terms of factors mitigating against the use of buses, the public have concerns that the services are not as convenient and comfortable compared with car journeys, and frequencies are limited. Access and facilities at bus stops need improving and personal security is an issue;
- Bus services to new housing areas particularly Sandymoor (eastern Runcorn) and Upton Rocks (northern Widnes) remain relatively poor;
- There is evidence of oversupply and wasteful competition between the two main operators on the key Widnes – Hough Green – Wavertree – Liverpool City Centre corridor; and
- The bus network remains vulnerable to external operational influences in neighbouring areas particularly Merseyside.

2.13 ROAD SAFETY

2.13.1 A key concern in relation to transport is safety, particularly on roads. In 2000 the Government produced a safety Strategy entitled, 'Tomorrow's Roads Safer for Everyone,' (Reference 16). Key national targets were set within the Strategy for 2010 based on the average of 1994-1998 data as follows:-

- A 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents;
- A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured (aged under 16); and
- A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate.

2.13.2 Analysis and investigation of incidents on the SJB and on the northbound and southbound approaches has revealed that this route is a concern to the Council. Typical incidents have involved rear end shunts, misjudgement of speed or distance and vehicles colliding whilst changing lanes.

2.13.3 The high demand for travel, coupled with the physical limitations and carriageway arrangements, have resulted in the route continuing to incur casualties, despite remedial measures such as imposing 30/40 mph speed limits. It is recognised that there is no realistic chance of fully addressing this problem without utilising the opportunities afforded by the Project to rationalise and reduce demand and recast the role of the SJB to serve only local journeys.

2.14 FREIGHT (All MODES)

2.14.1 Freight distribution plays a major part in the Borough's economy. The White Paper on the Future of Transport: A Network for 2030 identified that efficient freight transport is essential to the economy and prosperity of the UK.

2.14.2 The recent work of Eddington (Reference 22), which is discussed in Section 3 confirms that transport is vital to the economy. He argues that reliability of transport networks, including international networks is a high priority for freight. Eddington's work highlighted the need to tackle delay and unreliability on the transport network as this has significant direct costs on people and businesses by increasing business costs and affecting productivity and innovation. It is therefore essential that the Council provides the necessary facilities to meet the demands of freight distribution and increased reliability to support this highly important component of the Borough's economy and its contribution to the Region and UK as a whole.

2.14.3 The Council, as part of a Greater Merseyside initiative, has undertaken a review of freight in the region, which is reported in both the Council's LTP and the LTP for Merseyside. The Merseyside Freight Study (Reference 36) was commissioned to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding freight with the aim of developing a long-term strategy and Action Plan to:-

- Promote future economic growth;
- Reduce accidents, health risks and environmental damage; and
- Be affordable, practical and capable of implementation.

2.14.4 The Council's overriding objective on freight is to assist economic regeneration with minimal environmental costs. Main areas of the freight strategy in terms of the MGSTS include:-

- The provision of the New Bridge crossing of the River within the Borough;
- Freight distribution sites to be located next to railway routes and docks where possible, and in all cases to be accessed by suitable roads;
- To implement road and junction improvements to assist HGV movements;
- To pursue the scheme to improve the Halton Curve;
- To ensure that site traffic generated from developments involving modal change has a minimal environmental impact;
- To liaise with the Highways Agency (HA) to assist with the implementation of motorway junction improvements and motorway signing; and
- Work with Network Rail to develop opportunities to get road freight onto rail.

2.15 Canals, Inland Waterways and Associated Infrastructure and Facilities

2.15.1 This section provides an overview of the provision of facilities for inland waterways within the Borough.

2.15.2 The Manchester Ship Canal passes along the south side of the Estuary, as shown in Figure 1.1 and provides passage for sea-going vessels of up to 15,000 tonnes. The canal also serves the Runcorn docks, which has road connections to the chemical, glass and pottery industries, and can cater for vessels up to 6,500 tonnes.

2.15.3 Runcorn Docks can only accommodate vessels up to 6,500 tonnes. However, the convenient road connections are invaluable for the industries located nearby. Seven million tonnes of freight per annum are transported by the Manchester Ship Canal (Reference 39), thereby reducing the impact on the local highway network. However, with a supporting policy framework this could be increased to 16 million tonnes per annum.

2.15.4 Current supportive Government policy includes:-

- A New Deal for Transport-Better for Everyone (July 1998) (Reference 18);
- A Better Quality of Life a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK (May 1999) (Reference 19); and
- Waterways for Tomorrow (June 2000 Reference 20).

2.15.5 The River Weaver Canal runs to the south of Runcorn and connects with the Manchester Ship Canal as shown on Figure 1.1. The River Weaver Canal can only accommodate smaller sea vessels up to 1,000 tonnes and therefore with ships becoming larger, this canal has less potential for development. Traditional canals of up to 50 tonnes capacity cannot be expected to have any significant freight future.

2.15.6 The Bridgewater Canal runs along the eastern boundary of the Borough within Runcorn as shown on Figure 1.1. This canal has a branch from the Murdishaw Marina to Runcorn Town Centre via Norton, Windmill Hill and Castlefields. The Runcorn branch of the canal

used to be connected through to the Runcorn Docks system, however, this link was severed in the 1960's with the construction of the various spur roads and infrastructure linked to the SJB.

2.15.7 This canal is now used as a leisure cruising facility. As part of the MGRS for Runcorn discussed in Section 4, it is proposed that subject to further detailed engineering feasibility work and evaluation that this canal connection is reinstated between Runcorn Old Town and Runcorn Docks and the Manchester Ship Canal.

2.15.8 The St Helens Canal, commencing near West Bank runs eastwards on the north side of the Estuary. This canal is currently used as a small marina at Spike Island but is only navigable for a short length due to the presence of a low wooden footbridge just upstream of Spike Island. It also retains a significant leisure role, with the towpath providing the route for the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 for walkers and cyclists.

2.15.9 Many of these key routes are now classified as multi user routes such as NCN 62 as discussed above, and serve as significant leisure attractions. As part of the MGSTS efforts will be made to utilise key links as important local sustainable transport corridors through:-

- The greater promotion of the links with improved signage;
- Infrastructure improvements to better link the routes with the existing walking, cycling and public transport networks at key nodes;
- Further public realm improvements along the banks in line with the quality already provided along the Trans Pennine Trial NCN 62 (section between Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry power station); and

2.15.10 Key Canal and Waterway Opportunities

2.15.11 The following opportunities have been identified:-

- With focused attention there is the potential to better integrate the inland waterway and canal network with walking, cycling and public transport networks;
- The need for infrastructure improvements to better link the routes with the existing walking, cycling and public transport networks at key nodes;
- The need for public realm improvements along the banks, in line with the quality provision already provided along the Trans Pennine Trial NCN 62 (the section between Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry Power Station); and
- There is potential to introduce a new waterbus service linking Runcorn Old Town Centre to the Murdishaw basin providing a leisure service linking key communities in Castlefields, Windmill Hill and Norton (stops at Astmoor, Castlefields north (Bridgewater Day Centre), Castlefields (The Barge), Phoenix Park (for Norton Priory), Windmill Hill, Norton and Murdishaw Basin. This service could also potentially serve the Runcorn Collegiate site, which is proposed to be constructed in the Murdishaw area and the Daresbury SIC.

2.15.12 Rail Freight and the 3MG Site

2.15.13 In order to reduce road freight and congestion within the Borough there would need to be a substantial increase in the use of rail freight. There are two freight only lines within the Borough which could restrict growth of rail freight.

2.15.14 The line from Ditton to Arpley in Warrington is important for trans-modal railway freight, as it serves the 3MG development site shown on Figure 1.1. The second line runs from Runcorn railway station to the industrial sites at Runcorn and Weston Point docks, adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal shown on Figure 1.1.

2.15.15 Ditton has also been identified by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) as a strategic regional site. The Council, which is one of the key partners in 3MG, endorsed the Masterplan for the site in December 2004.

2.15.16 The programme will realise the potential for developing a major new rail/road freight handling and logistics park at Ditton covering approximately 180 hectares. It will build upon the established assets of the location to create a sustainable 21st century freight park which is a flagship for the region and which will create up to 5,000 new jobs.

2.15.17 3MG will support a number of local, regional and strategic objectives regarding the sustainable movement of goods and materials, as outlined in the Government's Transport White Paper, the North West Regional Freight Strategy and in the Council's LTP.

2.15.18 The transfer of freight from road to rail will help to reduce congestion as well as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions with a typical freight train transporting the equivalent of around 50 lorry journeys. Landscaping and environmental improvements will be achieved through the implementation of a landscaping strategy. This will mitigate any potentially negative environmental implications and include the creation of landscaped 'buffer zones.' In addition, areas of land currently classified as Brownfield will be comprehensively remediated, resulting in a great overall improvement to the environmental quality of the area.

2.15.19 The Ditton site has many advantages which make it ideal for a freight hub within the North West's developing freight network as follows:-

- Bringing back into use extensive areas of derelict and contaminated land;
- Existing access onto the West Coast Main Line Liverpool branch and the Halton curve;
- Direct rail access to Warrington via the Garston to Timperley railway route which also connects the Borough to Fiddlers Ferry power station;
- Site expansion may be achieved by the incorporation of new development land;
- The opportunity to create a new direct access onto the motorway network; and
- Daily rail links to deep sea ports and the Channel Tunnel.

2.15.20 Road Haulage

2.15.21 Road haulage allows operators ease of access into the freight market as they do not have relatively high infrastructure costs compared with, for example, railway operators.

2.15.22 As identified in the Council's LTP, the largest single issue in relation to road freight is the congestion on the SJB. The proposal for the New Bridge, which provides three lanes of traffic in each direction should assist in alleviating localised congestion and associated costly delays.

2.15.23 Air Freight

2.15.24 Liverpool John Lennon Airport lies close to the western side of the Borough and currently handles around 15,000 tonnes of freight per year (Reference 9). The Airport benefits from being able to cater for night flights, an essential feature of air cargo capability.

2.15.25 The World Freight Terminal at Manchester Airport is accessed from the Borough and other parts of the City Region by the M56 Motorway. It currently handles over 140,000 tonnes of freight per year (Reference 9).

2.15.26 Freight Issues

2.15.27 Freight distribution accounts for 11% of the Borough's GDP and 16% employment (Reference 9). 'The largest single issue in relation to road freight is the congestion on the SJB and the need for a new crossing of the River. The congestion on the SJB is recognised by the Council in the LTP as a constraint on the operation and development of freight movements within the Borough.

2.16 MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

2.16.1 The Council received national recognition for the work it has carried out on mobility management over the past 10 years, twice receiving Beacon Council status in 2005/6 for better public transport and in 2008/9 for 'Improved Accessibility,' as a joint bid with Merseytravel and the Merseyside authorities. This has been based on an integrated approach to delivering transport/accessibility improvements including the Council's Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT).

2.16.2 The Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT)

2.16.3 The NTT was formed in August 2002 and is based within the Council's Transport Coordination Section.

2.16.4 Currently, the NTT provides a range of services that are designed to improve people's ability to travel into, out of and around the Borough and focuses on promoting and supporting travel change and Smarter Choices. These services are available to anyone living or working within the Borough and currently include working with employers and businesses to promote alternative 'green' travel arrangements for example a car-share database. Key activities are listed below:-

- Working with new and existing business, to develop local travel plans in line with the Council's LTP 2;
- Personalised journey planning service available upon request;
- Freephone travel enquiry line;
- Holding travel surgeries on partner premises and within the community;
- The dissemination of transport and travel information to the community and employers;
- Conducting travel surveys with local communities and employers;

- Feeding back to the Council's transport coordination team with the findings from travel surveys and surgeries;

- Producing and distributing travel information leaflets;

- Providing discounted taxis through the "Links to Work" scheme for people unable to reach their place of employment by conventional public transport; and

- Delivering 'Travel Training' for key socially excluded members of the community.

2.16.5 Using their local experience, the NTT has raised a number of issues of concern as part of the development of the MGSTS:-

- Persistent problems associated with the low mobility and localised travel horizons of households living in low-income communities across the Borough. Specific interventions continue to be needed to improve access to key facilities such as fresh food, education, health, training, and employment opportunities;

- High public transport fares, especially for short journeys, recognising that the majority of local bus journeys within the Borough are less than 2.5 miles, and that a typical single journey costs between £1.40 to £1.70. Furthermore, the 'cash' fare single for a typical local cross-river bus journey between Runcorn (Halton Lea) and Widnes is currently £2.30;

- Lack of attractive local bus service links to key employment areas on the edge of the urban area, made increasingly difficult to provide due to flexible working patterns;

- Inaccessible infrastructure preventing people with limited mobility in accessing key public transport services and facilities across the Borough; and

- Lack of information/knowledge of the network of sustainable travel choices.

2.16.6 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and Signage

2.16.7 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) displays are in operation at key stops on routes 14, 17 and 61 between Hough Green and Widnes town centre, and Farnworth and Widnes town centre, as well as at key stops within Runcorn. This system was introduced and developed as part of a partnership between the Council, Halton Transport Ltd and Merseytravel.

2.16.8 One of the key passenger benefits of RTPI systems is that they give passengers confidence that buses are operating and are going to turn up even though route 14 is a high frequency service.

2.16.9 Intelligent traffic signage systems that provide variable messages are in place on the SJB to provide motorists with advance information on lane closures. This system is linked into the HA's variable message signing, which covers a wide area of the strategic motorway network incorporating the M6, M62 and M56.

2.16.10 Key RTPI and ITS Issues are as follows:-

- Lack of integration between RTPI and systems for sustainable modes for example between bus and railway services at stations such as Runcorn;

- Lack of a comprehensive system displaying the times of all buses serving the route, regardless of operator. This can lead to confusion and a lack of confidence in the system for the intending passenger;

- Lack of RTPI on low frequency bus routes;

- Lack of RTPI at off line locations such as key employments sites, major retail stores and health and leisure facilities; and

- Lack of RTPI at key stops on the Runcorn Busway such as Murdishaw, Astmoor, Halton Hospital, and Runcorn East.

2.17 CONCLUSION

2.17.1 Section 2 has considered the historical development and provision of transport infrastructure and services within the Borough and has identified a wide range of transport related issues. These issues are summarised below. Addressing them will be key to the Project. Section 4 details how these have influenced the development of the MGSTS.

2.17.2 Demographics

- Although there have been some recent modest improvements, overall the Borough remains a relatively deprived area;

- Despite this improvement, the Borough has seen an increase in the number of wards ranked in the top 3% most deprived areas of England;

- Generally, car availability within the Borough is lower than the average for England. There are several wards with very high percentages of residents with no access to cars or vans;

- Demand for employees is forecast to significantly outstrip the available local labour supply by 2020; and

- Almost half of the Travel to Work journeys within the Borough is less than 5 kilometres.

2.17.3 Public transport

- Although rail services within the Borough are generally good for journeys to neighbouring centres (except for links to St Helens), there appears to be significant potential to grow the demand for rail travel;

- There is little opportunity for intra-borough rail travel and a lack of connectivity between the rail routes limits journey opportunities. The Borough's railway stations currently suffer from poor passenger perceptions of security and accessibility, with limited staffing, restricted P&R provision and poor integration with the bus network;

- Bus use in the Borough is strong and appears to be relatively stable, but comparative Travel to Work statistics suggest that there could be considerable scope to grow the demand for bus travel, especially for journeys to and from work;

- The Borough enjoys a substantial network of high quality, high frequency, accessible bus services, operated commercially during the weekday daytime. However, during the evenings and on Sundays the network coverage deteriorates

significantly, with the Council required to financially support the majority of services;

- Despite good accessibility to services and high service levels, perceptions of bus services remain poor – but especially amongst non-users, concerned with quality and security issues. Addressing these negative perceptions will remain a key challenge;

- Bus services directly serving the Industrial zones are limited, both in terms of coverage and periods of operation;

- There is a strong and successful Community Transport sector within the Borough, (Neighbourhood Transport Team) with the potential to be further integrated into the overall public transport network; and

- Whilst cross-boundary bus links to Liverpool and Warrington are good, there are significant gaps in the links offered to other neighbouring towns.

2.17.4 Infrastructure

- The Runcorn Busway is a unique asset, whose potential should be further developed. The Runcorn Busway currently suffers from poor passenger perceptions, relating to personal safety security, lighting, infrastructure, signage and service levels; and

- The Quality Bus Corridor programme has seen substantial improvements on a number of core routes. The SJB offers the opportunity create a Quality Corridor between Runcorn and Widnes.

2.17.5 Cycling, Walking and Equestrian provision

- The Borough has a well defined network of routes for cycling – especially in Runcorn, but there remain some significant gaps in provision. There is considerable potential to encourage greater use of the cycle for short journeys within the Borough;

- The SJB offers the opportunity to create a new cross-river cycle link to join up the existing long distance cycle routes;

- There are significant opportunities to develop additional recreational and utility cycle routes, especially within Widnes and links into St Helens and Knowsley.

- Opportunities would be created to enhance pedestrian routes between Runcorn and Widnes and on both banks of the Mersey. In particular, walking routes to West Bank, 3MG and between Runcorn Old Town and Runcorn Station could be significantly improved; and

- The opportunity would be created to examine the provision of bridleway and equestrian facilities as part of the enhanced cross river facilities.

2.17.6 Road Safety

- The Project offers the opportunity to reassign traffic to the strategic route, and designate the existing SJB route for local traffic. This will provide further opportunities to introduce safety measures on the route.

2.17.7 Freight

- The MG project offers the catalyst for the freight Strategy across the Borough and further development of the 3MG site.

2.17.8 Waterways

- Opportunities exist to enhance the use of the waterways and towpaths in the Borough for recreational and leisure use.

- The potential for reopening the Runcorn branch of the Bridgewater Canal will be explored as part of the remodelling of the area approaching the SJB.

2.17.9 Smarter Choices

- The work of the NTT is recognised and the MGSTS would seek to further this in the delivery of Smarter Choices activities to promote sustainable travel and encourage greater consideration of mode choices and awareness of alternatives.

3 NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 It is important at the outset to set out the Government's agenda and thinking in relation to sustainable transport and economic growth beyond the period of the Council's LTP (Reference 1).

3.1.2 This section therefore sets the scene in terms of the wider transportation and planning policies, strategies and frameworks at the national, regional and local levels. It therefore provides an overview of the key issues that need to be addressed by the MGSTS in order to demonstrate consistency with current thinking and approaches to the delivery of sustainable transport. This is particularly pertinent following the publication of 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System' (TaSTS) Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World, DfT (Reference 21). The Government are currently consulting on the transport goals, challenges and processes involved in taking TaSTS forward, and have issued the 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) document, which sets out how regions can influence Government decision making on transport investment from 2014 onwards. The consultation ends on 27 February 2009.

3.1.3 TaSTS is a very important discussion document, particularly in the context of the MGSTS, that sets out the Government's response to the following landmark reviews and studies relating to economic development and sustainability:-

- Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (October 2006); and
- The Eddington Transport Study - The Case for Action (Reference 22). The document also assesses how the recommendations of these reports can be translated into the Government's short, medium and long-term policy making process

3.1.4 The key conclusions of the Stern Review are very much focussed on developing strategies and interventions that can help to combat climate change, recognising the significant and highly detrimental impact this could have on the UK's economy if no action is taken. The Stern review recognises, however, that there is still time to avoid the worst impacts.

3.1.5 TaSTS recognises that the Stern Review 'is not about sacrificing all economic growth to reduce CO_2, but about tackling climate change in the most cost-effective way possible in order to achieve future economic and social objectives.' There are clear parallels here with the Project as it is not simply about providing additional highway capacity, but is central to the social, economic and environmental aspirations of the Borough. The MGRS confirms the potential wider impact of the Project on these matters and its role in stimulating regeneration in five areas of the Borough. Importantly, the proposals to charge drivers on the New Bridge and the SJB will enable better management of car based trips, and help to encourage greater use of less polluting forms of transport.

3.1.6 The Eddington Study was written recognising the government's commitment to sustainable development. It provides advice on the long term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability.

The headline conclusions of the Eddington Report in the context of the MGSTS include the following:-

- Provision of the right transport connections to the right places;

- Good transport systems support the productivity of urban areas; and
- Strategic economic priorities for long-term transport policy should be the growing and congested urban areas and their catchments.

3.1.7 TaSTS identifies 5 broad goals for the Government's agenda as follows:-

- Maximise the competitiveness and productivity of the economy;
- Address climate change by cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases;
- Protect people's safety, security and wealth;
- Improve quality of life, and promote the development of healthy natural environments; and
- Promote greater equality of opportunity.

3.1.8 TaSTS emphasises the importance of making best use of existing networks and improving their performance. The Borough has a long established, highly developed transport network and associated facilities and infrastructure. A key emphasis and focus of TaSTS is on treating the most unreliable, congested and crowded sections of highway to improve end-to-end journey times, for example, trips across the SJB at peak times. This is particularly important for travel to work, domestic and international business trips, as well as the movement of goods and raw and finished materials. Removing delays at bottlenecks, such as the SJB, improves journey time reliability and, hence, makes businesses more competitive.

3.1.9 Proposals to reduce congestion, promote more sustainable development, and facilitate high levels of accessibility and permeability by sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport should facilitate reductions in greenhouse gases. In relation to motorised transport there are opportunities to introduce new low emission or zero emission public transport vehicles to operate services across the network within the Borough, and surrounding areas.

3.1.10 Protecting people's safety and security is a key issue on the Government's agenda. It is an issue that can actively deter people from using sustainable transport services and facilities unless it can be adequately addressed through safety and security interventions.

3.1.11 There is a strong relationship between issues relating to promoting accessibility and permeability and the design and development of the urban realm. Making interchanges and bus stops more visible and generating activity is one of a number of ways of addressing safety and security issues and instilling more people's confidence in the sustainable modes of transport.

3.1.12 In general, transport's negative impacts on the quality of life can include noise, vibration and intrusion all of which can undermine people's well-being. However, transport also has very powerful benefits, which people value very highly such as the ability to visit friends and relatives, to enjoy the open space and be able to easily access jobs, shops and health and leisure facilities.

3.1.13 People's expectations of comfort, convenience, quality of service, and speed and accuracy of information are increasing, and the government is keen to see that authorities, such as the Council, can adequately respond to these expectations through

its extensive community connections and stakeholder engagement.

3.1.14 From the Council's perspective the Project facilitates an opportunity to provide step change improvements to restore and uplift the biodiversity and landscape of large areas of the River estuary.

3.1.15 Ensuring that our transport systems provide effective access for everyone, and in particular for disadvantaged groups and disabled people, to jobs, services and social networks is a core aim of transport policy. These factors are embedded in the Council's general approach to transport provision, and are largely delivered through the services of its Neighbourhood Travel Team.

3.1.16 Looking at transport's wider impacts, people's life-chances can vary hugely between regions, and there are pockets of income deprivation in even the most affluent of areas in the UK.

3.1.17 What is particularly significant, is that the Borough is currently ranked 30th in Government's ranking of deprivation, which indicates that it suffers disproportionately from high levels of social deprivation (Reference 7).

3.1.18 A number of the wards in the Borough that exhibit these characteristics lie close to the SJB and the core bus, cycle and pedestrian networks. In order to reduce social exclusion, the MGSTS advocates a highly targeted Action Plan to enhance accessibility.

3.1.19 The TaSTS White Paper follows on closely from the previous White Paper 'The Future of Transport,' which was published by the DfT in July 2004 (Reference 17). This sets out a vision for the transport network and future transport investment up to 2030, and seeks to develop a coherent transport system through investment in the following:-

- Road Network to provide a more reliable and freer flowing service for both personal travel and freight, with people able to make informed choices about how and when they travel;
- Railway Network providing a fast, reliable and efficient service, particularly for inter-urban journeys;
- Bus services which are reliable, flexible, convenient and meet local needs;
- Walking and cycling-making these modes a real alternative for local trips; and
- Ports and airports providing improved international and domestic links.

3.1.20 Transport Bill 2008

In late 2008 the new Transport Act gained Royal Ascent. This will give local authorities important new powers to improve the quality of local bus services, reform the arrangements for local transport governance in the major conurbations and enable councils to take decisions on local road pricing schemes. Therefore the new Transport Act seeks to provide a clearer spectrum of options for local authorities consisting of:-

- Voluntary agreements;
- Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS); and
- Quality Contracts.

3.1.21 Changes also being introduced by the new Transport Act will mean that the QPS may also impose additional new restrictions relating to the subsequent registration of new bus services or the amendment/withdrawal of existing services within the area covered by the QPS. The aim of this new provision is to:-

- Prevent the introduction of new services which might undermine services also specified and provided under the QPS; and
- Preclude the entry of operators who are unwilling to operate services to the prescribed quality standards as set out in the QPS.

3.1.22 The new regulations would also empower local authorities to specify key dates for bus service registration changes as part of a QPS, hence ensuring greater stability to local bus markets. However, the DfT make clear that it remains the responsibility of the Traffic Commissioners to ultimately decide as to whether a bus service meets the quality criteria as set out in a QPS. Under such circumstances the normal 56 day notification period on bus service registration change is suspended and replaced by a decision taken by the Traffic Commissioner as to a practical start date for a new service, or amendment to an existing one, based on the nature of the QPS.

3.1.23 The new draft regulations also specify a procedure for the review of timings, frequencies and maximum fares under a QPS. The draft guidelines state that maximum fares must be reviewed at least every 12 months, however no such review period is stipulated for timings and fares.

3.1.24 A QPS cannot include tour services inter urban services, community bus services or school buses. Local authority subsidised services should be included in the QPS.

3.1.25 It is suggested that the local transport authority should establish a robust governance process for monitoring the scheme with all of the local partners such as a Local Partnership Board

3.1.26 Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment) Order 2009

3.1.27 In October 2008 the Government published consultation on the Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment) Order 2009 (Reference 42). The proposals are designed to take forward the key findings of the Gallagher Review including the proposal that the rate of increase of the Renewal Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) be slowed to reach 5% in 2013/14 rather than 2010/11, with two new types of bio fuels namely biobutanol, and hydrogenated renewable diesel, to be included within the list of fuels eligible under the RTFO.

3.1.28 **Climate Change Act 2008**

3.1.29 The UK Government is committed to addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change and has therefore passed a Climate Change Act 2008 (Reference 43). It will create a new approach to managing and responding to climate change in the UK through the following:-

- Setting ambitious targets;
- Taking powers to help achieve them;
- Strengthening the institutional framework;

- Enhancing the UK's ability to adapt to the impact of climate change; and
- Establishing clear and regular accountability to the UK, Parliament and devolved legislatures.

3.1.30 Key provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 include the following:-

- **Legally binding targets -** Green house gas emission reductions through action in the UK and abroad of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO_2 emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline. The 2020 target will be reviewed soon after Royal Assent to reflect the move to all greenhouse gases and the increase in the 2050 target to 80%;
- **A carbon budgeting system -** which caps emissions over five year periods, with three budgets set at a time, to set out our trajectory to 2050. The first three carbon budgets will run from 2008-12, 2013-17 and 2018-22, and must be set by 1 June 2009. The Government must report to Parliament its policies and proposals to meet the budgets as soon as practical after that; and
- **The creation of the Committee on Climate Change -** a new independent, expert body to advise government on the level of carbon budgets and where cost effective savings could be made. The Committee will submit annual reports to Parliament on the UK's progress towards targets and budgets to which the government must respond, thereby ensuring transparency and accountability on an annual basis.

3.2 The Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP)

3.2.1 The Council's transport policies, strategies and implementation programmes are contained within its LTP (Reference 1). This Plan has been assessed by the DfT and graded as being 'Excellent'.

3.2.2 The Council's LTP has also been the subject of an SEA.

3.2.3 The overarching objective of the LTP is:

> **'The delivery of a SMART sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system and infrastructure that seeks to improve the quality of life for people living in Halton by encouraging economic growth and regeneration, and the protection and enhancement of the historic, natural and human environment.'**

3.2.4 The plan is structured around the four-shared priorities for transport, which were agreed by local and central government. The objectives and summarised issues associated with each priority that are relevant to the Project are described below.

3.2.5 Tackling Congestion

Objectives

- To address and manage both local and strategic travel demand to ensure that the area's regeneration needs are met;
- To develop a sustainable and integrated transport system that meets the social, economic and environmental needs of residents living in the Borough; and
- To manage and maintain the highway network to minimise congestion and delay.

3.2.6 The major and overriding congestion problem identified in LTP2 is experienced on the approaches to the SJB. The SJB performs both a local function linking Widnes and Runcorn as well as a strategic role for the region. However, as the Council progresses its regeneration, a number of key junctions, as well as parts of the town centres are experiencing increasing levels of congestion at peak periods. Congestion Hotspots include A56 Chester Road/A558 Eastern Expressway roundabout, the Widnes Eastern Relief Road/Fiddlers Ferry Road junction and the A557 approach to the M56 Junction 12.

3.2.7 Delivering Accessibility

Objective:

- To resolve problems experienced by socially excluded communities, when accessing key services, and enhance life chances and employment opportunities.

3.2.8 The Council has developed extensive and detailed information on the accessibility of services and facilities in relation to local residents, networks and services. As part of its LTP, the Council has developed a comprehensive bus strategy, which addresses key accessibility issues. The bus strategy focuses on addressing the following matters, which have been identified as being important, in delivering increased travel on buses:-

- Network reliability;
- Accessibility;
- Permeability;
- Accurate information;
- Safe and accessible facilities and infrastructure;
- Affordable services;
- Minimum levels of service to communities across the network;
- Travel training;
- Coordinating different vehicle fleets;
- Stakeholder involvement to develop the network, services and facilities; and
- Improved access to Health facilities in the Borough.

3.2.9 These factors have also been recognised in the preparation of the MGSTS and as such have been incorporated in its development.

3.2.10 Safer Roads

Objectives:

- To minimise the incidence of personal injury road crashes within the Borough, through a combination of targeted physical measures and preventative road safety education and training initiatives.

3.2.11 The Council's Safer Roads strategy is based on a holistic and balanced approach utilising engineering, education, training, publicity, and enforcement techniques. Measures are generally targeted at specific problems, which are identified through extensive analysis of road casualty data.

3.2.12 An ongoing casualty hotspot problem exists on the SJB, where due to the high vehicular demand, substandard carriageway width and constrained highway arrangement, road casualties continue to occur on a regular basis. Attempts have been made to address the problem in the past with limited success. It is now recognised that the only realistic opportunity to successfully resolve this problem is through reducing the demand to travel on the SJB and simplifying its role to just a local route. Both of these measures will be achieved by the Project.

3.2.13 Better Air quality

Objectives

- To address air quality issues which have an impact on health and the environment, through management of travel demand and the provision and encouragement of environmentally sustainable travel choices.

3.2.14 There are known linkages between high levels of air pollution and health. In the short term, high levels of pollution can result in increased hospital admissions for people whose health is vulnerable to pollution. Exposure to pollutants, such as fine particles, over several years, may also contribute towards a reduced life expectancy. In addition, of course, there is a growing concern about the contribution that vehicle emissions make to the problem of greenhouse gases.

3.2.15 Locally, increased congestion on the highway network has resulted in two areas of the Borough being at risk of exceeding air quality objectives (Reference 4). The two areas are:-

- Deacon Rd (NO_2); and
- Milton Road (NO_2).

3.2.16 Should the concentration of pollutants at these sites fail to meet the air quality objectives, then the Council will be required to declare an Air Quality Management Area, (AQMA) and Action Plan for each area, to reduce the levels of pollutants.

3.2.17 The MGSTS has an important part to play in reducing vehicle emissions by encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

3.2.18 The MGSTS also seeks to bring forward measures to support proposals being advanced by the EU and the UK Government to develop local initiatives promoting alternative 'green' fuels. In particular careful attention will be taken of the Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment Order) 2009, which sets revised targets for the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), and encourages the potential use of a wider range of biofuels including biobutanol and hydrogenated renewable diesel for powering motorised road vehicles. The public transport improvements being proposed as part of the MGSTS will seek to utilise 'green fuels' as far as possible.

3.3 Transport Policies of Neighbouring Authorities

3.3.1 Recognising the close links that the Council has with its neighbouring authorities and the wider strategic impacts that the Project is expected to deliver, particularly in relation to sustainable transport, it is important to consider the LTP policies of neighbouring authorities.

3.3.2 Cheshire County Council

3.3.3 Within the context of the four shared Government/Local Authority priorities of congestion, accessibility, safety and air quality, Cheshire County Council (Cheshire CC) has identified the following objectives:-

- Enhance the quality of life of those who live, work or visit Cheshire;
- Promote social inclusion and accessibility to everyday services for all, especially those without access to a car;
- Promote the integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a improved and more efficient public transport system;
- Contribute to an efficient economy and to support sustainable economic growth and regeneration in appropriate locations; and
- Manage a well maintained and efficient transport network.

3.3.4 Cheshire CC responded to the MGSTS stakeholder consultation discussed in Section4. This was held during September and October 2008. A summary of the response from the Council to Cheshire CC, and suggested changes to the MGSTS following the stakeholder consultation, can found in Appendix B, set out as issue numbers 20, 21 and 22.

3.3.5 Warrington Borough Council

3.3.6 Warrington Borough Council (Warrington BC) is working on a coordinated strategy to meet the following objectives:-

- Enhance and protect the environment of Warrington BC:
- Improve safety, personal security and health;
- To contribute to an efficient economy and to support sustainable economic growth in Warrington;
- Improve accessibility and mobility in Warrington BC;
- To promote the integration of all forms of transport and land use planning; and
- Improve the quality of life, transport system, and reduce social exclusion and poverty in the borough.

3.3.7 Warrington BC responded to the MGSTS stakeholder consultation discussed in Section 4. This was held during September and October 2008. A summary of the response from the Council to Warrington BC, and suggested changes to the MGSTS following the stakeholder consultation, can found in Appendix B, set out as issue numbers 23 and 24.

3.3.8 Merseyside Local Authorities

3.3.9 The Merseyside Local Authorities which comprise Liverpool City Council, St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council (St Helens MBC), Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Knowsley MBC), Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (Sefton MBC) and Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (Wirral MBC) state the following set of objectives in their LTP's as follows:

- Provide appropriate infrastructure to improve the capacity and efficiency of the network and support the economic growth areas;
- Provide access for all to provide better links to employment, education and health;
- Manage demand to ensure that roads do not become congested and affect the efficient movement of public transport and freight;
- Protect/enhance the environment by taking positive measures to reduce the effects of travel demand;
- Support a healthier community by addressing air and noise problems caused by traffic and promote cycling and walking; and
- Make best use of existing resources by ensuring an efficient maintenance regime.

3.3.10 The Merseyside LTP (Reference 34) specifically supports the development of schemes to improve access to the port and Liverpool Airport and the creation of a Super Port.

3.3.11 The Liverpool Super Port is a major strategic and economic initiative being taken forward by the Merseyside Partnership. The Council is a member of the operational group for the Merseyside Partnership.

3.3.12 At national level, the Port of Liverpool is encouraging the UK Government to recognise the value and potential benefit of ports to offer modal shift opportunities to their regionally immediate hinterlands and prioritise spending on road and rail schemes to foster this. Such schemes include:-

- Re-instatement of the Halton Curve to enhance accessibility from North Wales into Merseyside that would particularly increase the catchment of Liverpool Airport;
- Construction of the Mersey Gateway Project; and
- Re-development of dockland areas adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal similar to the Seine-Nord European canal project.

3.3.13 The Merseyside Authorities who responded to the MGSTS stakeholder consultation in September and October 2008 were Liverpool City Council and Merseytravel who provided a response as the transport planning authority for Merseyside and its five districts.

3.3.14 A summary of the response to Liverpool City Council from the Council, and suggested changes to the MGSTS, can found in Appendix B set out as issue number 25, and for Merseytravel as issues 29-36.

3.4 Key Spatial Planning Documents - National Spatial Policy Framework

3.4.1 This section includes a high level review of key national, regional and local planning policy and Strategy frameworks considered relevant to the MGSTS.

3.4.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development

3.4.3 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development (Reference 23) sets out the Government's overarching planning policies for the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

3.4.4 Key principles set out in PPS1 place responsibility on regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change through policies which achieve the following:-

- Reductions in the use of energy;
- Reduced emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development, which reduce the need to travel by car, or reduce the impact of moving freight);
- Promote the development of renewable energy resources; and
- Take climate change impacts into account in the location and design of new development.

3.4.5 This has placed a responsibility on the Council, through its Local Development Framework (LDF), discussed below, to enhance the environment as part of development proposals. This means that significant impacts on the environment have to be avoided. Furthermore, those alternative options that might reduce or eliminate those impacts must be taken forward.

3.4.6 PPS 1 states that reducing the need to travel is highly appropriate to supporting sustainable development. The planning process adopted by the Council should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport, and focus development in existing centres near to major public transport interchanges, for example, in Widnes and Runcorn.

3.4.7 Planning Policy Statement - Planning and Climate Change, Supplement to PPS1 (DCLG, 2007)

3.4.8 Key Planning Objectives set out in this PPS (Reference 24) that are highly relevant to the MGSTS are to provide spatial strategies that:-

- Deliver patterns of urban growth and sustainable rural developments that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; and, which overall, reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

3.4.9 Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) June 2008

3.4.10 The recently reissued PPS12 (Reference 25) reiterates the key role of local spatial planning which is closely aligned to Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) developed by Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's). The Local Government White Paper seeks to encourage local authorities to ensure that:-

- Their SCS takes full account of spatial, economic, social and environmental issues;
- Key spatial planning objectives for the area are set out in the LDF Core Strategy and are in harmony with SCS priorities; and
- The LAA as the delivery agreement with central Government is based on the priorities of the SCS and supported by local planning policy to deliver the outcomes agreed.

3.4.11 Each local planning authority should produce a Core Strategy which includes:-

- An overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop;
- Strategic objectives for the area focusing on the key issues to be addressed;
- A delivery strategy for achieving these objectives that should set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered, and locations for strategic development should be indicated on a key diagram; and
- Clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

3.4.12 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13: Transport (March 2001)

3.4.13 A key objective of PPG13 is to integrate planning and transport at a national, regional, strategic and local level and to promote more sustainable transport choices both for carrying people and for moving freight. The aim of this approach is to:-

- Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

3.4.14 Regional Spatial Planning Framework: North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS 2008)

3.4.15 From the regional perspective, the recently adopted North West Regional Spatial Strategy RSS 2008 (Reference 27) focuses heavily on the need to increase the contribution towards the movement of people, goods and services by sustainable modes including road based transport, railways, waterways, walking and cycling.

3.4.16 Key objectives and outcomes of the RSS that are highly relevant to the MGSTS include the following:-

- Support economic growth and business competitiveness, tackle congestion and improve journey time reliability;
- Support regeneration and reduce social exclusion, integrate transport networks within, to and between the North West's city regions, and between these city regions and others in the north;
- Improve surface access, in particular to Liverpool and Manchester airports and the Port of Liverpool, to underpin the gateway functions;

- Introduce an integrated range of measures to manage travel demand and encourage a shift from the car to more sustainable modes of transport;

- Improve the public realm in the North West's regional centres, regional towns and cities and key tourist destinations;

- Enhance accessibility by developing integrated transport networks based on hubs at key service centres in order to support regeneration, reduce social exclusion and encourage sustainable tourism in rural areas;

- Community transport and demand responsive transport services should improve access to employment, services and facilities, particularly in rural areas where traditional commercial bus services are less likely to be financially viable and revenue support opportunities are limited for example, east Runcorn and employment areas around Daresbury;

- Develop a structured framework and improve region's highway network to reduce the wider environmental, social, health and quality of life impacts of road transport and infrastructure; and

- Facilitate opportunities for increasing the movement of freight by railway and on water.

3.4.17 A key component of the Project is to address the issues of network integrity, which, amongst other things, will help strengthen and improve business performance as well as provide a platform for delivering high levels of reliability and regularity on the bus network. This is important in helping to promote growth in patronage in line with parallel integrated strategies.

3.4.18 By the nature of its location at a key crossing and gateway, the Borough has always provided a platform for facilitating transport connections. Residents of the Borough have a close affinity and association with Merseyside. Hence, it is vitally important that transport connections by bus and railway between the Borough and this important region are maintained and strengthened.

3.4.19 The North West Regional Spatial Strategy (September 2008)

3.4.20 The recently adopted North West Regional Spatial Strategy replaces the old Regional Planning Guidance 13 (RPG13), and forms part of the statutory development plan for the Borough.

3.4.21 Liverpool City Region Development Programme

3.4.22 The Council is one of a group of local authorities comprising the Liverpool City Region. It is also a member of the operational group of the Merseyside Partnership, which was responsible for creating the Liverpool City Region and its development programme. The operational group also includes Merseytravel.

3.4.23 The opportunities identified in the development programme and which underpin the strategy for the Liverpool City Region include the following, which are particularly applicable to the borough and the MGSTS:-

- The improved connectivity between the key centres of the City Region and with the Manchester City Region and the Midlands, which will result from the New Bridge;

- The City Region's developments in science and innovation including Daresbury SIC within the Borough;

- The stable and strong economies of Cheshire and North Wales including Vale Royal and Weaver Valley, containing knowledge economy businesses, research, development and manufacturing;

- The potential that Liverpool Airport provides as a resource for the Borough's business and community to access UK and overseas markets; and

- The City Region's considerable, as yet unused, capacity for expansion in the form of land released by the decline of manufacturing in past decades. This includes the land that represents a legacy from the chemical industry. This industry used to dominate Widnes and Runcorn, for example, land adjoining West Bank and land in east Widnes.

3.5 LOCAL SPATIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

3.5.1 Halton's Unitary Development Plan (Adopted April 2005).

3.5.2 The saved policies of the UDP (Reference 2) represent the Council's adopted statutory development plan.

3.5.3 The UDP sets out an extensive range of aims and objectives across all policy areas for sustainable transport and land use within the Borough. The aims are:-

- To provide an efficient and effective land use pattern and transport infrastructure, which will reduce overall demand for travel and allow improved accessibility by a variety of transport modes;

- To develop safe, efficient and inclusive integrated transport systems and infrastructure that encourage sustainable economic growth and regeneration;

- To promote a new sustainable crossing of the River; and

- To encourage increased use of walking and cycling as modes of transport.

3.5.4 The Council's UDP policies (Reference 2) clearly identify the need to resolve the transport, accessibility and economic constraints imposed by the current river crossing. The need for a new river crossing is explicitly recognised, in particular Policy S14 states that:-

'A scheme for a new crossing of the River, will be promoted to relieve congestion on the SJB as part of an integrated transport system for Halton and the wider regional transport network'.

3.5.5 The saved UDP policies also include a number of specific transport related policies as follows:

- Integrated public transport network;

- Cycle network;

- Pedestrian network;

- Road network;

- Sustainable economic growth;
- Accessibility for all;
- Safety for all; and
- The environment.

3.5.6 Local Development Framework (LDF)

3.5.7 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the new system of spatial plans, introduced following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Reference 41). The folder of LDF documents includes among others, Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), the former carrying more weight and the ability to allocate land for particular purposes. It is anticipated that documents within the LDF will eventually replace the saved UDP policies to become the Council's statutory development plan.

3.5.8 The first DPD to be produced is the emerging Halton Core Strategy, currently under production. The Core Strategy will provide the overarching spatial planning framework for the Borough's development to 2026 and beyond. The emerging Core Strategy will look beyond LTP 2 and the planned opening of the Project, and identify in broad terms the areas of the Borough where development and change will happen during the plan period. The document will establish the spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for the Borough in its opening Section. It is intended that the spatial strategy will be conveyed through seven spatial themes:-

- An affordable and decent home and neighbourhood;
- A balanced and prosperous economy;
- Health, learning and social inclusion;
- Vital and vibrant town centres;
- Well designed places and spaces;
- A cleaner, safer and greener environment; and
- Sustainable travel options.

3.5.9 The MGSTS will support transport and movement related interventions, which are considered to be critical to the successful delivery of the Spatial Strategy for the Borough.

3.5.10 The LDF may include further sustainable transport related policies, in DPDs and SPDs, yet to be produced.

3.5.11 Halton Local Area Agreement (LAA) (June 2008- April 2011)

3.5.12 In June 2008, the Halton Strategic Partnership (Reference 28) published the new LAA for the Borough. It reiterated the strategic policy framework for the Borough, the key priorities of which are:-

- **A Healthy Halton:** To create a healthier community and work to promote well being – a positive experience of life and good health;

- **Halton's Urban Renewal:** To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, the develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough;

- **Halton's Children and Young People:** To ensure that children and young people in the Borough are safeguarded, healthy and happy;

- **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton:** To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth; and

- **A Safer Halton:** To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.

3.5.13 These principles are embedded in the MGSTS. The Council recognises the importance of the Project and the accompanying MGSTS in terms of supporting new employment opportunities and improving accessibility across the Borough and beyond.

3.5.14 Halton Draft Economic Review 2008

3.5.15 In 2008, the Council undertook a review of the key economic issues and trends that are likely to influence the development of its local economy. The draft review identified the following key messages associated with sustainable transport:-

- **Business Base:** The Borough has grown at a significantly higher rate than both the North West and the UK, although there remain concerns about the number of micro firms (0-4 employees), proportion of businesses in the lower turnover bands and business densities;

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** The contribution made by the Borough to the North West's GVA has been rising, against a background of a decline in its manufacturing sector. Transport and communications continues to be the only other sector to have a share of GVA higher that the NW and the UK, although distribution comes close. Future GVA is expected to grow from £2.2bn to £2.99m by 2020 with the Transport and Communication's share increasing;

- **Unemployment:** Beechwood, Birchfields , Daresbury, Farnworth and Hale wards of the Borough have lower than UK average unemployment, whilst Grange, Halton Lea, Kingsway, Mersey, Riverside & Windmill Hill wards have levels significantly greater than the UK average.

- **Worklessness:** 18% of the Borough's working population (13,000 people) claim benefits compared to the UK average of 11%. The Borough has 15 wards which fall into the top 10 most deprived wards in the UK, where 31.6% of the working population claim benefits, representing around 7,000 people.

- **Education & Learning:** In common with other parts of the region, education performance in the Borough is someway below the England average;

- **Skills:** Although skill levels have improved since the last survey in 2003, the Borough remains significantly under-skilled at level 4. Level 3 deficits are projected to be moderate, whilst it is projected that there will be an over supply at Level 2 and below. The deficits in skills are likely to be made up by people commuting into the Borough.

- **Land & Property:** The Borough is an active player in the inward investment arena and is able to 'feed off' the shortage of land for industrial uses in neighbouring

authorities, partly due to its good motorway connections. The market for office space in the Borough is considered as relatively small and the offer being perceived as generally poor. Retail within the Borough has a negative balance of trade of approximately £129m per annum, due to residents choosing to shop in Liverpool, Chester and Warrington.

3.5.16 The draft Review, which has yet to be approved by the Council, highlights the progress that has been made recently by the Borough and points to an increasing importance of transport in the Borough. The review also confirms the continuing and significant problems that the Borough faces in dealing with pockets of deprivation, as evidenced by the unemployment, worklessness, education and skills assessments. Ensuring that sustainable, affordable, accessible and convenient transport choices are developed will help to address these issues and provide travel choice for those who do not have access to a car and realistic alternatives to those who do.

4 THE MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY (MGSTS)

4.1 Strategic Objectives

4.1.1 The Project has 7 high level strategic objectives of which two strategic objectives relate directly to sustainable transport. These are:-

- **To improve public transport links across the River Mersey; and**
- **Encourage the increased use of cycling and walking.**

4.1.2 The proposed MGSTS aims to deliver the following key vision for sustainable travel options within the Borough:-

To identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of the LTP and the Project.

4.1.3 This vision will be achieved by the implementation of an integrated package of measures and initiatives designed to meet the following objectives:-

- Further improve accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards in the Borough to a wide range of key facilities including employment, education/training, health, leisure and retail facilities;
- Reduce the future reliance on carbon intensive modes of travel through encouraging promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options;
- Support the continued regeneration of the Borough, through ensuring that new, high quality sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Project and associated MGRS;
- Improve the modal share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres of the Borough (Runcorn town centre, Widnes town centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby supporting the regeneration of the centres;
- Further develop new strategic high quality sustainable transport links/corridors through the Borough utilising the opportunities provided by the Project and thereby improving key Mersey Belt and Liverpool City linkages; and
- To mitigate the impact of tolls on vulnerable groups by providing attractive alternatives to private vehicles for cross-river travel within the Borough and neighbouring communities.

4.1.4 Defining the Approach

4.1.5 The MGSTS has been developed following a wide ranging review of existing land use, regeneration and transport policies for the Borough and the wider Liverpool City Region, as well as comprehensive stakeholder consultation in 2008. The diagram in Section 1 on page 6 sets out how the MGSTS has been developed. The key components of this are summarised below:-

- **The Objectives of the Project** (as above);

- **LTP2 2006/7 – 2010/11:** (Reference 1**)** This is the second LTP for Halton which sets out the Council's strategic transport objectives, strategies and policies for the period April 2006 to March 2011 and beyond. It also contains details of the schemes and initiatives that will be delivered, together with performance indicators and targets that will be used to monitor progress;

- **Halton Access Plan 2006/7-2010/11:** This supports the LTP and covers the same period, setting out a range of complementary actions to improve accessibility to a wide range of facilities across the Borough;

- **'Halton's Story of Place'** in Section 2 of this Study;

- **The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS):** The purpose of which is to explore the wide ranging economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration opportunities that the Project could potentially deliver; and

- **First Stage Public Transit Options Study:** (Reference 5) This study was commissioned by the Council to help inform the development of the sustainable transport Strategy by undertaking a high level review of the feasibility of utilising a range of alternative rapid public transport options as part of the Project. This provided a valuable platform for the development of the Strategy and is described in Section 4.2.

- **Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Model:** This seeks to objectively assess the impact on local travel behaviour across all modes of various transport modes as part of the Project.

4.2 First Stage Public Transit Options Study

4.2.1 The First Stage Public Transit Options Study was commissioned by the Council to inform the development of the MGSTS. The study included:-

- A comprehensive review of various public transport route development options;

- An initial passenger demand study;

- A review of the opportunities to integrate various public transit options into the proposed de-linking works of the SJB;

- A high level assessment of the costs and benefits of the utilisation of a wide range of potential public transit options and technologies including:-

  - Personalised Rapid Transit (PRT);
  - Ultra Light Railway (ULT);
  - Guided busway (also including trolley bus);
  - Light rail;
  - Tram-train;
  - Heavy rail; and
  - Monorail.

- The short listing and evaluation in detail of the following options:

  - Medium level bus priorities;

- High level bus priorities;
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) using guided busways;
- BRT using regular busways;
- Light rail;
- Opportunities for Tram-train; and
- Heavy railway development.

4.2.2 The evaluation was based on:-

- Spatial characteristics, to determine the ease with which each system could be integrated into the existing commercial centres within the Borough, the suitability for accommodation of each option within the structure of the existing SJB, and the proposed New Bridge structures and associated infrastructure;

- Alternative energy and power supply options to minimise emissions and carbon footprint;

- Vehicle capacity and system capacity matched to likely future demand including indicative networks;

- Indicative system performance for each public transport option; and

- Indicative vehicle and infrastructure costs for each public transport option.

4.2.3 All of the above were carried on the assumption that the Project is constructed and fully operational. As such, this MGSTS is designed to complement and work in a holistic manner with the new and existing crossings.

4.2.4 The recommendations and conclusions of this detailed evaluation of the short listed options are summarised below:-

- **Heavy Railway Enhancements:** existing and future heavy railway facilities need to be integrated into proposed transit systems. The proposed improvement of the Halton Curve for example is a heavy rail transit proposal, but could be easily incorporated into a tram/train system and network if tram-train is taken forward in the long term as part of an alignment that includes the New Bridge.

- **Tram–train options:** These may be worthy of further investigation, possibly commencing with a basic north-south transit system;

- **Light railway options:** These may be worthy of further consideration, possibly as part of a basic north-south transit system. However, an option to link with proposed Merseytram Lines 2 & 3 would be poor value for money;

- **Tramway:** The study identified that this may be worthy of further consideration, possibly as part of a basic north-south transit system operating exclusively within the Borough;

- **Bus based options (guided and non guided options):** The Runcorn Busway provides a sound basis for developing a network to serve a wider part of the Borough, using unguided buses. Whilst not recommending guided bus technology for kerb guidance, due to it being unsuitable/insufficiently developed, elements of the technology could be used for docking and providing for narrow rights of way and for guidance on the New Bridge should this option be pursued. Further investigation of options was recommended;

- **Bus based transit (alternative power and traction options):** Trolley buses and dual mode technologies were not excluded. Electrification could be applied to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) options, but is not a prerequisite, as vehicles can be based on diesel or low emission bio fuel. A BRT system is an option, worthy of further investigation, subject to detailed technical and investment appraisal;

- **High level bus priority measures:** The relatively modest cost of adopting high level bus priorities, compared with the cost of light railway or tramway, suggests that the option should be retained for further detailed study and evaluation;

- **Medium level bus priorities:** The relatively low cost of bus priorities, delivered through a corridor approach, suggests that the option should be retained for further consideration, and should form the base case for any evaluation of transit option systems;

- **Demand responsive and Para-transit options:** The Council already funds a range of community and voluntary transport schemes operated principally by Halton Community Transport (HCT) a stand alone charitable organisation. These services include a traditional 'dial a ride' service as well as an evening Women's "Safe" transport scheme, and an accessible, post-16 learners transport scheme to local colleges and the Independent Living Centre in Runcorn. These services are complemented by the Council's 'in house' passenger transport fleet. At the time of writing these two services were undergoing a process of better integration through the launch of the new "Door2Door" service. These services offer high levels of flexibility and opportunities to serve areas of low demand, but at the same time provide a platform for growing the network. These types services have considerable potential to be expanded and further developed;

- **De-linking the SJB:** That the de-linking proposals for optimising public transport benefits are developed and evaluated in more detail; and

- **Accommodating public transport on the New Bridge and associated infrastructure:** The Study recommended that funding is set aside to examine the feasibility of accommodating public transit options for the Project.

4.2.5 The recommendations arising from this study were that the Council should develop a BRT system, linked into the heavy railway network, utilising medium level bus priority measures, delivered through a corridor approach.

The characteristics of the system would be as follows:-

- Metro style quality service with 'turn up and go' frequencies;
- Integrated network of routes and corridors;
- Segregated busway (in key places based on the existing Runcorn Busway);
- Typically pre-board fare payment/verification;
- Higher quality stops and stations;
- Clean vehicle technologies;
- Strong network identity through clear and consistent marketing; and
- Superior quality service.

4.2.6 The study also recommended that once this BRT network is established, the Council should carry out further feasibility work to examine the potential to introduce further high level bus priority measures as well as Tram-train and Light Rapid Transit (LRT) options on the busiest corridors.

4.2.7 Building on the recommendations of the study, the following modifications were made to the Project to accommodate the delivery of the priority sustainable transport

improvements and local regeneration:-

- The design of the New Bridge would accommodate the carrying of a light rail system which could be implemented in the future, given the design life of the New Bridge structure is 120 years;

- The Strategy for the Project would be based on the SJB being used for local travel within the Borough, with priority being given for sustainable transport, taxis and local trips by private vehicles;

- The approach roads to SJB would be modified to allow the new route to be constructed and regeneration proposals in West Bank and Runcorn Old Town to be delivered; and

- The carriageway across SJB would be reduced to one full standard traffic lane in each direction with the remaining width being used for cycling and walking and equine use (subject to safety assessments).

4.2.8 These changes now form part of the Project which is subject to applications for statutory powers. Subject to securing the necessary consents and powers, the new bridge is expected to be opened in 2014.

4.2.9 Based on the opportunity of using SJB as a local facility, a comprehensive and integrated sustainable transport Strategy has been developed, which builds upon and complements the Project. The MGSTS incorporates a wide variety of complementary measures to encourage sustainable travel, through improving opportunities for public transport use, walking and cycling. In developing the MGSTS it was important to also take into account the impact that the proposed tolling is expected to have on travel behaviour.

4.3 The Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Model

4.3.1 The impact of tolls has been forecast using the Mersey Gateway Variable Demand Transport Model.

4.3.2 The Project is designed to relieve the congested SJB to allow the Borough's regeneration and local transport objectives to be achieved. There is local congestion approaching the SJB, and alternative crossings of the River (at the Mersey tunnels, through Warrington and on the M6 Thelwall Viaduct) experience congestion during extended peak periods and during times of incidents on the network. Centrally located within the sub-regional motorway network, the SJB plays an important network role. Each of the alternative crossings of the Mersey has experienced routine traffic growth over many years and this growth in traffic demand is expected to continue over the foreseeable future. It is therefore likely that the capacity of the road network-and the capacity of the SJB in particular-will have an increasing effect on future traffic levels and congestion as demand exceeds the capacity available.

4.3.3 The model, therefore, had to be able to model congestion and reflect the re-assignment and behavioural changes brought about by increasing congestion over the traffic evaluation period of the Project (15 years after opening) and the effects of imposing tolls.

4.3.4 The traffic model was specified as a variable demand traffic model, incorporating highway and public transport components to allow the modelling of travel behaviour. In essence the model reflects how travel choices are likely to be influenced by varying levels of congestion across the study network.

4.3.5 Attitude to paying tolls

4.3.6 Providing significant additional capacity, albeit modified by the use of SJB for local traffic and no-car modes, in a congested network can normally be handled by conventional assignment models. However, because of the opposing effect of requiring the payment of a toll to use that capacity, the model has to be able to reflect the interaction between re-assignment and behavioural response to paying tolls. This interaction has additional dimensions when considering values of time of travellers from different socio-economic groups, and undertaking trips for different reasons. The traffic model developed for the appraisal of this project is able to model the behavioural responses required.

4.3.7 Model specification overview

4.3.8 The traffic model consists of a number of inter-related components. Separate highway and public transport models have been developed for the base year of 2006. These two models are brought together in the forecasting process and it is here that the variable demand element comes into play.

4.3.9 The forecasting process enables the behavioural responses to increasing congestion, payment of tolls and provision of new capacity to be assessed.

4.3.10 The output from the forecasting process, which also includes the physical changes anticipated on the travel networks (committed schemes and developments, regeneration proposals and changes in values of time and travel costs), then feeds into the economic, environmental and financial appraisals.

4.3.11 The data requirements of the model have been considerable. An extensive series of roadside interviews (RSI's) was conducted, and household survey data was analysed to inform trip making patterns. Journey time surveys, manual and automatic traffic counts, stated preference surveys to establish values of time and aerial surveys to check network performance were all undertaken.

4.3.12 Tolling also provides an opportunity to fund sustainable transport improvements. The Project delivery objective is to base toll charges at levels similar to the Mersey Tunnels. The procurement process will determine the success of this objective and the Council is required to take a prudent view on the amount of toll revenue likely to be available to fund sustainable transport, given the objective of keeping toll levels down. To provide some certainty of funding sustainable transport through the toll revenue stream, an amount of £500k per annum will be specified as a requirement in the Project procurement process. It is likely that the Council would benefit from toll revenue share in excess of this minimum of £500k, but this will depend on actual outturn revenues received and the management of toll charges in the future.

4.3.13 The modifications to use SJB as a bridge for local transport combined with the tolling effects and funding through toll revenue sharing present the Council with an opportunity to deliver a step change in the quality of sustainable transport available to residents. The MGSTS has been designed to capture this opportunity with the objective of producing a significant modal shift towards sustainable transport in the Borough for the future.

4.3.14 Funding Support

4.3.15 Without the Project and the potential funding support the scheme will generate through

tolls, it would not be possible to deliver such an improvement to the sustainable transport choice available to residents of the Borough.

4.3.16 The reason for this, is the absence of river crossing capacity and that the key established funding mechanisms for local transport cannot generate the step change improvements that are going to make a noticeable difference to the way the Borough's residents travel in the future. The Council's LTP provides capital resources to maintain and improve facilities on the whole of the transport network. Indicative levels of funding provided by the DfT for the 5 years after 2010/11 show a considerable reduction in real terms over the levels provided during the current LTP. Similarly, revenue funding provided by the Council to carry out other maintenance works, support to local bus services and travel planning, information and training and other associated components of sustainable travel, are also likely to be very limited.

4.3.17 Funds secured through tolling on the existing and proposed bridges can, however, enable the critical step change improvements to be delivered. Importantly, such funding would provide a guaranteed revenue stream that will encourage stakeholders, such as bus operators, to grow the bus network, provide new vehicles and improve services across the whole integrated network through pump-priming or Kickstart mechanisms. The additional ring fenced funding will reduce the risk to bus operators when introducing improvements and enhancements to the network. Furthermore, the anticipated additional tolling revenue, above the minimum assumed, will support a process of continuous step improvements to go forward in the long term.

4.3.18 The informal public/private partnership between the Council and stakeholders, which has resulted in considerable improvements to the sustainable transport offer across the Borough, will be used to deliver a step change in provision as part of the Project. In addition, opportunities will be taken to utilise private developer contributions, where appropriate, to help facilitate the proposed improvements to sustainable travel within the Borough.

4.3.19 Two Phase Implementation Strategy

4.3.20 Based on the above assessment and modelling exercise, the Strategy is based on two phases of implementation as follows:-

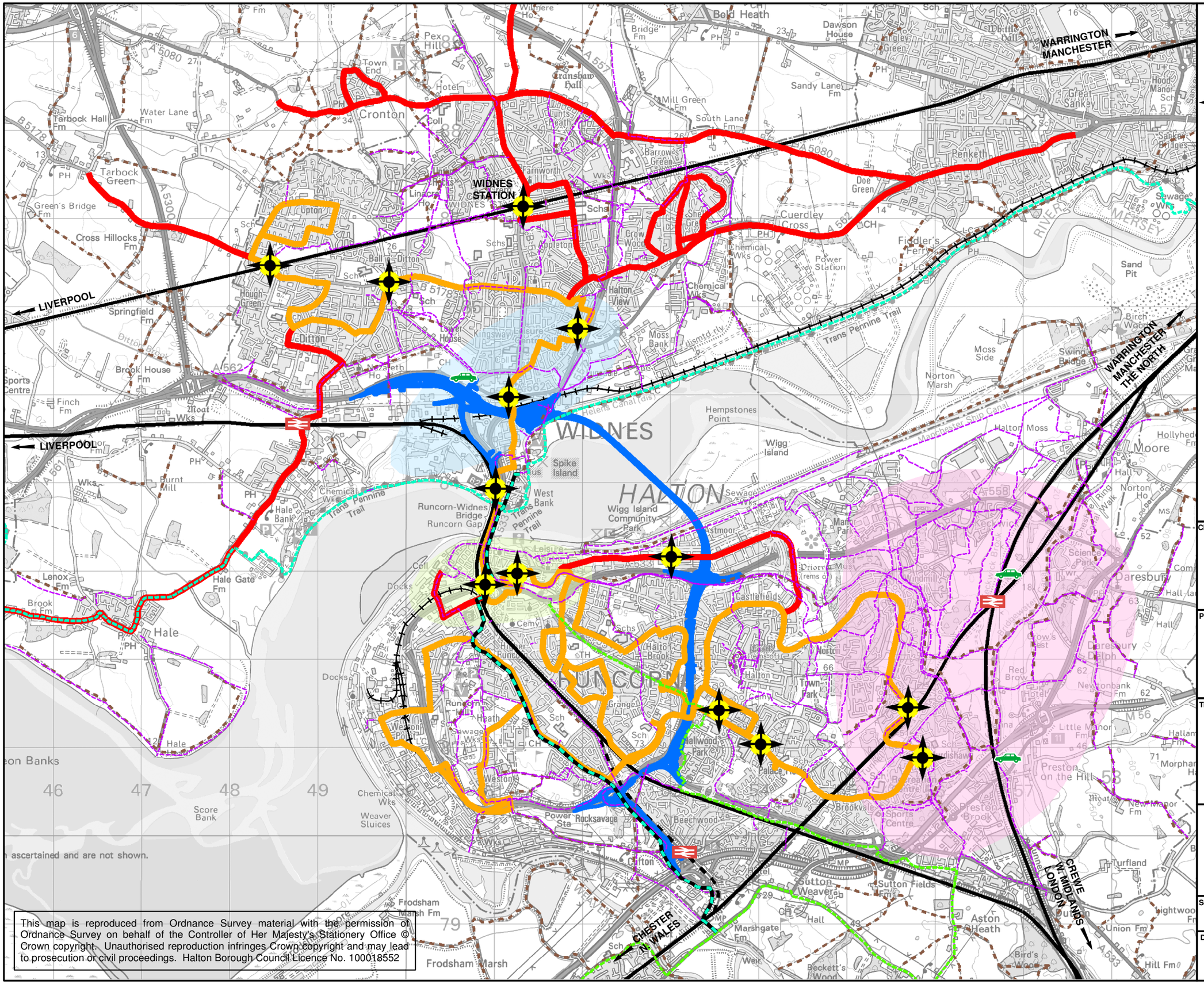
- The first phase Improvement Themes (Numbers 1-6) (for implementation from 2014/2015 to 2024/25) contain those initiatives that, potentially, could be funded through tolling income from the Project, the LTP, private developers and bus operators; and

- The second phase of Improvement Themes (Numbers 7-9) (for implementation beyond 2024/25) incorporates projects that will draw on the variety of public and private sector funding that may be available at the time. The recommendations set out below will be brought forward depending upon the availability of such funding.

4.3.21 It is important to stress that the opportunity will be taken to accelerate all themes, where new funding sources become available.

4.3.22 The work programmes in each phase have been structured into a number of inter-related Improvement Themes. Each theme addresses the key areas of concern, previously identified in Section 2. The detailed content of each of these Improvement Themes are described below.

4.3.23 The Improvement Themes that can be shown visually have been set out in Figure 4.1.



Legend

- Possible future Park and Ride sites
- Possible future rail stations
- Local Interchanges
- Other cycle routes
- NCN 5
- Trans Pennine Trail (NCN 62)
- Proposed future route for NCN
- Halton Rapid Transit Network
- Halton Core Bus Network
- Public Right of Way
- The Mersey Gateway Project
- Freight Railway Route
- Proposed Halton Curve
- Passenger Railway Route
- Runcorn East Door2Door service
- Town centre shuttle bus - Runcorn
- Town centre shuttle bus - Widnes

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client: HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project: MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Title: IMPROVEMENT THEMES

Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:40,000	19/01/09	Jane Hunter

Drg No: FIGURE 4.1 Rev.: -

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297

4.4 Phase One Improvement Theme 1 – Development of the Proposed Halton Rapid Transit Network

The focus of this Improvement Theme is the development of the first stage of a new bus based rapid transit network for the Borough, (*marketed as, Halton Rapid Transit Network.')* This new revitalised network will incorporate many of the 'best practice' features commensurate with other high quality bus rapid transit networks being developed across the UK and continental Europe.

4.4.1 Following the results of the stakeholder consultation, a key immediate priority for the Council and its stakeholders is the delivery of a 'step change' in quality of public transport links across the Borough. The foundation for these improvements will be a significant upgrade to the quality of bus based public transport services which provide the backbone of the integrated sustainable transport network within the Borough.

4.4.2 At the heart of the network lies the Runcorn Busway, and, as such, Improvement Theme 1 will primarily concentrate on further revitalising this key, existing, infrastructure asset. This part of the network includes the main Runcorn Busway loop linking Halton Lea (North and South) - Halton Hospital, Palacefields - Brookvale - Murdishaw - Windmill Hill and Castlefields, as well as the spur links to Halton Lodge, Whitehouse and Beechwood. Once the network is improved, the Council, and its partners, will use it as a platform to develop a range of complementary measures across the sustainable transport network.

4.4.3 Key features of this Improvement Theme include:-

- Greatly improved connections between the Runcorn Busway and Widnes via the SJB;
- The safeguarding of key linkages as part of the land use development process;
- The introduction of a new dedicated marketing and branding of the service and vehicles for the proposed 'Halton Rapid Transit Network' (HRTN);
- The introduction of a new fleet of 'state of the art' high quality, fully accessible, visually attractive, and environmentally friendly buses (electric hybrid or bio fuels) offering a passenger travelling environment equivalent to a modern tramway system;
- Significant improvements to all existing stops on the Runcorn Busway system offering level boarding facilities and vehicle 'docking' to benefit all users and improved passenger waiting facilities including attractive passenger shelters, seating and lighting;
- The provision of a range of accessible public transport information, including real time, audio and conventional printed information at all stops, and on board the new vehicles; and
- The provision of 'at stop' ticketing machines at key stops designed to reduce average bus boarding times for passengers.

4.4.4 The services on the HRTN will be significantly improved to offer a 5 minute frequency (Monday to Saturday daytime) service, complemented by a 20 minute frequency service in the evenings and on Sundays. This will create a genuine 'turn up and go' service at key periods and is linked to the proposed package of service improvements as part of Improvement Theme 2 discussed below.

4.4.5 It is also proposed to encourage greater community involvement in the management of the stops on the transit system through the development of community partnerships, based on the successful railway model. High quality public realm features will be incorporated at key stops and along prime corridors of the proposed HRTN. These will be developed in partnership with surrounding land owners and developers to generate a greater 'sense of place' among local communities.

4.4.6 Table 4.1 below shows the projected capital costs of delivering these improvements, which will be funded through a mixture of:-

- LTP capital funding; and
- Bus operator contributions (for example funding for new vehicles and improved driver training and passenger care).

As can be seen, the projected total capital costs of the improvements, as set out in Improvement Theme 1, are estimated to cost £8.07m, to be implemented over a period between 2014/15 and 2020/21. It is currently projected that the LTP process will provide £4.57m (or 57%) of the required funding, with the remainder from other external sources. In addition, the programme will be enhanced, when possible, with developer funding.

4.4.7 The revenue costs associated with operating the new services are covered by the proposals set out in Improvement Theme 2. It is proposed that tolling revenue generated by the Project will be used to 'pump-prime' bus service improvements across the bus network in the Borough.

4.4.8 In delivering the new proposed HRTN, the Council notes, and welcomes, the new provisions contained within the Transport Act 2008, which received Royal Assent in December 2008. This new legislation will enable local authorities to work more effectively with bus operators to deliver more attractive local bus networks. The new provisions contained within the legislation, that widen the scope of the statutory quality bus partnership agreements to restrict the operation of bus services on the network, which do not meet strict quality criteria, are considered to be of particular benefit in bringing about a step change in the quality of services offered in the Borough.

4.4.9 The criteria that can be applied include:-

- Service frequencies;
- Hours of operation; and
- Maximum fares.

4.4.10 The Council, and its partners, are currently examining the new provisions to ensure that the new powers are fully utilised in the delivery of the objectives of the MGSTS, although it is envisaged that the bus improvements will be delivered through a voluntary, quality bus partnership approach. Improvements to local public transport services will also be carried out in close partnership with Merseytravel and other neighbouring authorities.

Table 4.1 Proposed Costs of Improvement Theme 1

Theme 1 Elements	2014/15 £000s	2015/16 £000s	2016/17 £000s	2017/18 £000s	2018/19 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	Totals £000s
Improvements to Murdishaw Bus Interchange (LTP)	150	180	0	0	0	0	0	**330**
Improvements to Halton Lea Bus Station (LTP)	200	**0**	**0**	0	0	0	0	**200**
Improvements to Halton Hospital Interchange (LTP)	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	**100**
Introduction of BRT style buses (bus operators)	1000	1000	1000	500	0	0	0	**3500**
Improvements to bus stops on the main Runcorn Busway loop (LTP)	450	550	850	760	550	300	300	**3760**
Improvements to information on board vehicles and stops (LTP)	100	50	30	0	0	0	0	**180**
Total (LTP)	**900**	**880**	**880**	**760**	**550**	**300**	**300**	**4570**
Total (Other)	**1000**	**1000**	**1000**	**500**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3500**
Grand Total								**8070**

4.4.11 Improvement Theme 2 - Further Expansion of The Halton Rapid Transit Network (HRTN) and the Introduction of Complementary Service Improvements

The focus of this Improvement Theme is the further development of proposed new HRTN, and the introduction of a new network of complementary public transport service improvements designed to better connect key development and regeneration areas.

4.4.12 To complement the proposed improvement to the core Runcorn Busway network as part of Improvement Theme 1, it is proposed that the Council, and its partners, deliver a range of measures/initiatives to:-

- Expand the proposed HRTN to other key bus corridors across the Borough and key cross boundary routes into Merseyside, Warrington, West Cheshire and Chester;
- Improve the quality and frequency of bus based public transport services over the SJB, especially during evenings and Sundays when the existing bus network within the Borough is most limited in terms of connectivity and frequency;
- Introduce new town centre shuttle bus services linking key public transport interchanges to the main retail, education, leisure and employment facilities within Runcorn and Widnes town centres;
- Launch major new, demand responsive transport services, focused on improving accessibility to key employment locations in eastern Runcorn;
- Consider the potential introduction of a new discounted travel scheme for young people; and
- Launch a new community transport development fund to encourage the introduction of innovative transport/accessibility improvement schemes at a local level within individual communities within the Borough.

4.4.13 This theme primarily focuses on addressing the key bus service accessibility gaps for low income communities by increasing the accessibility of employment, training, health, education, social and food retail shopping opportunities.

4.4.14 There is potential for the new services to be funded using 'pump prime revenue funding' generated through tolling on the bridges. The package of bus service improvements identified to be delivered in this Improvement Theme will require an average of £500,000 per year of tolling income to fund the £5.5m programme of measures (over 11 years 2014/15-2024/25).

4.4.15 Where possible, all of the measures identified in this Improvement Theme will be delivered through a 'decreasing revenue funding' principle. Revenue funding for each scheme will be gradually decreased over a period of 5 years, commensurate with a projected increase in fare revenue as the services become more established and passenger numbers grow. Hence, it is expected that all of the schemes identified will become commercially sustainable at the end of their respective 5 year revenue grant period. As the funding is 'released', this will enable the Council, and its partners, to introduce further measures to improve accessibility and improve travel choice for a wider range of local residents. It is proposed that complementary infrastructure improvements will be funded through a

mixture of LTP capital funding and developer contributions (where available).

4.4.16 The physical improvements to the routes will be funded from LTP sources as set out in Table 4.2 .

4.4.17 The package of schemes include:-

- **A -** Further expansion and improvement of the HRTN focussing on cross river services;
- **B -** Introduction of new Runcorn town centre shuttle bus service;
- **C -** Introduction of an enhanced Widnes town centre shuttle bus service;
- **D -** Launch of a new Community Transport Development Fund;
- **E -** Launch of a new Runcorn East 'Door 2 Door' Service**;**
- **F -** Introduction of a new concessionary travel scheme for young people/ "WorkWise"

4.4.18 A - Further Expansion of the Halton Rapid Transit Network

As part of this package of measures it is proposed that facilities on 3 key corridors are developed to complement the platform of improved services being delivered along with Improvement Theme 1 on the rejuvenated Runcorn Busway. In addition, new services will be introduced on the improved corridors as follows:-

- **Transit Line 1:** Introduction of a new cross Runcorn service linking the main Runcorn Busway Loop (Halton Lea, Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Norton, Runcorn East railway station, Murdishaw, Brookfields, Palacefields and Halton Hospital) and the Heath/Weston Point areas (serving the proposed Halton Housing Growth Point sites);
- **Transit Line 2:** Hough Green - Halton Lea (Hough Green estate loop, Hough Green railway station, Chesnut Lodge, Widnes town centre and Widnes West Bank, SJB, Runcorn town centre); and
- **Transit Line 3:** Runcorn town centre - Halton Lea via Grangeway and Halton Brook areas.

4.4.19 Transit line 2, once developed, will provide the main public transport link over the existing SJB.

4.4.20 These corridor improvements will be developed over a phased period of 9 financial years, between 2014/15 and 2022/23. The projected cost of these improvements is £1.11m (revenue) and £2.55m (capital).

The projected timescale for the development of transit lines 1 - 3 is as follows:-

- Transit Line 1 will be developed between 2014/15 – 2020/21;
- Transit Line 2 will be developed between 2016/17 – 2020/21; and

- Transit Line 3 will be developed between 2018/19 – 2022/23.

4.4.21 **B - Introduction of new Runcorn Town Centre Shuttle Bus Service**

This proposed new service will be introduced in 2014/15 and will be designed to link the main public transport gateways in the Runcorn town centre area to key employment, retail and leisure opportunities. In particular it is proposed that the route of the service will link the following places:-

- Runcorn town centre bus station;
- The Bridges retail park;
- Runcorn station;
- Riverside College, Runcorn;
- Independent Living Centre;
- Runcorn Waterfront;
- 'The Deck' residential development; and
- Runcorn leisure centre.

4.4.22 The service will be operated by a fleet of dedicated new low floor environmentally friendly shuttle buses (either electric hybrid traction or bio fuel technology). It is proposed that the service will operate every 20 minutes in each direction (Monday to Saturday, daytime 08.00 - 18.00).

4.4.23 The projected revenue cost of this new service is £345,000 (decreasing over 5 years in line with the adopted "Kickstart" principle). This will be supplemented by an additional £105,000 in capital funding for supporting infrastructure improvements . The service will feature new attractive branding, and will be comprehensively marketed in the local area. Consideration will also be given to the introduction of an attractive fare policy to encourage use.

4.4.24 C - Introduction of an Enhanced Widnes Town Centre Shuttle Bus Service

4.4.25 To complement the proposed new town centre shuttle bus service operating in Runcorn, it is proposed that a similar service be introduced in and around Widnes town centre. Again the proposed new service will be operated by low floor vehicles powered using the latest low carbon technologies. This will minimise their impact on the environment. The shuttle will link the following key attractions:-

- Widnes Green Oaks bus station;
- Widnes Waterfront;
- 3MG;
- West Bank (proposed new public transport interchange); and
- Stobart Stadium and Widnes leisure centre.

4.4.26 The enhanced service will be based on an extension to the existing service 13, which is proposed to be funded by toll funding. This new service will utilise new, dedicated, environmentally friendly shuttle buses, running every 20 minutes in each direction (Monday to Saturday daytime 08.00 - 18.00).

4.4.27 The estimated revenue cost of this initiative is £345,000, again based on a 5 year decreasing revenue "Kickstart" basis. This is complemented by a programmed £105,000 in capital investment. As with the proposed Runcorn new town centre service, the

Widnes service will be launched in 2014/15, and will be expected to be fully commercially sustainable by the end of the financial year 2018/19.

4.4.28 D - Launch of a New Community Transport Development Fund

4.4.29 Given the demographic profile of the population within the Borough, there is expected to be a significant growth in the number of elderly persons over the next 20 years. The projected growth of people within the following age bands between 2006 and 2021 are:-

- All aged 65 or over = + 43%;
- All aged 75 or over = + 42%; and
- All aged 85 or over = + 63%.

4.4.30 Therefore, it is proposed that a proportion of the toll revenue generated from the SJB and the New Bridge will be used to fund further improvements to community transport initiatives within the Borough, to improve accessibility and independence for elderly and retired persons. Therefore, £250,000 of toll revenue funding has been programmed to support the development of innovative, new community transport schemes.

4.4.31 E - Launch of a New Runcorn East 'Door2Door' Service

This would involve the introduction of a new, dedicated, demand responsive transport service for key areas in eastern Runcorn. The service will operate as an extension to the recently introduced Borough wide 'Door2Door' service, and will be operated through the centralised booking and vehicle scheduling system, introduced as part of the Council's second LTP. This new service will link key employment sites in eastern Runcorn to both Murdishaw Bus Interchange and Runcorn East railway station. The service will operate 19 hours per day, 6 days per week and will serve the following key places:-

- Murdishaw Bus Interchange;
- Runcorn East railway station;
- Whitehouse industrial estate;
- Daresbury business park;
- Daresbury SIC;
- Manor Park;
- Sandymoor; and
- Windmill Hill.

4.4.32 The projected cost of this initiative is £820,000 to be funded out of revenue generated from the SJB and the New Bridge.

4.4.33 Diagram 4.1 illustrates how these Improvement Theme 2 initiatives would form the HRTN. Table 4.2 details the costs of funding these measures, and the proposed funding mechanisms for Improvement Themes 2 and 3.

4.4.34 Over the longer term, the Council is aware of the potential increased travel demand arising from future housing growth as part of the housing growth point proposals. The proposed new HRTN is ideally placed to provide a solid platform from which to serve the proposed new housing developments. The MGSTS also seeks to support complementary housing growth point projects in neighbouring local authority areas, such as West Cheshire and Chester, Warrington Borough Council and the Metropolitan Borough of St. Helens. These measures are set out in paragraph 4.4.12, and are subject

to further feasibility work and discussion with neighbouring authorities.

4.4.35 F - Introduction of a New Concessionary Travel Scheme for Young People/ 'WorkWise'

Also included within this Improvement Theme is indicative funding to provide additional concessionary travel for young people resident within the Borough. This initiative will be the subject of a detailed feasibility study as set out in Improvement Theme 3 below. Subject to the results of the feasibility study, this funding could also be used to develop further 'WorkWise' initiatives within the Borough. It is proposed that this study will be undertaken during the financial year 2017/18. A projected funding package has been identified for this initiative, featuring £1.63m revenue funding and £1.15m capital funding.

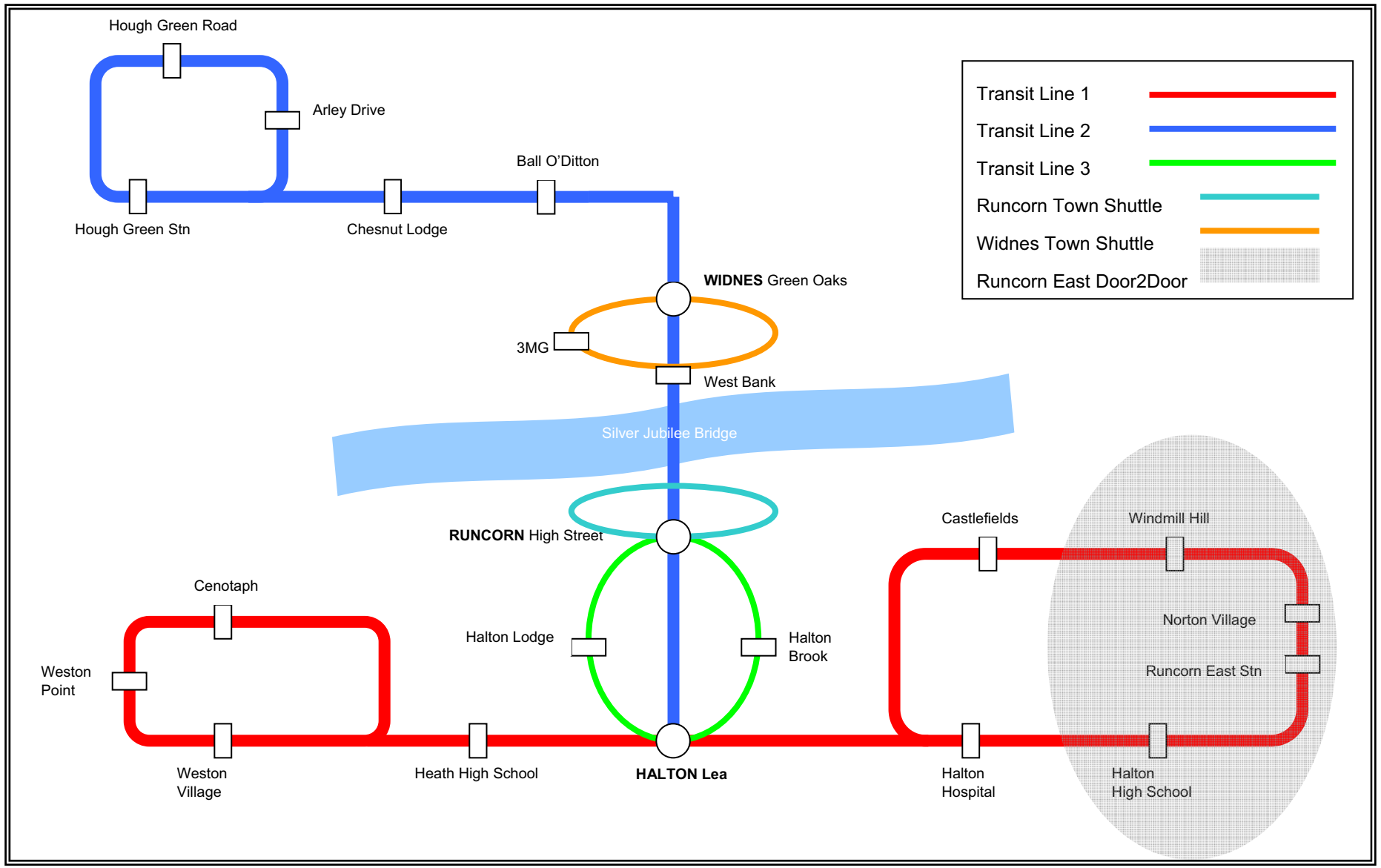


Diagram 4.1: Proposed Halton Rapid Transit Network: [Indicative diagram - not to scale]

4.4.36 Improvement Theme 3 - Introduction of a New Mobility Smartcard

The focus of this Improvement Theme is the further development and launch of an Integrated ITSO* compatible Mobility Smartcard for use by local residents, and users of the SJB and the New Bridge. This will enable residents, visitors and transit vehicles/passengers to easily access and use the network of sustainable transport services/ infrastructure within the Borough.

* Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation (ITSO)

4.4.37 It is proposed that the concessionaire (who will build and operate the project and administer the tolls) will also manage a proposed new, Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation compatible, Smartcard which will be marketed as the '***Halton Mobility Card.'*** Subject to compatibility with fast-tag technology for tolling, this will act as the common platform for the payment of transport services incorporating:-

- Bridge tolls;
- Public transport journeys;
- Leisure facilities;
- Cycle hire facilities; and
- 'Door2Door' services.

4.4.38 Fully integrated ticketing will underpin the principles adopted within the Halton Rapid Transit Network enabling passengers to interchange between services, regardless of operator, and between modes without penalty, and in the most cost effective manner. The Smartcard offers the potential to operate as a season ticket for any user-defined period, increasing the flexibility of the product to both the regular and occasional passengers.

4.4.39 It would also be possible to devise a scheme which recognises sustainable use of the Smartcard and rewards users with 'green points' to offset against other goods and services.

4.4.40 This proposal will be incorporated into the existing family of pre-paid, multi-operator, public transport passes which are currently available for use within the Borough, based on the block exemption to the 2002 Competition Act. The card will be able to build on the successful operator reimbursement mechanisms that are already in place.

4.4.41 One of the key advantages of a Mobility Smartcard is that all residents living within the Borough could be issued with a card for use on all modes across the sustainable transport network. A key feature of the technology that surrounds Smartcard services is that it makes them very easy to administer. Furthermore, highly targeted discounts can be provided to particular users if this is required, for example, residents of the Borough who are either unemployed or on low incomes.

4.4.42 Smartcard technology is moving forward very rapidly and the next generation of cards could be incorporated within mobile phones.

4.4.43 Another important aspect of the Smartcard technology is that it provides instant, and up to date information on travel behaviour, which can be used to monitor service provision, provide continuous improvements and carefully match supply and demand.

4.4.44 Finally, Smartcards can considerably reduce boarding times on buses and, therefore, make a considerable contribution to speeding up journeys, improving reliability and reducing bus operating costs.

4.4.45 As part of the development of the Smartcard scheme, the Council and the Concessionaire will look for opportunities to integrate the proposed new Smartcard with similar, complementary proposals being advanced in other local authority areas across the Merseyside and the North West regions. This would make huge inroads into supporting and promoting cross boundary travel, which is both difficult and complicated to administer and confusing for passengers, and generally not a user friendly way of promoting sustainable travel.

4.4.46 The Council is particularly keen to target young people between 16 and 21 with the proposed Smartcard. This will help to support a range of initiatives to encourage greater participation by socially excluded young people in education, training, employment and leisure activities. Included within this Improvement Theme is indicative funding to provide additional concessionary travel for young people resident within the Borough. This initiative will be the subject of a detailed feasibility study. Subject to the results of this study, this funding could also be used to develop further 'WorkWise' initiatives within the Borough. It is proposed that this study will be undertaken in 2017/18.

4.4.47 This proposal will be the subject of a comprehensive feasibility study, which is estimated to cost £50,000 and will be undertaken in 2017/18. However, capital and revenue funding has been programmed from 2018/19 to launch the ticket. Details of the funding for this element of the strategy are shown in Improvement Theme 2. In total £1.63m in revenue funding has been programmed, and £1.15m in capital programmed to support the initiative.

Table 4.2 Proposed Costs of Improvement Themes 2 and 3

Table 4.2 Improvement Themes 2 and 3	2014/15 (£000s)	2015/16 (£000s)	2016/17 (£000s)	2017/18 (£000s)	2018/19 (£000s)	2019/20 (£000s)	2020/21 (£000s)	2021/22 (£000s)	2022/23 (£000s)	2023/24 (£000s)	2024/25 (£000s)	Totals (£000s)
A-Transit Line 1												
Revenue (tolls)	130	100	70	50	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	370
Capital (LTP)	250	60	0	0	180	150	80	0	0	0	0	720
A-Transit Line 2												
Revenue (tolls)	0	0	130	100	70	50	20	0	0	0	0	370
Capital (LTP)	0	0	300	300	200	300	200	0	0	0	0	1300
A-Transit Line 3												
Revenue (tolls)	0	0	0	0	130	100	70	50	20	0	0	370
Capital (LTP)	0	0	0	0	200	200	130	0	0	0	0	530
B- Runcorn Town Centre Shuttle												
Revenue (tolls)	130	100	65	40	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	345
Capital (LTP)	0	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	105
C-Enhanced Widnes town centre shuttle												
Revenue (tolls)	130	100	65	40	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	345
Capital (LTP)	0	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	105
D- Community Transport Development Fund												
Revenue (tolls)	110	0	0	70	10	40	20	0	0	0	0	250
E- Proposed Door to Door Demand Responsive service expansion in East Runcorn												
Revenue (tolls)	0	200	170	150	150	90	60	0	0	0	0	820
Mersey Gateway Theme 3 introduction of Smartcard Technology incorporating local concessionary fares scheme for 16-19 year olds/'Workwise' (Tolls)												
Revenue (tolls)	0	0	0	50	100	220	330	450	480	0	0	1630
Capital (LTP)	0	0	0	0	0	200	300	300	350	0	0	1150
TOTALS												
Revenue (tolls)	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**5500**
Capital (LTP)	**250**	**270**	**300**	**300**	**580**	**850**	**710**	**300**	**350**	**0**	**0**	**3910**
												9410

4.4.48 Improvement Theme 4 - Further Development of Mobility Management Initiatives

This Improvement Theme focuses on the ongoing development of further mobility management measures across the Borough, to be delivered by the Council's award winning Neighbourhood Travel Team.

4.4.49 As part of this Improvement Theme, it is proposed that the Council's award winning Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT) be expanded to provide a more comprehensive range of services and facilities for local residents. The focus of the NTT's work will continue on addressing mobility/accessibility issues of residents living in the poorest wards within the Borough by working, in partnership, with stakeholders and community/voluntary organisations.

4.4.50 The proposed package of complementary measures across the Liverpool City Region. include:-

- Enhanced travel blending and advice to households within the Borough, which includes individualised travel planning;
- Further expansion of the various "WorkWise" initiatives including scooter commuter schemes, cycle hire, discounted taxis and car share schemes; and
- The continued development of 'healthy lifestyles' initiatives in partnership with NHS Halton and St. Helens (formerly known as St. Helens and Halton PCT).

4.4.51 The cost of this measure will be subject to the outcome of a full feasibility study into the proposals, which will be funded through specific grants from partner organisations and businesses through the ongoing development of employee/staff travel plans.

4.4.52 Improvement Theme 5 - Walking and Cycling Improvements

Under this Improvement Theme, the Council, and its partners, will seek, as part of the strategy, to develop a step change in the provision of facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists across the Borough, as well as developing improved links to key centres in neighbouring local authority areas.

4.4.53 In addition to the proposed step change improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport on the SJB, an extensive and highly complementary package of sustainable transport improvements has been identified by the Council that are designed to address the key issues set out in Section 2, including:-

- Improvements to key strategic cycle and walking routes and links between Widnes and St Helens and parts of Knowsley MBC (especially Huyton and Whiston);
- The development of a new strategic cycle link between northern Widnes and Penketh (Warrington) to complement the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62;
- Provision of a dedicated cycling centre linked to the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 offering bike hire, bike doctor, shower and locker facilities for leisure cycling and both cash and Smartcard payment;
- Improvements to the core cycle network in the western Runcorn area to better link Rocksavage, Weston Point and Frodsham areas to central and eastern Runcorn and across the SJB to Widnes and the Trans Pennine Trail;

- Improvements to prime orbital cycle routes in Widnes to better directly link the suburbs, commercial and employment areas and leisure and education facilities;

- Improved access to cycle facilities for households, businesses and visitors in the area;

- Improved cycle links between Widnes town centre and Widnes Waterfront via West Bank and new proposed local centre; and

- Improved walking and cycling route linking the SJB/Runcorn railway station and Runcorn town centre.

4.4.54 The estimated costs of these improvements are shown in Table 4.3 below. It is proposed that these works would be funded from LTP sources. However, the theme will be enhanced with contributions from developers and other sources, such as the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), as they become available.

4.4.55 The Council is also supportive of measures to promote good levels of equine access across the Borough. As part of the detailed design works on the remodelled SJB, the Council will fully evaluate the potential of allowing equestrian access to the improved pedestrian and cycling facilities on the SJB and its approaches. The Council will work with the British Horse Society to develop a comprehensive safety audit to ensure that the safety of all road users is protected when determining the feasibility of any options proposed.

4.4.56 The Projected Costs of delivering the various improvements identified within Improvement Theme 5 is £6.59m, of which £665,000 is programmed from LTP capital funding with the remaining £5.92m from other sources, such as Housing Growth Point infrastructure funding and developer contributions. This programme is identified in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy.

Table 4.3 Proposed Costs of Improvement Theme 5 Cycling and Walking Improvements

Mersey Gateway STS Theme 5	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Totals
Improved Strategic cycle link North Widnes – St. Helens												
LTP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	50	10	0	160
Other Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	60	0	0	100
Improved Cycle Route linking North Widnes - Warrington												
LTP	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	50	40	0	0	190
Other Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	60	0	0	100
New improved strategic Rincorn – Weston point – Rocksavage – Frodsham – Weaver regional park cycle / pedestrian route. (This will serve the proposed new Housing Growth Point development).												
LTP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	40	60	0	120
Other Capital	0	0	0	0	0	1157	75	32	47	169	52	1532
Introduction of new cycle hire service at key locations across the Borough.												
LTP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	20	0	0	30
Other Capital	0	0	0	0	20	25	30	35	0	0	0	110
Improved cycle / walking links to and from Widnes West Bank / Waterfront.												
LTP	50	50	20	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	130
Other Capital	514	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	514
Improved cycle / walking links between SJB / Runcorn Railway station and the proposed new Housing Growth Point area.												
LTP	25	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
Other Capital	284	258	329	1241	345	254	232	295	95	108	127	3568
Totals												
LTP	***75***	***60***	***20***	***10***	***0***	***0***	***100***	***180***	***150***	***70***	***0***	***665***
Other Capital	***798***	***258***	***329***	***1241***	***365***	***1436***	***337***	***443***	***262***	***277***	***179***	***5925***
Grand Total												**6590**

Improvement Theme 6 - Improvements to Bus/Rail Interchange and Railway Stations in Halton

The aim of this Improvement Theme is the substantial improvement of passenger facilities at key railway stations across the Borough.

4.4.57 Proposed improvements include:-

- New railway station booking offices and passenger waiting facilities (with enhanced opening hours);
- Improved bus/railway interchange facilities at all railway stations;
- Development of bus and railway station improvement zones within approximately 800 metres of each facility, to promote an integrated, multi-modal approach to the provision of improvements for cyclists and pedestrians, including measures to make sustainable travel safe and secure;
- Improved information, facilitating connections and real time bus/rail information; and
- High quality public realm features commensurate with the proposed HRTN discussed above as Improvement Theme 2.

4.4.58 The estimated cost of this option is £1.5m, which will be funded by a mixture of railway industry funding and contributions from the LTP.

4.4.59 Total Costs and funding sources for Phase One

4.4.60 The projected total costs of the various Improvement Themes which constitute Phase One of the Strategy is £24.57 million, of which £9.145m would be provided through the LTP bid process. Table 4.4 below details the total costs.

Table 4.4 Costs and Funding sources for the Phase One Implementation Themes

Theme	LTP Capital £000s	Tolls Revenue £000s	Other sources £000s	Total £000s
1 – Development of the Proposed Halton Rapid Transit Network	4570	-	3500	**8070**
2 - Further Expansion of The Halton Rapid Transit Network (HRTN) and the Introduction of Complementary Service Improvements	2760	2870	-	**5630**
3 - Introduction Of A New Mobility Smartcard	1150	1630	-	**2780**
4 - Further Development of Mobility Management Initiatives	-	-	#	**-**
5 - Walking and Cycling Improvements	665	-	5925	**6590**
6 - Improvements to Bus/Rail Interchange and Railway Stations	-	-	*	**1500**
Totals	**9145**	**4500**	**9425**	**24570**

The cost of this measure will be subject to the outcome of a full feasibility study into the proposals, which will be funded through specific grants from partner organisations and businesses through the development of travel plans.

* Costs will be funded by a mixture of railway industry funding and contributions from the LTP

4.4.61 Phase Two Improvement Themes for Implementation Beyond 2024/25.

4.4.62 Over the medium to longer term it is proposed that the following Improvement Theme s be developed as part of the Strategy. Funding for many of these proposals still needs to be identified and many of the initiatives are subject to more detailed feasibility studies to be carried out by the Council, in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and key stakeholders.

4.4.63 Improvement Theme 7 - The Development of New Strategic P&R Facilities across Halton.

Under this Improvement Theme, the Council, in partnership with the Concessionaire and other key stakeholders, proposes to carry out a comprehensive set of feasibility studies to evaluate the potential to introduce new strategic Park and Ride (P&R) sites across the Borough, taking advantage of enhanced levels of local and regional accessibility afforded by the opening of the Project, and proposals to improve the sustainable transport network as set out in Phase One of the strategy.

4.4.64 In the longer term it is also proposed that the Council and the Concessionaire will investigate the feasibility of constructing new strategic Park and Ride (P&R) facilities, close to the key approaches of the Project.

4.4.65 Key sites identified within the Borough for examination as part of further feasibility work include are shown on Figure 4.1 and include:-

- Central Widnes close to the approaches of the New bridge; and
- Daresbury (serving the M56 and A56).

4.4.66 It is envisaged that these new P&R facilities will be primarily bus based. The revenue subsidy for connecting bus services to P&R facilities will need to be identified as part of the proposed feasibility work, but could include a mixture of developer contributions, and tolling revenue.

4.4.67 In order to progress this matter, the Council has already agreed to contribute £15K to a P&R study that Warrington Borough Council is intending to commission. In addition, further work on P&R at local rail stations is being considered by Merseytravel, which Halton intends to support.

4.4.68 As part of the housing growth point proposals, the Council has submitted a Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) bid which includes the carrying out of a detailed feasibility study on the potential early construction of a new bus based P&R facility at Daresbury.

4.4.69 At the time of writing, the Council is also aware of significant initiatives at a national level to develop a network of new high speed rail lines across the UK. The Council will explore the potential to link the Borough and its key development sites fully with any new high speed rail lines serving the wider North West where opportunities exist to develop the strategic P&R.

4.4.69 Improvement Theme 8 - Canal and Waterway Improvements

This Improvement Theme includes the potential development of new schemes to reinvigorate the network of inland waterways across the Borough.

4.4.70 The MGSTS has also identified further improvements to canals and waterways to support the development of further strategic transport/access improvements for passengers and freight during the longer time frame of the Strategy. These include:-

- The introduction of a new passenger waterbus service linking Runcorn town centre to Murdishaw Marina via Astmoor, Castlefields, Phoenix Park and Windmill Hill (This service will mainly serve the leisure and visitor market, however a pre-feasibility study will also examine options to utilise the link to encourage more local journeys to be made by the service);

- A feasibility study will be carried out into the reopening of the waterway link between the Runcorn branch of the Bridgewater Canal and the Manchester Ship Canal at Runcorn Docks. This will be facilitated by the planned de-linking of the SJB in Runcorn and other changes to the land use pattern in Runcorn town centre as part of MGRS; and

- Further support for measures will further utilise the Manchester Ship Canal as a key inland freight and distribution artery.

4.4.71 As part of the housing growth point proposals, the Council has submitted a Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) bid which includes the carrying out of a detailed feasibility study on the above waterway proposals.

4.4.72 Improvement Theme 9 - Improvements to The Halton Curve

This Improvement Theme seeks to support the development of this key sub regional rail project within the Liverpool City region.

4.4.73 The Halton Curve links Halton Junction (on the West Coast Main Line) to Frodsham Junction on the Manchester to North Wales coast line. The proposal involves the introduction of a new local passenger railway service linking Liverpool Lime Street - Liverpool South Parkway - Widnes Waterfront (3MG) - Runcorn - Beechwood - Frodsham - Chester. The scheme not only caters for strategic movements between Chester and Liverpool, but also local journeys within the Borough, should the option to build a station at Beechwood and re-open Ditton railway station be adopted.

4.4.74 The Halton Curve is already a commitment within both the Council's LTP and Merseyside's LTP, and has been the subject of a detailed project appraisal by Network Rail. (Reference 40)

4.4.75 The scheme provides improved rail access to the Liverpool Super Port initiative discussed in Section 3.

4.4.76 The cost of the basic scheme is projected at £13.6m. The funding for this project has yet to be identified, but is likely to be provided from a cocktail of public and private sector initiatives. The opportunity will be taken to accelerate this theme if new funding sources become readily available.

4.4.77 The economic benefits of the scheme include:-

- Significant impact on the accessibility of locations along the line of route, increasing the size of local labour markets;
- Bringing more than 500 jobs to the North West; and
- The biggest impacts will be felt in Runcorn, Widnes, Frodsham, Helsby and Chester.

4.4.78 The Council will continue to work in partnership with Merseytravel and Network Rail to deliver this key scheme. At the time of writing Merseytravel and the Council were, jointly, undertaking a detailed demand forecasting study of the proposed new scheme, and it is anticipated that this will lead to its inclusion within Network Rail's Merseyside Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS), which is expected to be published in the summer 2009.

4.5 New Approach to Appraisal (NATA)

4.5.1 A NATA appraisal of all the themes has been undertaken, the results of which are shown in Table 4.5

4.6 Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback for the MGSTS

4.6.1 The MGSTS was the subject of a stakeholder consultation during September and October 2008. More than 160 stakeholders, representing a wide range of interests were invited to engage in this key stakeholder initiative, and were sent copies of the draft MGSTS for comment, discussion and to provide a platform for feedback to the Council. An integral component of the stakeholder consultation was a consultation seminar held at the Stobart Stadium in September 2008. The consultation seminar, which was well attended, included comprehensive presentations covering the MGSTS in the context of the Project, and a

workshop and feedback session. The latter allowed stakeholders to drill down into specific aspects of the MGSTS and provide feedback, aided by facilitators from the Council.

4.6.2 A summary of the written responses to the MGSTS stakeholder consultation and actions that have been taken by the Council to change and amend the MGSTS can be found in Appendix B of this document.

4.6.3 It can be seen from Appendix B that the thrust of the consultation responses was, generally, very positive and supportive.

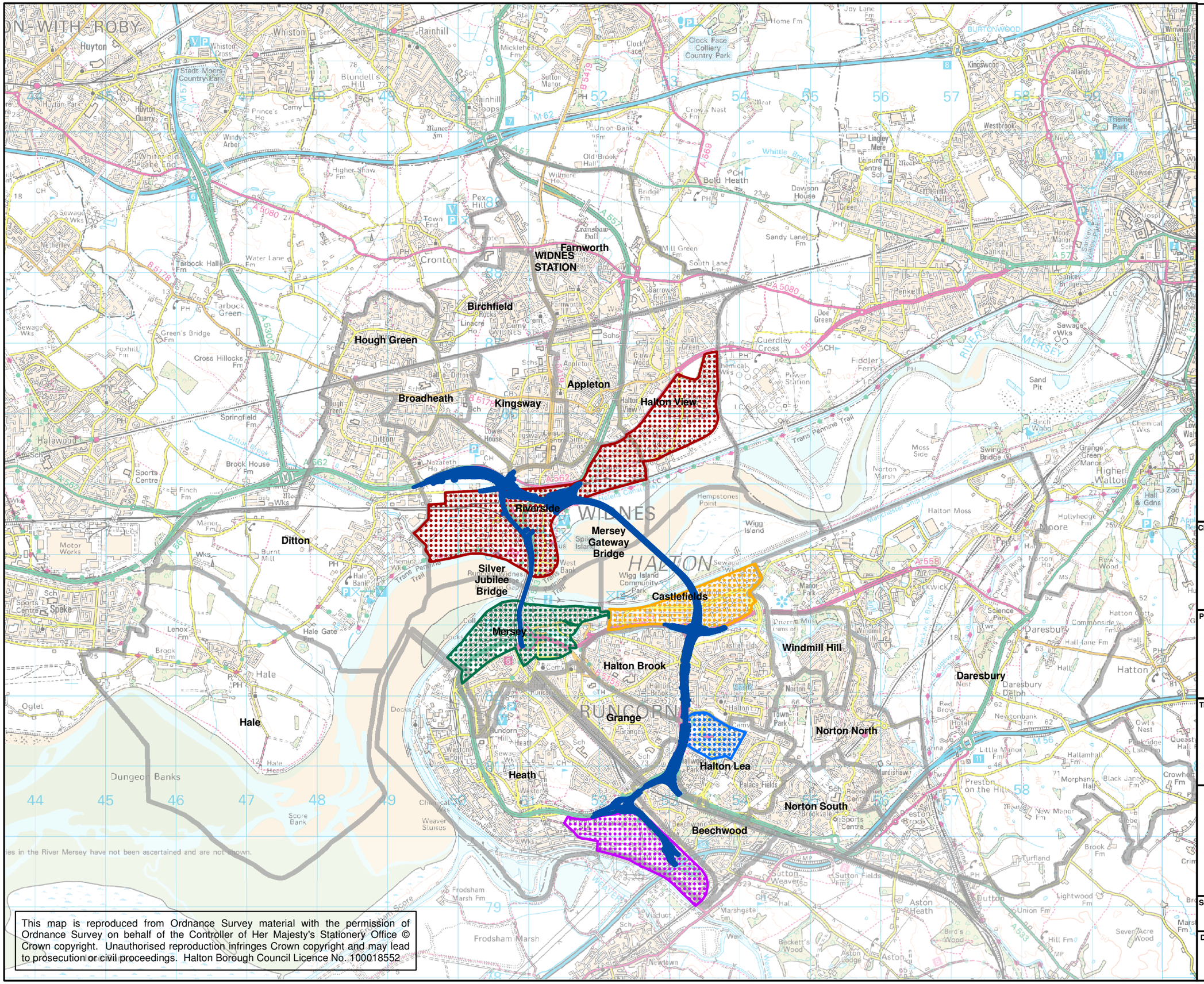
4.7 The Strategy in Practice

4.7.1 It is generally recognised that transport is not an end in itself, but is a means to an end. It is, therefore, important to demonstrate how the proposed Strategy complements key initiatives within the Borough and enables the delivery of much wider socio-economic and environmental benefits.

4.7.2 In developing the MGSTS, particular attention has been paid to addressing the key transport issues that were identified in the MGRS. Section 4.8 summarises the aims and objectives of the MGRS along with the key sustainable transport issues relevant to the five designated regeneration areas in the Borough. The five MGRS areas are shown in Figure 4.2. and are as follows:-

- West Bank;
- Runcorn;
- Astmoor;
- Halton Lea; and
- Rocksavage and Clifton.

4.7.3 The Project impacts directly on two of the regeneration areas. These are Widnes West Bank and Runcorn town centre, and, as such, provide early opportunities for regeneration. However, regeneration in the remaining three areas is more dependent on other development opportunities and is more long term. Section 4.8 below focuses on an integrated approach to the transport issues in the West Bank and Runcorn town centre and identifies those themes in the proposed Phase One delivery programme that will facilitate regeneration of these two areas of Halton. Measures are also identified for the other three areas, but are less detailed due to the longer timescales involved.



Legend

- The Mersey Gateway Project

Regeneration Areas

- ASTMOOR
- HALTON LEA
- ROCK SAVAGE
- RUNCORN
- WIDNES
- Halton Ward Boundaries

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100018552

10 0 10 20 50 100mm NATURAL SCALE

Client
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project
MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Title
MERSEY GATEWAY REGENERATION STRATEGY AREAS

Gifford
3rd Floor, King's Court, 2-4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Tel: 0161 827 1890 Fax:0161 819 5703 www.gifford.uk.com

Scale (At A3)	Date	Drawn
1:50,000	10/12/2008	Jane Hunter

Drg No: FIGURE 4.2 Rev.: -

ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE 420 x 297

Table 4.5 This illustrates the results of a high level impact evaluation of the proposed Strategy using key elements of the DfT's NATA approach to transport appraisal. LP= Low Positive N = Neutral MP= Medium Positive HP=High Positive

Assessment Criteria	PHASE ONE Improvement themes 1 and 2 Halton Rapid Transit Network Improvements and ring fencing of tolling revenue	PHASE ONE Improvement Theme 3 Halton mobility smartcard	PHASE ONE Improvement theme 4 Development of mobility management measures	PHASE ONE Improvement Theme 5 Walking and cycling improvements	PHASE TWO Improvement Theme 6 Improvements to bus/rail interchange and railway stations	PHASE TWO Improvement Theme 7 Development of new strategic P&R facilities across Halton	PHASE TWO Improvement Theme 8 Canal and waterway improvements	PHASE TWO Improvement Theme 9 Improvement of the Halton Curve
Environment:								
Landscape	**N**	**N**	**LP**	**HP**	**N**	**LP**	**LP**	**N**
Noise and Air Pollution	**MP**	**N**	**LP**	**HP**	**MP**	**LN**	**MP**	**LP**
Congestion	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**
Safety	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**
Economy:			**LP**					
Regional	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**
Local	**MP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**
Employment (employers)	**MP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**
Employment (employees)	**MP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**
Integration	**MP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**	**MP**	**HP**	**MP**	**MP**
Passengers			**LP**					
Journey Time	**MP**	**LP**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**
Increased accessibility	**HP**	**LP**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**
Service Frequency	**HP**	**N**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**
Service Reliability	**MP**	**N**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**	**LP**	**LP**	**MP**
Journey Opportunities	**HP**	**MP**	**LP**	**N**	**LP**	**MP**	**LP**	**MP**

4.8 The Draft Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (MGRS) (GVA Grimley April 2008)

4.8.1 The MGRS explores a wide range of economic, social, physical and environmental opportunities for the Borough that result as a direct consequence of the Project. Significantly, the MGRS recognises that the Project is much more than just a bridge.

4.8.2 The development of the MGRS has included extensive and wide reaching stakeholder participation and consultation in the Borough.

4.8.3 There are four overlapping themes that the MGRS seeks to develop, of which two are highly relevant to the MGSTS:-

- **Enhancing Accessibility:** through reduced travel times, thereby extending potential catchment areas to education, employment and other community facilities; and

- **Image, Property and Development:** the Project will have a direct physical impact on the locality and will assist in the definition of land use, movement and design mix.

The integration of the land use proposals as set out in the MGRS and the transport and accessibility improvements, as articulated in the MGSTS, are clearly demonstrated from the following integrated area regeneration solutions.

4.8.4 Integrated Solution 1 - West Bank, Widnes

4.8.5 The MGRS recommends that as part of the Project, the West Bank area of Widnes should be comprehensively upgraded as an attractive, mixed land use area. Hence, the MGSTS seeks to support the MGRS by delivering a comprehensive range of transport and access improvements to support the key proposals for that area.

4.8.6 Para 4.6 of the MGRS states:

'An important ambition for the West Bank area is, firstly, to create a new and improved waterfront promenade, which, as part of a robust environmental improvement Strategy, could really transform the image and quality of place. A second important ambition is to improve the links with adjacent areas, particularly Widnes and Runcorn town centres, and also enhanced accessibility to the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 and the highway network.'

4.8.7 Following on from this, the MGRS recommends the following key improvements within the West Bank area;

- **Image and Place Making**

  - To support the improved image and place making within the West Bank area, the MGRS proposes the creation of a new neighbourhood centre located on the Waterloo Road corridor. This new commercial centre is designed to provide an attractive commercial and social hub for the community, where a wide range of key local services will be provided within an attractive setting. This proposed new commercial centre will also act as the hub of an enhanced network of improved sustainable transport links especially public transport, walking and cycling improvements in the area.

  - Furthermore, new sustainable access improvements are proposed to open up access to the Widnes Waterfront area stretching from Spike Island

through to Pickering's Pasture. Particular attention will be placed on the creation of new high quality walking and cycling routes emanating from the key public transport interchange identified at Irwell Street and the new proposed district centre (located off Waterloo Road). These improved walking and cycling links will be complemented by the introduction of a new shuttle bus service linking West Bank, Widnes Waterfront, 3MG, and Widnes Town Centre, detailed in Improvement Theme 2.

- **Accessibility and Movement**

  - To improve accessibility and movement within the West Bank area, the MGRS specifically recommends that the A533 (Queensway) should be downgraded using modifications to the existing road infrastructure to create more direct access to West Bank. As part of the proposals, the A533 becomes a local two-way road to simplify and maximise accessibility. This will be complemented by new at-grade junctions allowing better local traffic movements within and between West Bank and the surrounding areas.

  - The MGRS also identifies the need for the creation of clearer and more easily defined routes for pedestrians and cyclists through the West Bank area. It also provides for a clear hierarchy of defined routes, which responds to the character of the areas proposed and provides for pedestrian and cycle movement, especially key north/south linkages. These issues are addressed in the MGSTS by the proposals contained in Improvement Theme 5.

- **Development and Economic Prosperity**

  - High quality public realm improvements will be introduced as part of the proposals, which will seek to unify the area and improve the 'sense of place'.

4.8.8 Key issues related to sustainable transport and movement in this area were identified as follows:-

- Poor traffic circulation and a lack of permeability;
- Area dominated by motor vehicles and road infrastructure;
- A hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Poor linkages into West Bank;
- Need to upgrade links to Widnes town centre and the Estuary; and
- Need to improve safety and security on footways and roads.

4.8.9 The MGSTS will address these issues by implementing the following:-

- A significant upgrade to key bus routes through the area. The area is dissected by the Core Bus Route Network (identified in Section 2) linking Widnes town centre to West Bank and the SJB. This Core Bus Route Network will be upgraded as part of the first phase of the introduction of the proposed new HRTN. This will be complemented by the introduction of a new local community shuttle bus service, under Improvement Theme 2, offering improved connectivity between the key residential communities within West Bank, the main employment areas, the proposed new commercial centre and key public transport interchange nodes (to be located at Irwell Street and the new commercial centre on Waterloo Road). This service, in addition, provides for enhanced north/south links;

- The creation of new high quality and attractive core walking and cycling routes, (Improvement Theme 5) again linking the key public transport nodes in the area and the housing, employment and leisure attractions in the area;

- Further improvements to the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 section of the strategic cycle network, (Improvement Theme 5); and

- The Council will aspire to deliver a high quality scheme to better provide for pedestrian movement between the high level SJB deck (and proposed public transport interchange at Irwell Street) and Widnes Waterfront area in West Bank. (Improvement Theme 5).

4.8.10 Proposed De-Linking of the SJB in West Bank

4.8.11 Integral to the Project is the de-linking of the SJB from the strategic highway network. The de-linking arrangements are aimed at reducing the potential for the SJB to be used as a strategic link for long distance traffic movement, whilst increasing its function as a local connection for residents and businesses in the Borough.

4.8.12 The planning application submitted in respect of the Project includes de-linking proposals on Queensway in West Bank. The indicative layout for the proposed de-linking as submitted with the Planning Application is shown in Figure 4.3 for illustrative purposes only.

4.8.13 Integrated Solution for Runcorn Town Centre

4.8.14 The MGRS also identifies and recommends specific infrastructure and land use changes for Runcorn town centre, which are supported by measures in the MGSTS.

4.8.15 Key issues related to sustainable transport and movement in this area from the perspective of the MGRS are as follows:-

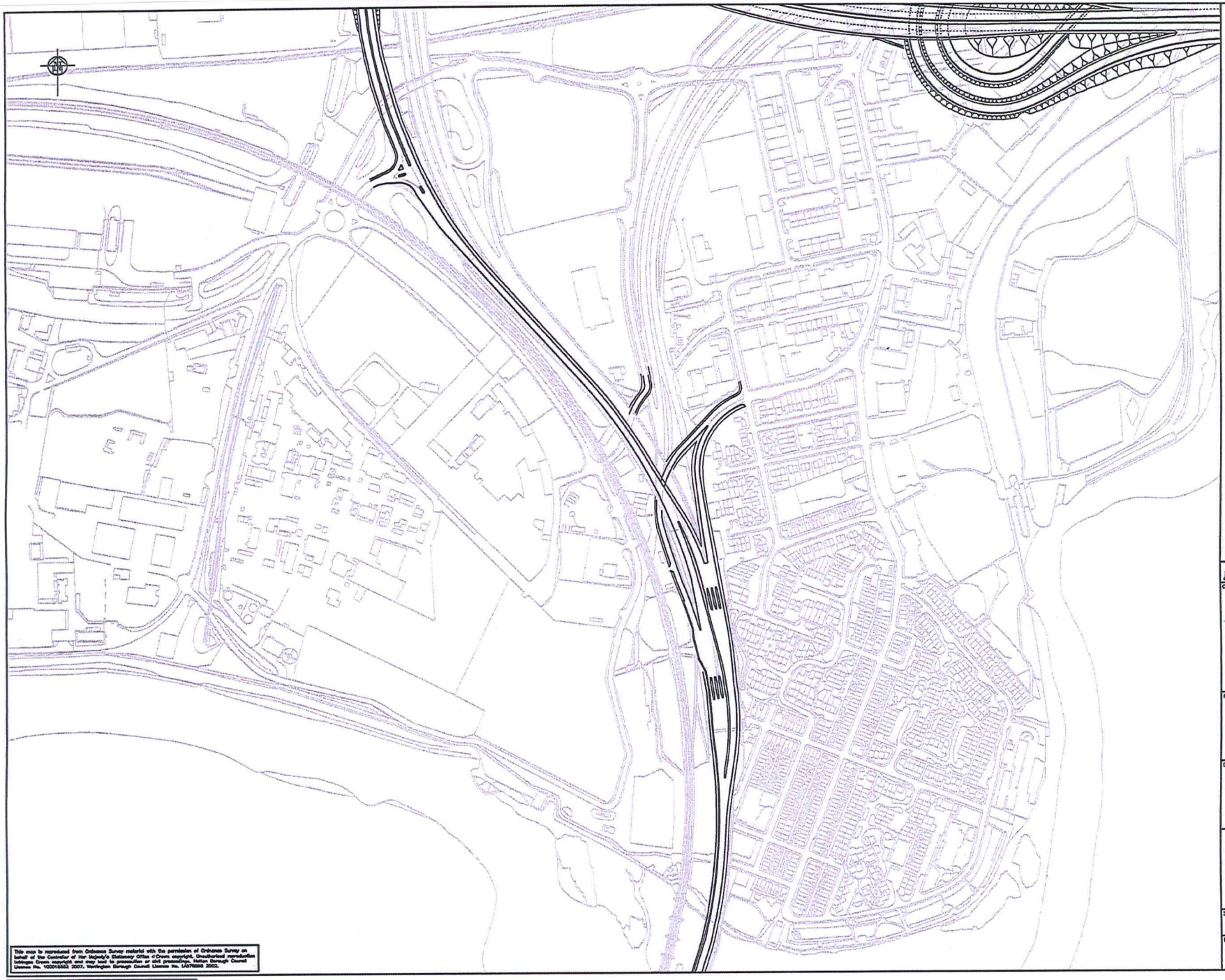
- Poor visibility and legibility of Runcorn railway station and associated bus and pedestrian facilities and connections;

- Poor pedestrian links and high levels of severance in this area; and

- Dominant road infrastructure, particularly on elevated structures.

4.8.16 A number of potential solutions have been considered for the SJB de-linking works in Runcorn as set out in the Mersey Gateway De-Linking Options Report (Reference 33). The scale of the heavy highway infrastructure on the Runcorn side of the SJB is significant and complex. The MGRS has examined the development potential for land in this area following the de-linking works. A key opportunity resulting from this is the potential to redevelop Runcorn railway station with associated office and business land uses adjoining the frontage of the station.

4.8.17 From the perspective of the MGSTS, the de-linking of the SJB provides an opportunity to develop and improve Runcorn railway station as a major transport interchange and thereby address the sustainable transport issue identified above. The key design considerations include the need to identify a solution that maximises the development and commercial opportunities of the land adjoining the station, whilst facilitating the provision of a key sub-regional interchange and transport hub at the station itself. Designs will also have to incorporate direct linkages for buses, pedestrians and cycles between Runcorn railway station and Runcorn Old Town and between Runcorn railway station and the



NOTES

1. This layout is indicative of a highway/ infrastructure layout which delinks the local roads from the main network and can deliver the key elements described within Sustainable Transport Strategy. It should be appreciated that further developement will be required to integrate this layout with the objectives of the Regeneration Strategy.

Rev.	Drwn	Chkd.	Apprvd	Date	Description
-	BAH			13.06.07	FOR INFORMATION

Client

the mersey gateway
A BRIDGE TO PROSPERITY

Northwest
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Project

THE MERSEY GATEWAY

Drawing Title

WESTBANK DELINKING
INDICATIVE LAYOUT
REFERENCE DESIGN
OPTION

FIGURE 4.3
Not to Scale

Scale (at A1)	Date	Drawn
1:2000	13.06.08	BAH

Drg. no.	Rev.
B4027/4/SK/157B	-

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Halton Borough Council Licence No. 100019553 2007, Warrington Borough Council Licence No. LA078266 2002.

housing growth point at Weston via Picow Farm Road.

4.8.18 To help support the regeneration of Runcorn town centre, the key transport recommendations contained within the MGRS, which are supported by the MGSTS include:-

- The removal of the highway bridge over the Bridgewater Canal, which currently prevents it joining with the Manchester Ship Canal and providing wider links to the inland waterways which form the Cheshire loop system, which the Runcorn Branch of the Bridgewater Canal is linked to;
- A comprehensive redesign of the road layout from/to the SJB, involving the removal of the Runcorn 'loops,' to simplify vehicular movement into/out of Runcorn town centre and allow direct bus and vehicular movement from the SJB to Runcorn railway station;
- Retention of the east bound slip road which would be redesigned as a two way road linking the SJB to the town centre by a new, at grade, four-way junction on the Runcorn Expressway; and
- Downgrading of road infrastructure from the 'loops' format allowing improved pedestrian and cyclist movement from the town centre to commercial development via upgraded and new pedestrian and cycle links.

These proposals will be subject to further detailed scrutiny as the project progresses and actual funding and development opportunities come forward.

4.8.19 The MGSTS will address these issues by implementing the following:-

- The introduction of a new town centre shuttle bus service (Improvement Theme 2) linking Runcorn town centre bus station - Runcorn railway station (through the new proposed mixed use commercial area created through the removal of the 'loops'), The Bridge retail park - Riverside College Halton - the Independent Living Centre and the Runcorn Promenade;
- Core Bus Route network improvements over the SJB linking West Bank to Runcorn town centre (Improvement Theme 1);
- Improved bus links between Runcorn town centre and the proposed new housing growth point area at Western Docks (Improvement Theme 2);
- Cycling and walking links (Improvement Theme 3); and
- Improved leisure corridor along the Runcorn branch of the Bridgewater Canal (Improvement Theme 7).

4.8.20 Common Issues and themes in West Bank and Runcorn associated with the SJB

4.8.21 There are a number of common issues and themes in terms of sustainable transport in West Bank and the Runcorn regeneration areas and these are related to the SJB, which provides the only connection for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists in the Borough.

4.8.22 Issues Associated with the Pedestrian Route on the SJB

4.8.23 The SJB currently offers very poor facilities for pedestrians walking between Runcorn and Widnes. The route comprises a narrow pedestrian route running along the east side of the

SJB between West Bank in Widnes and the Town Viaduct in Runcorn. (See plates 4.1 and 4.2 below). Other factors discouraging pedestrian movements include:-

- Noisy environment, particularly on the approaches to the SJB;
- Poor air quality;
- Close proximity of pedestrians to dense traffic;
- High potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists due to the narrowness of the route;
- High level of exposure to the wind and rain;
- Bridge vibrates which can be unnerving for pedestrians; and
- The route is not a formalised route for cyclists.

Plate 4.1. Existing narrow footway on the east side of the SJB, that is intended for pedestrians, but is also used by cyclists.

Plate 4.2. Cyclists in West Bank, heading south towards Runcorn via the SJB.

4.8.24 Feedback from focus group consultation in Section 2 indicated that the walkway across the

SJB should be made more user friendly, more attractive to use and have better access and signage from both sides of the River. Concerns about personal safety were also expressed by consultees as pedestrians and, to a lesser degree, cyclists are 'out of view' when crossing the bridge.

4.8.25 Experience and observations have indicated that pedestrians walking across the SJB often have to frequently get out of the way of cyclists travelling over the SJB, and there is a degree conflict between the two groups of users. This is exacerbated by the narrowness of the route.

4.8.26 Issues Associated with Cycling on the SJB route

4.8.27 A survey conducted on Tuesday 4th December 2007 between 7am and 7pm counted 104 pedestrians and 129 cyclists using the footway on the SJB (Gifford 2007). The survey was undertaken at a time of the year when demand is likely to be low due to the seasonal weather conditions. More people tend to walk and cycle outside the winter season. The results of the survey provided strong evidence to suggest that there is a core of users who wish to make the connection across the River, despite the current unpleasant conditions. The proposed improvements will make the crossing more attractive and should, therefore, generate greater regular use throughout the year.

4.8.28 An automatic counter installed on behalf of the Council on the Town Viaduct in Runcorn on the southerly approach to the SJB, has been monitoring cycle use. These are cyclists who have travelled over Town Viaduct on their way to or from the SJB. A summary of the data collected between May 2007 and September 2008 is shown in Table 4.6. Due to mechanical problems and vandalism to equipment it was not possible to obtain data for every month between May 2007 and September 2008.

4.8.29 The data indicates a peaked profile during weekdays demonstrating a strong demand during the commuter peaks.

Table 4.6 Summary of Cycle Use over the SJB Recorded by Automatic Counting Equipment

		Volume	
Month	**Period**	**Ave Mon-Fri**	**Ave Sat-Sun**
May-07	21st-31st	172	61
Jun-07	1st-10th	206	151
Jul-07	2nd-22nd	157	118
Sep-07	17th-30th	163	126
Oct-07	Whole Month	146	102
Nov-07	Whole Month	123	79
Dec-07	Whole Month	88	62
Jan-08	25th-31st	107	95
Feb-08	Whole Month	132	102
Mar-08	27th-2nd April	136	96
Apr-08	Whole Month	145	83
Aug-08	6th-31st	178	119
Sep-08	6th-15th	184	114

4.8.30 Integrated Solution 3 - Astmoor Sustainable Transport Issues

4.8.31 Key issues related to sustainable transport and movement in this area are as follows:-

- Poor visibility of the Astmoor branch of the Runcorn Busway and stops;
- Poor integration between the Runcorn Busway and pedestrian and cycle routes and adjoining employment and business sites;
- Weak north-south links within Astmoor and links to Runcorn town centre; and
- Poor public realm, particularly in areas adjacent to the Runcorn Busway and stops; and
- No clearly defined interchange and key transport node on the Runcorn Busway in Astmoor.

4.8.32 Measures to address these issues will be implemented as part of proposals to comprehensively regenerate the Astmoor Industrial Estate by the Council.

4.8.33 Halton Lea Sustainable Transport Issues

4.8.34 Halton Lea is one of the foremost commercial centres within the Borough, with significant retail and business office functions. The majority of the centre was purpose built between the late 1960's and mid 1970's in a series of phases, coinciding with the expansion of the Runcorn New Town area.

4.8.35 The main commercial shopping centre, although now dated in many respects, was designed around a unique arrangement of segregated access routes for public transport, pedestrians/cyclists and vehicle movements. The centre is the hub of the unique Busway system which connects all the main residential areas in the Runcorn area with the shopping centre. Passenger access to the Runcorn Busway system is provided by two separate bus stations (Halton Lea North bus station and Halton Lea South bus station) which are served by an elevated one way loop section of the Runcorn Busway. Accessibility by bus to the main commercial centre continues to be excellent from most areas during the daytime Monday to Saturday. However, service quality and availability deteriorates during evenings and Sundays.

4.8.36 Cycling and walking access to Halton Lea is generally very good and is based again on segregated walking and cycling links from surrounding areas. Pedestrians and cyclists are fed into the centre via a network of elevated pedestrian footbridges, although with the opening of the Trident Retail Park in 2003, the at-grade pedestrian access was improved to the southern section of Halton Lea.

4.8.37 The main issues related to sustainable transport and movement in this centre include the following:-

- Car movement dominates the area:-
- Halton Lea North bus station and Halton Lea South bus station operate independently of each other;
- Poor provision for pedestrians;
- The centre suffers from poor legibility with the main access to the shopping area being hidden; and;
- Direct vehicle access from the east is lacking.

4.8.38 Over the longer term, and linked into any future redevelopment of the commercial centre at Halton Lea, the Council will work with developers to address these problems.

4.8.39 Rocksavage and Clifton Sustainable Transport Issues

4.8.40 The MGRS recommends a package of regeneration measures for the Rocksavage and Clifton areas of south Runcorn. The area is tightly ringed by a network of strategic road links and infrastructure (A557 'Western Point Expressway' and the M56) which limits the permeability and ease of movement by sustainable transport choices to the rest of the urban area. The area also fronts onto the River Weaver Canal which provides an important recreational and leisure resource. The railway alignment which is the proposed route of the improved Halton Curve railway is also located on the western fringes of the area. However, pedestrian access between Clifton and the proposed new station on the Halton Curve at Beechwood is currently severed by the A557.

4.8.41 The western part of the area is dominated by heavy industrial activity associated with the Rocksavage power plant and Weston Dock. The principal road access points are Cavendish Farm Road and Bankes Lane. Towards the south east of the area lies the Ashville industrial estate, this only has vehicle access from the A557 (off the severed Clifton Road). Sandwiched in between these two industrial/commercial areas lies the small residential area of Clifton village. Access to Clifton village, is limited by sustainable travel choices due to the existence of heavy road infrastructure, with public transport, walking and cycling links currently extremely limited in scope. Furthermore, strategic walking and cycling linkages are hampered by the design and limited road/footpath capacity on the swing bridge over the Weaver Navigation, affecting key walking and cycling movements between Runcorn and Frodsham and the Weaver Vale area.

4.8.42 The MGRS identifies the area as the key southern gateway to Runcorn and a key link between the M56 and the New Bridge. The MGRS identifies the following objectives for the area:-

- **Objective One:** Strengthen the distinctive character assets of the area, including the Weaver Canal, Sutton Quays and areas of woodland, through the promotion of leisure and recreation;
- **Objective Two:** Respond to the demand for smaller, better quality employment accommodation to cater for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) and business start ups;
- **Objective Three:** Seek to promote alternative energy production within the area, due to the opportunity offered by the areas relative seclusion, lack of opportunity for residential development and locational links into the Borough's electrical supply network;
- **Objective Four:** Encourage high quality, visible gateway development opportunities;
- **Objective Five:** Maximise the use of contaminated land through appropriate redevelopment; and
- **Objective Six:** Promote improved east to west pedestrian links along the River Weaver Canal.

4.8.43 Therefore, over the medium to long term the MGSTS will seek to deliver the following improvements funded out of a mixture of LTP funding and developer contributions:-

- The introduction of improved community passenger transport services to the Clifton village area;

- Improved local pedestrian and cycle links between Clifton village and the core of the urban area in Runcorn;

- Better walking and cycling links between Clifton village and the surrounding commercial and employment areas to the proposed new Beechwood railway station on the Halton Curve railway line;

- The development of travel plans with businesses in the area to work up detailed proposals to promote the greater use of walking, cycling and public transport to the key employment areas; and

- The further development of strategic cycle/walking links through the area, in particular the re-opening of a new cycle/walking link over the Weaver Navigation and River Weaver, thereby improving connections between southern and western Runcorn and Frodsham.

4.9 Conclusion

4.9.1 Section 4 has identified a two phase implementation plan, based on a thematic approach, which addresses key issues identified in the MGRS. Section 5 will describe how progress is to be monitored on the implementation of the MGSTS, and identifies a series of challenging targets, which are linked to the MGSTS objectives.

5 MEASURING PROGRESS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

5.1 Measuring Progress

5.1.1 As with any key strategy covering a period of 20 years, it is important to identify and implement a robust framework for measuring the effectiveness of the MGSTS, both in terms of outputs and impacts.

5.1.2 It is proposed that the recently established Halton Local Strategic Transport Board will steer the implementation and monitoring of the MGSTS and that annual updates will be produced in line with the normal reporting mechanisms for the LTP (or successor documents).

5.1.3 To assist with the measuring of progress, the following output indicators and impact targets are proposed (grouped under each of key objectives of the MGSTS).

5.1.4 Objective 1

Further improve accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards in Halton to a wide range of key facilities including employment, learning/ training, health, leisure and retail facilities.

Table 5.1 Objective 1 Indicators

Output Indicator	Impact Target
Improved cycle links between the top five most income deprived wards of the Borough and the key regeneration sites.	Increase the percentage of people living in the top five most deprived wards in the Borough, regularly cycling to education, employment, health, leisure and shopping facilities by 10% in 2021 and 25% in 2031.
Improved accessibility to key employment sites in eastern Runcorn through the introduction of a new 'Door2Door' service operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week.	Reduction in the journey time by bus for residents living in the top 5 most income deprived wards living within 40 minutes end to end journey time from their home to place of employment in eastern Runcorn. Specific targets will be identified when base data becomes available. Performance will be monitored using the DfT's 'Accession' accessibility software.

5.1.5 Objective 2

Reduce the future reliance on carbon intensive modes of travel through encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options.

Table 5.2- Objective 2 Indicators

Output Indicator	Impact Target
Improvements to local bus services on the Core Bus Route Network, as set out in improvements themes 1 and 2.	Increase the percentage of people travelling to and from work by bus from 8% in 2001 to 15% in 2021, and 18% in 2031.
Introduction of 20 new cycle hire nodes in the Borough.	Generate 1,000 active members of the cycle hire scheme by 2021 (active members are defined as using the scheme at least twice per month).
Introduction a fleet of at least 40 new buses running on bio fuel or alternative low carbon fuel as part of the Strategy	Reduce reliance on conventional diesel sources for operators providing services on the local public transport network by 75% by 2021.

5.1.6 Objective 3

Support the continued regeneration of Halton, through ensuring new high quality sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Project and the associated MGRS.

Table 5.3 Objective 3 Indicators

Output Indicator	Impact Target
The introduction of 2 new high quality shuttle bus services linking key regeneration sites to Widnes and Runcorn Town Centres.	90% of the population of the Borough should be within 45 minutes travel time of key regeneration areas by public transport by 2021. Performance will be monitored using the Accession model
Improved accessibility to key employment sites in eastern Runcorn through the introduction of a new 'Door2Door' service	Delivering a 20 minute 'connecting' target for passengers arriving and transferring to/from the new proposed eastern Runcorn 'Door2Door' service at Murdishaw Bus Interchange or Runcorn East Station, Specific targets will be identified when base data becomes available. Performance will be monitored using the DfT's 'Accession' accessibility software.
Better linkages for pedestrians and cyclists over the SJB.	Increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling over the SJB by 350% by 2021 compared with current levels of use as at 2008.

5.1.7 Objective 4

Improve the modal share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres (Runcorn Town Centre, Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby supporting the regeneration of these centres.

Table 5.4 Objective 4 Indicators

Output Indicator	Impact Target
The introduction of improved frequencies and hours of operation on the Core Bus Route Network , which links the key three commercial centres to their surrounding residential areas.	Increase the percentage of people travelling into the three main commercial centres by public transport by 8% in 2021, and by 12% in 2031 compared to the baseline data established in 2011.
Introduction of improved cycle links and facilities into the main commercial centres from the surrounding areas.	Increase the percentage of people cycling into the three main commercial centres, by 15% in 2021 and by 25% in 2031 compared to the baseline data established in 2011.
Improve the footfall in the three main commercial centres through measures to improve the pedestrian environment.	Increase the percentage of people walking to the three main commercial centres by 4% in 2021 and by 8% in 2031 compared to the baseline data established in 2011.

N.B. Baseline figures for the cordon count's need to be established. The cordon counts will be conducted once every 3 years, during the period of the MGSTS.

5.1.8 Objective 5

Further develop new strategic high quality sustainable transport links/corridors through Halton utilising opportunities provided by the Project and thereby improving key Mersey Belt and Liverpool City area linkages.

Table 5.5 Objective 5 Indicator

Output Indicator	Impact Target
Better cycle links between the Trans Pennine Trail NCN 62 and Runcorn via SJB.	Increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling over the SJB by 100% by 2021

6 SUMMARY

6.1 The MGSTS, delivered within the Mersey Gateway Project, seeks to dramatically improve levels of accessibility in Halton and within the emerging Liverpool City Region. This, in turn, will support the ongoing regeneration of Halton and deliver a sustained, balanced improvement to communities and the local economy, enabling the Borough to play a full part in the transformation of the UK economy.

6.2 The Project, including the MGSTS, is very closely aligned to the UK Government's long-term vision for transport as set out in **"**Towards a Sustainable Transport System" and is firmly cemented into a strong regional, sub-regional and local vision framework.

6.3 The key outcomes of the Project clearly meet the UK Government's long term vision for transport as set out in TaSTS including :-

- Supporting national economic competitiveness and growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
- Reducing transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;
- Contributing to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
- Promoting greater equality of opportunity for all citizens with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and
- Improving quality of life for transport users and non transport users and promoting a healthy natural environment.

6.4 The proposed MGSTS ensures that the Project is much more than just a new road crossing across the River Mersey. It also includes a package of complementary sustainable transport improvements which aim to significantly enhance travel options and improve accessibility for all residents of the Borough of Halton, especially those living in the most deprived areas. This is the essence of the **Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.**

REFERENCES

Ref 1 Halton Council (2006) Final Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/2011.

Ref. 2 Halton Council (2005) Unitary Development Plan 2005.

Ref. 3 GVA Grimley, The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy 2008
Chapter 16.00 Transport

Ref. 4 The Mersey Gateway Project Environmental Statement 1.0, 2008
Chapter 20.00 Impact Assessment

Ref. 5 Mersey Gateway First Stage Public Transport Options Study, 2006.

Ref. 6 Census 2001, National Statistics (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

Ref. 7 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2007)
www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation

Ref. 8 Office of the Rail Regulator www.rail-re.gov.uk

Ref. 9 National Travel Statistics 2005 (online)
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product

Ref.10 Halton Council Halton Local Transport Plan (2006/07-2010/11) Mid Term Review (2008).

Ref.11 Halton Access Plan. This is a component of Halton Borough Council's second Local Transport Plan 2006/07- 2010/11 referred to as Reference 1 above.

Ref.12 Department for Transport, The Future of Transport White Paper, July 2004.

Ref.13 Sustrans http//sustrans.org.uk/default.asp

Ref.14 Department for Transport, Walking and Cycling-an Action Plan, 2004.

Ref.15 The Really Useful Research Company john@reallyusefulresearch.com
January 2008.

Ref.16 Department for Transport, Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone, 2000.

Ref.17 Department for Transport, The Future Transport, A Network for 2030, July 2004
.
Ref.18 Department for Transport, A new deal for transport; better for everyone, 1998

Ref.19 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK (May 1999)

Ref.20 Department for Environment, Waterways for Tomorrow, 2000

Ref.21 Department for Transport, Towards a Sustainable Transport System, October 2007

Ref.22 Department for |Transport, The Eddington Transport Study, The Case for Action: Sir Rod Eddington's advice to Government, 2006.

Ref.23 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development 2005.

Ref.24 Department for Communities and Local Government, Planning Policy Statement, Planning and Climate Change, supplement to PPS1 2007

Ref.25 Department for Communities and Local Government, Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) June 2008

Ref.26 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13: Transport March 2001

Ref.27 North West Regional Authority, Regional Transport Strategy, 2003.

Ref.28 Halton Council, Halton Strategic Partnership, a community Strategy for a sustainable Halton 2006-2011 Making it Happen in Halton. 2006.

Ref.29 Halton Council, Halton Draft Economic Review 2008.

Ref.30 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Climate Change Act 2008.

Ref.31 British Integrated Smartcard Organisation http://itso.org.uk

Ref.32 Halton Council LTP 2006/07-2010/11 Mid Term Review, 2008.

Ref 33 Gifford, Mersey Gateway De-Linking Options Report, 2006.

Ref.34 Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and Executive, Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 Approved 2006.

Ref.35 Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation (ITSO) http://www.itsoservices.org.uk/

Ref.36 Merseyside Freight Study http://www.merseydeealliance.org.uk/

Ref.37 Gifford, Mersey Gateway Cycle and Walking Issues, August 2006.

Ref.38 Association of Community Rail Partnerships ACORP. www.acorp.uk.com

Ref.39 http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/

Ref.40 Network Rail, Halton Curve Options Report, September 2007

Ref.41 Department for Communities and Local Government, Planning and Compulsory Purchasing Act 2004.

Ref.42 Department for Transport, Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment) Order 2009

Ref.43 http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm

Ref.44 http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk

Ref.45 Gifford Report Number MGREPTR025 Rev A Date Dec 2008

APPENDIX A

Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy

Review of Recent Developments relating to National, Regional and the Local Policy Context.

National Policy Developments

Policy Change	Description of Policy Change	Recommended Action
Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment) Order 2009	In October 2008 the Government published consultation on the Draft Renewable Fuel Obligation (Amendment) Order 2009. The proposals are designed to take forward the key findings of the Gallagher Review including the proposal that the rate of increase of the Renewal Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) be slowed to reach 5% in 2013/14 rather than 2010/11, with two new types of bio fuels – biobutanol and hydrogenated renewable diesel be included within the list of fuels eligible under the RTFO.	**It is recommended that the national policy change should be referred to in Section 3 of the MGSTS. However this does not affect the overall Strategy as currently drafted.**
Local Transport Bill 2008	In late 2008 the new Transport Act gained Royal Ascent in late 2008. This will give local authorities important new powers to improve the quality of local bus services, reform the arrangements for local transport governance in the major conurbations and enable councils to take decisions on local road pricing schemes. Therefore the new Transport Act seeks to provide a clearer spectrum of options for local authorities consisting of:- • Voluntary agreements (VPA's); • Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (QBP's); and • Quality Contracts.	**In commenting on draft Guidance to accompany the Bill, the Council welcomed the introduction of new powers to introduce Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Schemes. These schemes allow local authorities to specify bus service frequencies, timings and maximum fares. It is recommended that the Strategy be changes to include the following provision:-** **"In delivering the proposals as set out in the MGSTS, the Council will seek to identify the correct mechanism for delivering the proposed public transport improvements in partnership with the bus operators, including the creation of a formal Statutory Quality Bus Partnership."**

	Changes also being introduced by the new Transport Act will mean that the QPS may also impose additional new restrictions relating to the subsequent registration of new bus services or the amendment / withdrawal of existing services within the area covered by the QPS. The aim of this new provision is to:- • Prevent the introduction of new services which might undermine services also specified and provided under the QPS; and • Preclude the entry of operators who are unwilling to operate services to the prescribed quality standards as set out in the QPS The new regulations would also empower the local authority to specify key dates for bus service registration changes as part of a QPS, hence ensuring greater stability to local bus markets. However, the DfT make clear that it remains the responsibility of the Traffic Commissioners to ultimately decide as to whether a bus service meets the quality criteria as set out in a QPS. Under such circumstances the normal 56 day notification period on bus service registration changes is suspended and replaced by a decision taken by the Traffic Commissioner as to a practical start date for a new service or amendment to an existing one based on the nature of the QPS. The new draft regulations also specify a procedure for the review of timings, frequencies and maximum fares under a QPS. The draft guidelines state that maximum fares must be reviewed at least every 12	

	months, however no such review period is stipulated for timings and fares. A QPS cannot include tour services; inter urban services, community bus services or school buses. Local authority subsidised services should be included in the QPS. It is suggested that the local transport authority establish a robust governance process for monitoring the scheme with all of the local partners such as a Local Partnership Board	

Regional Policy Developments

Policy Change	Description of Policy Change	Recommended Action
The recently adopted North West Regional Spatial Strategy (September 2008)	The recently adopted North West Regional Spatial Strategy replaces the old Regional Planning Guidance 13, and forms part of the statutory development plan for the Borough. The forthcoming North West Regional Spatial Strategy Implementation Plan (due for publication in December 2008) will outline regional priorities for transport investment.	**It is recommended that this regional policy change should be referred to in Section 3 of the MGSTS. However this does not affect the overall Strategy as currently drafted.**

Local Policy Developments

Policy Change	Description of Policy Change	Recommended Action
Halton Local Area Agreement June 2008 – April 2011	In June 2008, the Halton Strategic Partnership published the new Local Area Agreement for the Borough. It reiterated the strategic policy framework for the Borough, the key priorities of which are:- • **A Healthy Halton** – To create a healthier community and work to promote well being – a positive experience of life and good health; • **Halton's Urban Renewal** – To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough; • **Halton's Children and Young People** – To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy. • **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth; and • **A Safer Halton-** To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life. The LAA recognises the importance of the Project and the accompanying MGSTS in terms of supporting new employment opportunities and improving accessibility across the Borough and beyond.	**It is recommended that the local policy change should be referred to in Section 3 of the MGSTS. However this does not affect the overall Strategy as currently drafted.**

Report No. MG_REP_TR_025 Rev A
December 2008

MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
"GATEWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY"

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

Halton Borough Council
Environment Directorate
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
"GATEWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY"

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Gifford Document No:	**MG_REP_TR_025 Rev A**		
Status:	FINAL	*Copy No:*	

	Name	*Signature*	*Date*
Prepared by:	Chris Hodsman	Chris Hodsman	15 December 2008
Checked:	Valerie Ballorin	Valerie Ballorin	15 December 2008
Gifford Approved:	Bram Miller	Bram Miller	15 December 2008

Revision Record

Rev.	*Date*	*By*	*Summary of Changes*	*Chkd*	*Aprvd*
A	21/01/2009	CH	Consultation responses from statutory consultees incorporated.	VB	BAM

MERSEY GATEWAY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY "GATEWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY"

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

C O N T E N T S

Page

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY 2

1.1 Introduction and Background 2
1.2 Method 2
1.3 Relationship to other plans, programmes and objectives 2
1.4 Baseline conditions 2
1.5 SA Framework 2
1.6 Appraisal of strategic options 2
1.7 Consultation 3
1.8 Mitigation and monitoring 3
1.9 Difference the process has made 3

2. BACKGROUND 5

2.1 Purpose of the SA and the SA Report 5
2.2 Strategy objectives and outline of contents 5
2.3 Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations 7

3. APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY 9

3.1 Approach adopted to the SA 9
3.2 Consultation 9
3.3 Difficulties encountered 11

4. SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES, BASELINE AND CONTEXT 12

4.1 Links to relevant plans, policies and programmes 12
4.2 Existing baseline 14
4.3 Key issues/problems identified 18
4.4 The SA Framework: Objectives, indicators and targets 19

5. APPRAISAL OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS 21

5.2 Objective Appraisal 24

6. CONSULTING ON THE SA REPORT 37

7. MITIGATION AND MONITORING 38

8. DIFFERENCE THE PROCESS HAS MADE 38

APPENDIX 1: REVIEW OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

APPENDIX 2: KEY ISSUES

APPENDIX 3: COMPATIBILITY OF OBJECTIVES

APPENDIX 4: OUTPUTS INDICATORS AND TARGETS FROM MGSTS

APPENDIX 5: MGSTS SA SCOPING REPORT CONSULTATION

APPENDIX 6: SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE

APPENDIX 7: SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

APPENDIX 8: CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM NATURAL ENGLAND

APEENDIX 9: SA REPORT CONSULTATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS REPORT

Details on how to comment on the SA Report is provided below.

Consultation on the MGSTS Sustainability Appraisal
.
Comments can be provided by:

Post:

Write to: Chris Hodsman

Gifford
Carlton House
Ringwood Road
Woodlands
Southampton
SO40 7HT

Email: Chris Hodsman on chris.hodsman@gifford.uk.com

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction and Background

1.1.1 Gifford has been appointed by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the proposed Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS). The MGSTS sets out how the proposed Mersey Gateway Project can encourage sustainable transport in the Borough.

1.2 Method

1.2.1 This report and the previous Scoping Report (MG_REP_TR_024) produced in October 2008 were conducted in accordance with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (now Department of Communities and Local Government DCLG) Guidance *'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents'* (November 2005).

1.2.2 Stages A and B relate to the previous Scoping Report. This SA Report covers Stages C of the SA/SEA process for the MGSTS.

1.3 Relationship to other plans, programmes and objectives

1.3.1 The range of international, national, regional and local plans, programmes and objectives relevant to the MGSTS was established in the scoping report (MG_REP_TR_024), along with how the strategy is affected by these outside factors, and how objectives and requirements might be taken on board.

1.4 Baseline conditions

1.4.1 Baseline information collected in Stage A (scoping stage) of this SA was divided into two categories. Firstly, generic sustainability baseline information collected as part of the production of the SA Scoping Report of HBC Core Strategy Development Plan Document and secondly supplementary baseline data relating to specific issues that will affect the MGSTS.

1.4.2 Baseline characteristics of Halton were established for both existing and predicted future baseline, and the main social, environmental and economic issues for the area were identified.

1.5 SA Framework

1.5.1 A total of eighteen proposed SA/SEA objectives have been utilised in this SA/SEA. These reflect social, economic and environmental issues in the Borough of Halton. The framework is based on the Halton Borough Council (HBC) Core Strategy SA ensuring consistency.

1.5.2 The framework provides a way of checking whether the objectives of MGSTS are likely to contribute to sustainability. The SA Framework has been tested for internal compatibility to help identify key areas where conflict may occur. No conflicts were identified.

1.6 Appraisal of strategic options

1.6.1 A key requirement of the SA/SEA is to consider reasonable alternatives. Two options were assessed:

- Option One – 'Do Nothing' Business as Usual/Without MGSTS Option;
- Option Two – Implement MGSTS.

1.6.2 Option One was included should the MG Project not progress, this scenario would result in the continued adoption of Local Transport Plan (LTP2). Option Two assumes that the MG scheme is constructed and fully operational. As such, the MGSTS is designed to complement and work in a holistic manner with the new crossing. The preferred option is Option Two and is concentrated on in this SA.

1.6.3 The Mersey Gateway Team commissioned a First Stage Public Transit Options Study (Reid Rail May 2007) for Option 2. The alternative transit options considered included:

- Personalised Rapid Transit (PRT);
- Ultra Light Railway (ULT);
- Guided Busway (also including Trolley Bus);
- Busway;
- Light Rail;
- Tram – Train;
- Heavy Rail; and
- Monorail.

1.6.4 A Bus Rapid Transit System combined with a demand response service was deemed to be the most effective way to create step change improvements in the sustainability and accessibility of a public transport system for Halton.

1.7 Consultation

1.7.1 The SA Scoping Report was sent out for formal consultation from 31st October 2008 to 8th December 2008. Following closure of the consultation period all responses were taken into consideration and justification for incorporating or omitting comments is recorded.

1.7.2 Stage D of the SA/SEA process requires that the draft SA Report is subject to a five week formal consultation period with statutory consultees:

- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England

1.7.3 The SEA Directive also requires that the SA Report is publicly consulted on. The finalised report will be available and signposted on Halton Borough Council's website.

1.8 Mitigation and monitoring

1.8.1 The appraisal of the MGSTS suggests that implementation will have mainly positive impacts. Because of this, enhancement measures will be aimed at maximising these positive effects. Mitigation measures are presented in Table 6.

1.8.2 The MGSTS presents a framework to measure the effectiveness of the Strategy both in terms of outputs and impacts which directly relate to the objectives of the MGSTS.

1.9 Difference the process has made

1.9.1 The undertaking of this SA has acted as a catalyst to facilitate consultation with statutory consultees. Consultation responses on the Scoping Report have fed back into this SA, addressing concerns and ensuring all relevant information is included and available in order to comprehensively assess the sustainability of the MGSTS.

1.9.2 Changes made as a result of the SA process have included:

- Increased emphasis and inclusion of the issue of air quality and climate change. Air quality is now incorporated into the core MGSTS objectives.
- The SA process has stressed the importance of addressing the issue of deprivation and low incomes within Halton. The proposed SMART card system was introduced as a result of findings and information presented by the SA. This multi modal SMART card system is designed to offer a flexible way to travel, targeting people on low incomes and will help open up new public transport markets. Discounts will be easily administered and issued to persons on low incomes through the SMART card.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Purpose of the SA and the SA Report

2.1.1 Gifford has been appointed by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the proposed Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS). The MGSTS sets out how the proposed Mersey Gateway Project can encourage sustainable transport in the Borough.

2.1.2 This report has been prepared by Gifford solely for the benefit of Halton Borough Council. It shall not be relied upon or transferred to any third party without the prior written permission of Gifford.

2.1.3 Sustainable development in the UK has been developed through the guiding aim of the Bruntland Report which defines it as *"development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. It is now central to UK Government goals to change resource use attitudes. Contrary to common perception, sustainability is not just focused on environmental/ecological impacts, but also considers social issues and an overall sense of well being to include economic and employment factors.

2.1.4 The purpose of SAs is to highlight and encourage sustainable development through integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into strategic level planning.

2.1.5 SA is a multistage process, as set out in the Scoping Report (Gifford report: Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy "Gateway to Sustainability" Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report MG_REP_TR_024). The Scoping Report formed Stage A, consultation carried out throughout the MGSTS development process formed Stage B, with this SA report forming Stage C of the 5 stage process, as set out in the Guidance. This SA has assessed the MGSTS against sustainability objectives for Economic, Social and Environmental factors. Through the options presented, mitigation measures have been identified to ensure that development of the MGSTS will be focussed on achieving sustainability goals thus maximising benefits of the development for the populace and environment of Halton.

2.2 Strategy objectives and outline of contents

2.2.1 The vision set by the MGSTS is:

"To identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of Halton's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Mersey Gateway Project"

2.2.2 The MGSTS supports a number of the objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project. These being:

- To relieve the congested Siler Jubilee Bridge (SJB), thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local transport needs;
- Improve accessibility to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities;
- Improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment; and
- Improve public transport links across the river.

2.2.3 The MGSTS embraces findings of the LTP2 and Halton's Unitary Development Plan that congestion on the SJB is a restraint to economic growth. The SJB is also failing to satisfy its role of facilitating strategic inter-urban transport and local trips between Runcorn and Widnes. The MGSTS sets out how the proposed Mersey Gateway Project can encourage sustainable transport in the Borough. The Mersey Gateway Project and the MGSTS are central to the achievement of the economic and environmental regeneration aspirations of the Borough presented in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. The key objectives of the MGSTS are to:

- Further improve accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards in Halton Borough to a wide range of key facilities including – employment, learning / training, health, leisure and retail facilities;
- Reduce the future reliance on carbon-intensive modes of travel through the promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options;
- Support the continued regeneration of the Borough, through ensuring new high quality sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Project and associated Mersey Gateway Regeneration strategy (MGRG);
- Improve the modal share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres of the Borough (Runcorn Town Centre, Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby supporting the regeneration of the centres; and
- Further develop new strategic high quality sustainable transport links / corridors through the Borough utilising the opportunities provided by the Project and thereby improving complementary Merseyside Region linkages.

2.2.4 The MGSTS was developed as illustrated in Figure 1. This SA Report is largely informed by HBC's Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report of 2006 which identified key sustainability issues affecting Halton. The Core Strategy among others aided the development of the MGSTS.

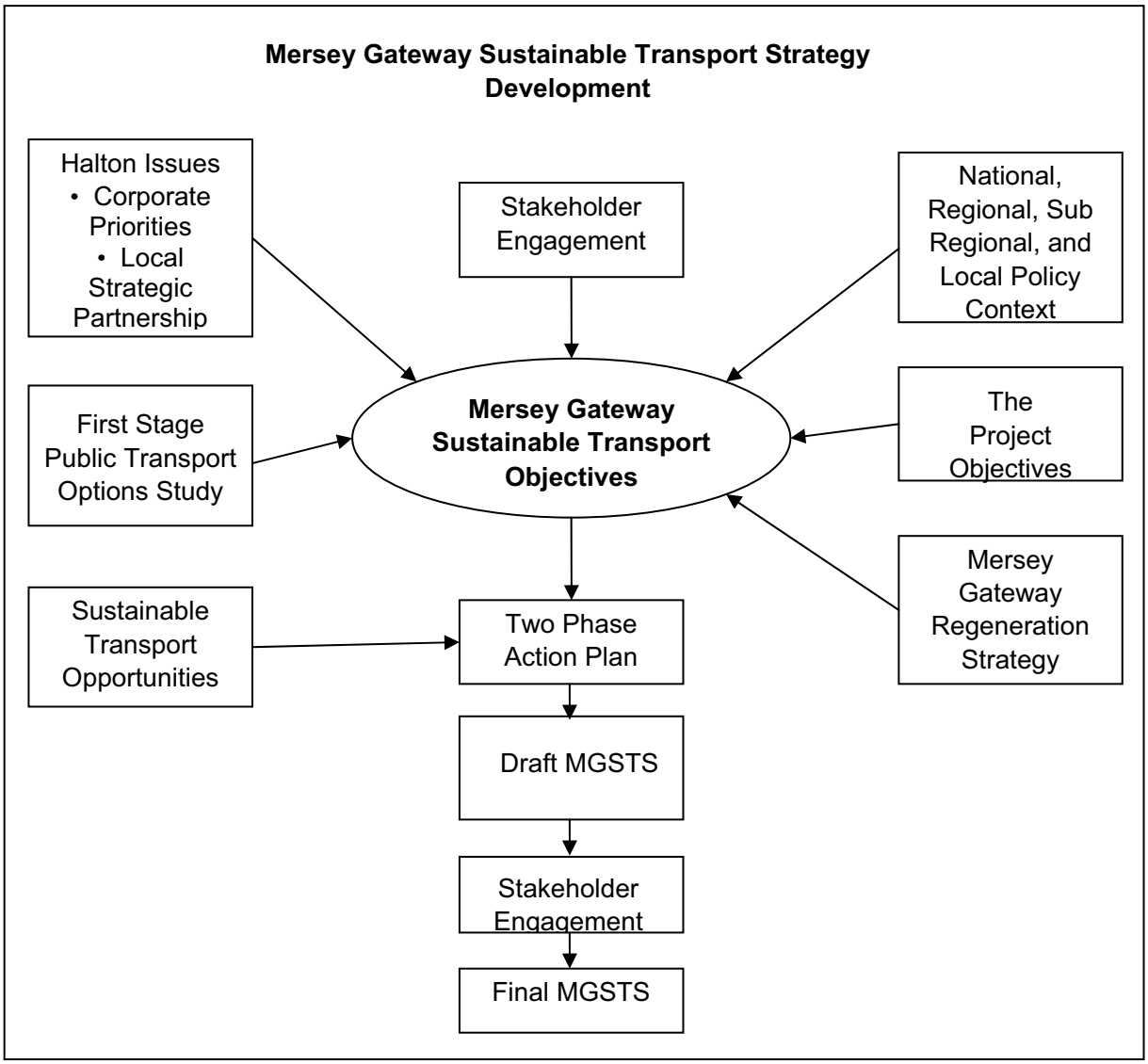


Figure 1: Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy Development

2.3 Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations

2.3.1 The DCLG Guidance sets out the guidelines for undertaking SAs. Appendix 1 of the DCLG document tabulates the SEA Directives requirements. The table below illustrates where, within the SA for the MGSTS, these objectives are met. It is permissible to satisfy both the requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC and DCLG Guidance through the preparation of a single Sustainability Appraisal document.

Objectives	Where Covered in SA
A) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2, 4
B) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 4
C) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 4
D) Any existing evironmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme;	Section 4
E) The environmental protection objectives, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 2, Section 4, Section 5
F) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assests, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors,	Section 5, Table 5
G) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 5, Table 5
H) An outline of the reason for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 5
I) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Section 7
J) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Section 1
Consultation: • Authorities with environental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be including in the environmental report. • Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public shall be given early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme	Section 3

Table 1: Assessing conformance with the SEA Directive

3. APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach adopted to the SA

3.1.1 A Scoping Report was produced in October 2008 which covered Stage A of the SA/SEA for the MGSTS, in accordance with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (now DCLG) Guidance *'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents'* (November 2005). The Scoping Report was sent to statutory consultees for formal consultation from 31st October 2008 to 8th December 2008. Following closure of the consultation period all responses were taken into consideration and justification for incorporating or omitting comments is recorded.

3.1.2 This SA Report forms Stage C. Subsequent stages of the SA process include consultation and the monitoring of significant effects of implementing the MGSTS after adoption.

3.2 Consultation

Scoping Stage

3.2.1 The SA Scoping Report forming stage A of the SA process was submitted to Halton Borough Council for review and comments incorporated. Subsequently the scoping report was sent to the following statutory consultees: the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England and English Heritage, responses from which have shaped this stage of the SA process. A list of questions related to the Scoping Report was provided to statutory consultees to target responses to areas which were considered of greatest importance to the SA process. The questions are presented in Appendix 5.

3.2.2 Table 2 presents comments received from the statutory consultees and provides a commentary explaining if responses were included or omitted.

Consultee	Question comment relates to	Comments	Commentary
English Heritage	1	Include European Landscape Convention of 2006 into list of relevant PPPs.	Inclusion agreed, added in Section 4 and Appendix 1.
	2/3	Refer to Cheshire Historic Towns Survey report for Halton District and Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation project for baseline data relating to cultural heritage.	Documents have been reviewed and relevant information added to the baseline.
	5	As part of the key issue "protecting cultural and built heritage" need to cover all aspects of the historic environment, also include scheduled ancient monuments, other archaeology and locally important heritage assets.	Inclusion agreed, information added to Table 3 in Section 4.
	7	SA objective 17 is agreed.	Agreed.
	9	It is unlikely that the indicators for objective 17 (To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets) will help in addressing the detailed criteria	Revised more suitable indicators have been devised and included.

Consultee	Question comment relates to	Comments	Commentary
		included in Appendix 5. It is suggested that an indicator more directly related to this strategy and its potential impact upon the historic environment is developed.	
		Appendix 3: The most up to date information is available form Heritage Counts 2008 and Heritage Risk Register 2008.	These documents were reviewed and information contained in Appendix 3 updated as necessary.
EA		Reference should be made within paragraph 3.1.6 to Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.	Added to list of PPPs.
		We note that the suggested objectives for the MGSTS SA framework to be the same as those within the Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March 2006). We would draw your attention to the Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (July 2006) which provides details on changes and refinements to objectives 6, 13, 16 and 17. We would recommend that the MGMTS SA scoping report reflects these amendments. Additionally, these changes may need to be reflected within the Compatibility of Objectives detailed in Appendix 4 and the SA Framework detailed in Appendix 5. We would also advise that the Interim Report be added to the list within paragraph 3.1.8.	SA objectives have been updated in line with the suggested document. The Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (July 2006) has been added and reflected accordingly. Changes have been reflected in the compatibility matrix.
		There would appear to be missing information within “Relevance to MGSTS” within table: National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives in Appendix 2: Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes. Under PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk, relevance should be made that the MGSTS should follow the principles of PPS25 and ensure that the development mitigates any flood risk on or off site. We would also recommend that consideration is made to the inclusion of Flood Risk as a potential environmental issue.	Statement added to “Relevance to MGSTS”. Flood risk was already included in the environmental baseline in Figure 4.
		We would advise that the Baseline Data for SA Objective 13 within Appendix 5 has been updated for 2006.	Data has been reviewed and updated as required.
Natural England		Figure 3: We would like to see reference to the Borough's green infrastructure and the	Reference made to green infrastructure

Consultee	Question comment relates to	Comments	Commentary
		health and economic benefits increased access to these areas can bring.	principles in report.
		Figure 4: References should be to Natural England not English Nature.	Amended.
		3.1.6: Needs reference to NERC Act and biodiversity duty.	Included.
		Social Issues: We would like to see reference to green infrastructure, particularly the benefits to health of an easily accessible green infrastructure network. We would like to see specific mention of the opportunities for increased active forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, and the health and access benefits these could bring.	Included.
		Objective 11: We would like to see reference to green infrastructure in this objective.	Objective has been amended.
		Objective 16: We would like this objective to be broadened out to reflect the potential to reduce carbon emissions in relation to climate change targets.	Objective has been amended.
		Appendix 5: SA Framework: Objective 11: We would like to see the indicator expanded to include a measure of the number of LNRs and parks accessible by sustainable transport modes e.g. bus, train, cycle, walking. Objective 16: It would be useful to include an indicator for carbon emissions.	Objective indicators have been updated.

Table 2: Consultation responses from statutory consultees

3.2.3 Copies of consultation responses from English Heritage and the Environment Agency are included in Appendix 6 and 7 respectively.

3.3 Difficulties encountered

3.3.1 There were minimal difficulties compiling information and carrying out the assessment. The baseline information produced by HBC acted as a sound base for the assessment. However, it was necessary to review the information presented for completeness and accuracy as the baseline information was published in 2006.

4. SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES, BASELINE AND CONTEXT

4.1 Links to relevant plans, policies and programmes

4.1.1 The range of international, national, regional and local plans, programmes and objectives relevant to the MGSTS have been identified and reviewed.

4.1.2 The Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, produced in 2006, contains a comprehensive review of relevant PPPs for Halton. This review is considered to be appropriate to serve as a basis for the review of PPPs for this Sustainability Appraisal and can be found in Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The use of concurrent PPP reviews conducted for the area is in accordance with the Guidance.

4.1.3 The plans and programmes reviewed provided different types of information and fulfil different roles, including:

- A source of baseline date.
- A source of sustainability objectives that should be reflected in the SA process.
- An influence over the MGSTS preparation and a higher level policy context.
- A source that may lead to cumulative effects when combine with the MGSTS.

4.1.4 Information presented within the Core Strategy SA Scoping Report has been reviewed for completeness and accuracy and has been updated and added to as deemed necessary. The PPPs below have been deemed to be relevant to the MGSTS and this SA. They also incorporate the comments received during consultation of the Scoping Report. Full details of the PPPs and their relevance to the MGSTS are included as Appendix 1.

4.1.5 International PPPs with particular relevance to this SA:

- Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (2002);
- Kyoto Protocol (1997);
- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992);
- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (amended 19
- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP);
- EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002-2012);
- European Landscape Convention (2006)
- Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive);
- The Birds Directive 79/409/EEC;
- Air Quality Directive 1999/30;
- Waste Framework Directive 75/442/EEC;
- European Water Framework Directive Integrated River Basin Management for Europe (2000/60/EC; and
- Aarhus Convention (2005).

4.1.6 National PPPs with particular relevance to this SA:

- Roads – Delivering Choice and Reliability (July 2008);
- Towards a Sustainable Transport System TaSTS (October 2007);
- The Eddington Transport Report: The case for Action (December 2006);
- Stern Report: The economics of Climate Change
- The Future of Transport: (White Paper, July 2004);
- Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone: The First Three Year Review (April 2004);
- Making Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion (2003);

- Highways Agency's 'Tackling Congestion by Influencing Travel Behaviour';
- Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan (June 2004);
- National Cycling Strategy (September 1996) and Modified (October 2004);
- Urban White Paper (2000);
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (January 2004);
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities *Act* 2006;
- Working with the Seeds of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002);
- Securing the Future – Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (March 2005);
- Creating a Sustainable Built Environment (July 2005);
- Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance (November 2000);
- Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (July 2007);
- Waste Strategy for England and Wales (May, 2007);
- PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2004);PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (August, 2005);
- PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres (2005);
- PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005);
- PPS 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (2005);
- PPS 11: Regional Spatial Strategy (September, 2004);
- PPS 12: Local Development Frameworks (2008);
- PPS 23: Planning and Pollution Control (2004);
- PPG 2: Green Belt (1995);
- PPG 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms (November,1992);
- PPG 13: Transport (March, 2001);
- PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994);
- PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning (November 1990);
- PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (August 2002);
- PPG 24: Planning and Noise (September 1994);
- PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk (Dec 2006);
- Mineral Policy Guidance 6: Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England (1994);
- Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (2006);
- Power of Place (2000); and
- The Historic Environment – A force for our Future (2001).

4.1.7 Regional PPPs with particular relevance to this SA:

- Moving Forward – The Northern Way (2004);
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (2008);
- Regional Sustainable Development Framework – Action for Sustainability;
- Wild about the North West: A Biodiversity Audit of North West England (1999);
- The Cultural Strategy for England's North West (2001);
- North West Economic Strategy (2006);
- Draft North West Sustainability for Developments;
- Rising to the Challenge – A Climate Change Action Plan for England's North West 2007-2009;
- North West Regional Freight Strategy (2003);
- Regional Waste Strategy for the North West – (September, 2004);

4.1.8 Local PPPs with particular relevance to this SA:

- MG Regeneration Strategy (May 2008);

- Halton LTP2 – Interim Review (2008);
- Halton Economic Profile 2008;
- Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (July 2006);
- Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March 2006)
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (July 2006)
- Halton Unitary Development Plan (April 2005);
- Halton Local Area Agreement (June2008 – April 2011)
- Corporate Plan for Halton Borough Council 2006-2011
- Community Strategy for a sustainable Halton 2006-201
- Halton Borough Local Transport Plan (LTP2) 2006/7-2010/11
- Housing Strategy 2005/6-2007/8
- Halton's Natural Assets Strategy
- Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- Sports Strategy 2002 – 2007
- Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Waterside Development Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- LA 21 Strategy Action Plan for Halton

4.2 Existing baseline

4.2.1 Baseline information collected in Stage A of this SA was divided into two categories. Firstly, generic sustainability baseline information collected as part of the production of the SA Scoping Report of HBC Core Strategy Development Plan Document and secondly supplementary baseline data relating to specific issues that will affect the MGSTS.

4.2.2 The baseline data provides the basis for prediction and monitoring of sustainability effects. This information will enable a much better picture to be obtained of how situations are improving or deteriorating and will help to identify problems and alternative ways of dealing with them.

4.2.3 The Scoping Report considered the baseline characteristics of Halton for both existing and predicted future baseline, and identified the main social, environmental and economic issues for the area. These are summarised below (Figs. 2-4).

Figure 2: Economic Issues

Type of Employment

Employee jobs by industry	Halton (employee jobs)	Halton %	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Manufacturing	7,700	14.3	12.5	10.9
Construction	2,700	5.0	5.0	4.8
Distribution, Hotels & Restaurants	11,500	21.3	23.9	23.5
Transport & Communications	6,600	12.2	6.0	5.9
Finance & IT	12,700	23.5	19.2	21.2
Public Admin, Education & Health	10,200	18.9	27.8	26.9
Other Services	2,300	4.3	4.7	5.3

(Nomis, 2006)

There is a greater reliance on employment in the manufacturing and transport and communication sectors than the UK average. The proportion of employment in public admin, education and health is 8% lower than the UK average.

Unemployment

Between Jan 2007-Dec 2007, 7.5% of economically active people in Halton were unemployed. This is higher than the North West average (5.6%) and the UK average (5.2%) (Nomis, 2008) The wards demonstrating the highest level of unemployment are Riverside, Windmill Hill and Grange. (HBC Halton Economic Profile, 2008)

Earnings & Total Output

The Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population in Halton and Warrington was £17,190 compared with the UK average of £15,614 (HBC Core Strategy, 2006)

The gross weekly pay by residence in Halton in 2007 was £427.10. This is lower than the North West average of £432.70 and the national average of £459.00 (Nomis, 2008)

ECONOMIC

Town Centres

Average weekly footfall within Halton Lea is 292,605, in Widnes, 595,747 and in Runcorn Old Town 187,207 (July – Nov 2005) (HBC Core Strategy, 2006).

In 1999, Halton Lea, Widnes and Runcorn Old Town had 37.5%, 17.4% & 9.7% of units vacant respectively (HBC Core Strategy, 2006).

Business Survival Rates

In 2006 there were 180 VAT deregistrations accounting for 7.5% which is slightly above the national average of 7.4%. There were 235 registrations (9.7%) above the national average of 9.4%.
(Nomis, 2008)

Education and Skills

Qualifications	Halton (numbers)	Halton %	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 & above	12,200	16.2	28.6
NVQ3 & above	24,600	32.6	46.4
NVQ2 & above	43,200	57.4	64.5
NVQ1 & above	55,800	74.1	78.1
Other	4,700	6.2	8.8
No qualifications	14,800	19.7	13.1

(Nomis: Jan 2007-Dec 2007)

In 2007, 41.1% of students achieved 5 or more grades A*-C including English and maths GCSEs, down on 04/05 levels of 46.9% (DfES, 2007). Halton performs poorly in terms of skills and qualifications levels and is ranked 370th out of 408 districts in the country.

Figure 3: Social Issues

Housing

Housing Type 2001:
Detached 19.2%
Semi detached 33.0%
Terraced 37.5%
Other (flats etc.) 10.3%

Housing Tenure 2004:
Private 71.9%
Council 12.9%
Housing Association 15.2%

The average house price in 2005 was £123,003, compared to £139,928 in the North West and £194,589 UK wide. There are 1,624 empty homes in Halton, the majority of which are privately owned. In the period 2003/04, 257 people were accepted as being homeless and in priority need, equivalent to 5.3 homeless people per 1,000 households in Halton. There are 6.4 homeless people per 1,000 households in the North West and 6.6 in England. (HBC Core Strategy, 2006) & (HBC Core Strategy Interim Report, 2006)

Crime and Fear of Crime

The following crime statistics relate to the period Apr06-Mar07 for Halton Borough.

Crime	Halton	North West	England
Violence Against the Person	2697	135,055	975,843
Burglary in a Dwelling	661	45,194	281,704
Burglary Other than a Dwelling	782	47,343	321,571
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	519	28,691	181,593
Theft from a Motor Vehicle	901	71,635	473,171

(ONS, 2006)

16.4% of residents believe that reducing crime would be the most effective means to make the local area a better place to live (HBC Core Strategy, 2006)

Open Space, Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation

5 parks in Halton have Green Flag Awards. (The Civic Trust – Green Flag Awards, 2005)

There is a deficiency in open space within the Borough with the exception of natural and semi natural open space. There is a surplus of outdoor sports facilities although these are focused around central Widnes and shortfalls are in evidence elsewhere (HBC Core Strategy, 2006). Proposals have been made to support green infrastructure in the Borough.
No Area Forum within Halton currently meets the minimum standard of 0.2 hectares of equipped play facilities per 1,000 population (HBC Core Strategy, 2006).

The Northwest's environment generates an estimated £2.6bn in Gross Value Added (GVA), and supports 109,000 jobs (EA, 2006).

SOCIAL

Deprivation

National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Rank (2007) for Halton is 30 (of 354, 1 is most deprived). This is the third highest in Merseyside and 10th highest in the North West. Levels of deprivation have decreased since 2004 when the Borough was ranked 21st. The most deprived neighbourhood is in the Windmill Hill area of Runcorn ranked 306th of 32,482.

Transport and Traffic

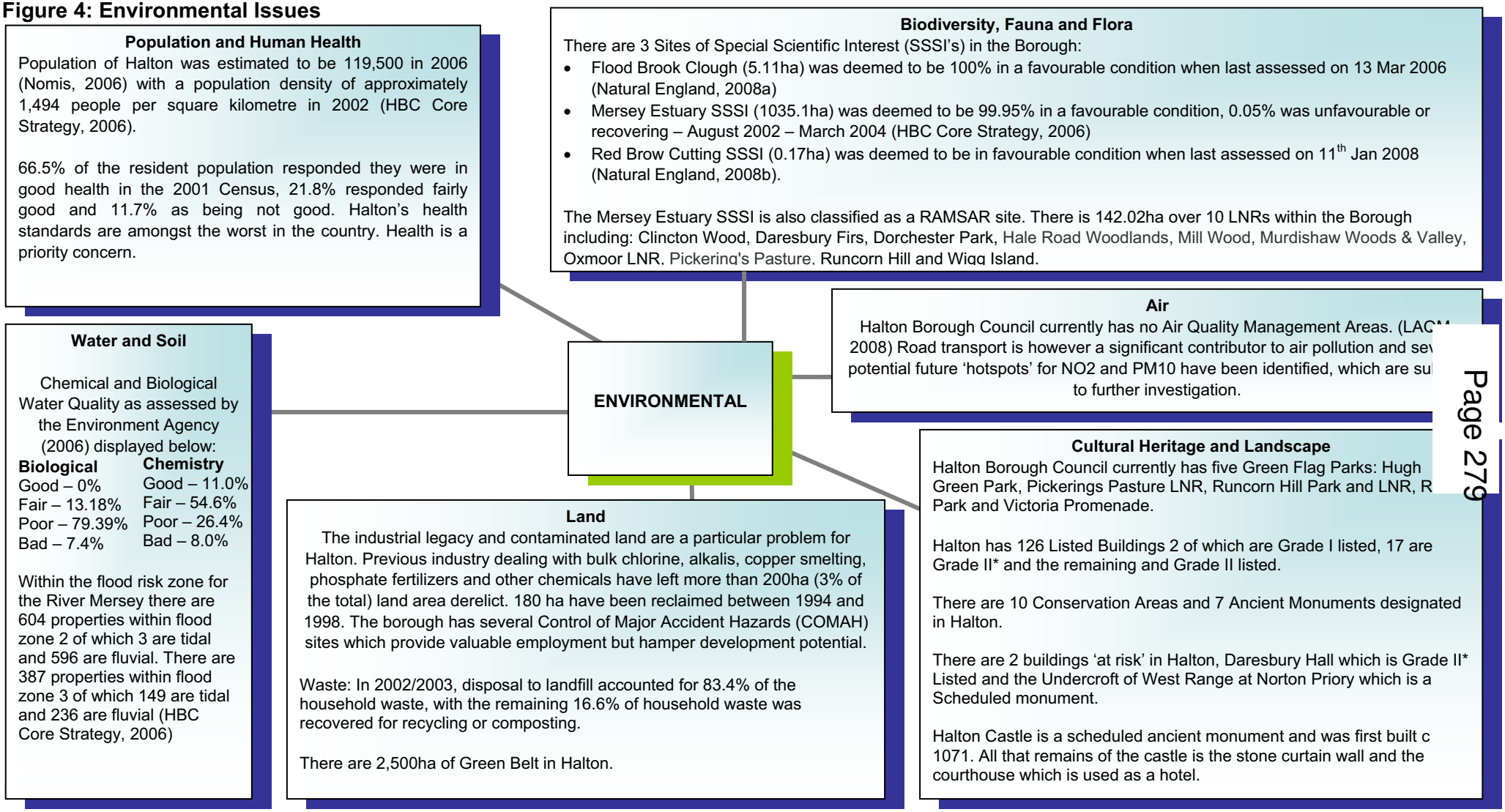
On average 29% of all households in Halton do not own a car or van. However, there is significant variation between wards with 45% of households in Castlefields, and 3% of households in Birchfield, not owning a vehicle (ONS, 2001).

20% of employed residents use public transport means including bus, underground, train, bicycle and on foot to get to work. The remainder travel by car or van either as a driver or passenger, taxi, or motorbike (ONS, 2001).

Access to Key Services

There are 202 GPs in Halton, 32 dentists, 3 NHS hospitals and 15 nursing homes. All housing completions 2004/2005 were within 30 minutes public transport time of key services including GPs, primary school, secondary school, employment and the town centre. Only 48% of completions were within 30 minutes public transport time of a hospital however.

Figure 4: Environmental Issues



4.3 Key issues/problems identified

4.3.1 Table 3 lists key sustainability issues identified from the baseline information presented in the SA Scoping Report. The MGSTS could potentially have a significant impact upon these issues and need consideration when assessing the sustainability of the MGSTS.

4.3.2 For a full explanation of the issues in Table 3, and supporting baseline evidence, see Appendix 2 in which the table of issues and supporting evidence given in the Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Scoping Report is reproduced and updated where deemed necessary.

	Key Issues	Examples of how the MGSTS may contribute towards a sustainable Halton
ECONOMIC	Unemployment	Job creation in construction phase and subsequent regeneration.
	Disparity in employment	
	Access to Employment	Improved transport infrastructure and initiatives. MGSTS is likely to draw inward investment.
	The need to raise the levels of education & skills	
	The need to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship	Increased business opportunity, improved transport infrastructure and initiatives.
	Reliance on a narrow economic base and low wage economy	Support the continued regeneration of the Borough.
	The need to improve the Economy	Construction and operational contributions.
	The need to revitalise the Town Centres	Improving the modal share of sustainable journeys into the main commercial centres, through the provision of transport infrastructure improvements and initiatives, which support the regeneration strategy.
	The image of the Borough	Contributes to the regeneration strategy improving transport links and drawing inward investment.
SOCIAL	The need to improve health & life expectancy	Improved accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards to a range of key facilities including health services. Also lower pollution levels will assist in reducing associated health risks. The MGSTS will be an easily accessible green infrastructure network and will bring benefits to health promoting active forms of transport such as walking and cycling.
	Long-term illness	Improved accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards to a range of key facilities including health services. Also lower pollution levels will assist in reducing associated health risks.
	Ageing residents & the need to grow the health-care sector	Improved transport choice for persons without access to a car and improved access to key facilities. Provision of transport advice and support.
	Perception of crime levels and fear of crime	Draw inward investment, improved public transport system.
	Increase green infrastructure	MGSTS will provide benefits to health through increased accessibility to green infrastructure.
	Increased demand for affordable housing	Ensure any housing developments facilitated by the MGSTS are of a suitable mix.
	Providing an appropriate and balanced housing supply	Ensure any housing developments facilitated by the MGSTS are of a suitable mix.
	Providing appropriate sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers	
	Improve access to services from the East of Runcorn	Improving modal share of sustainable journeys into the main commercial centres by sustainable forms of transport and initiatives.

	Key Issues	Examples of how the MGSTS may contribute towards a sustainable Halton
	Improve access to services to those who do not own cars	Improved accessibility to key facilities through a range of sustainable public transport measures.
	Community facilities	Drawing inward investment and improved accessibility to facilities where not provided locally.
	Amount, location and access to Recreational Space	Improved access to recreational space. Inward investment may increase recreation facility provision.
	Population	Attract people to the area.
	Deprivation	Decrease deprivation through increasing sustainable access to key services, job creation, inward investment and facilitate regeneration of deprived areas.
ENVIRONMENTAL	Water quality	Use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, monitoring and care of quality of water bodies.
	Conserving biodiversity, habitats and species	Ensure effective surveying leads to appropriate mitigation and monitoring strategies which are to be planned and implemented.
	Waste Management	Sustainable procurement, materials use and waste disposal. Use secondary aggregates and reclaimed or recycled materials where possible. Ensure waste is managed according to the waste hierarchy throughout phases of development and a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) employed.
	Transport congestion & pollution	Reduce reliance on carbon-intensive modes of travel through the provision of sustainable travel facilities and the promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options. Use local sources for materials and waste disposal.
	Air Quality	Reduce use of the private car through improvements to the public transport system and walking and cycling networks. Ensure emissions to air are within national air quality standards.
	Design quality in development	Ensure design is of a high standard incorporating the needs of the local residential and business communities.
	Protecting cultural & built heritage	Ensure design does not impact upon listed buildings, scheduled monuments, the Conservation Area, other archaeology and locally important heritage assets.
	Obtaining energy from renewable sources	Consider incorporating renewable energy production into the design.
	Energy efficiency	Ensure design is energy efficient in construction phase and operational phase in terms of lighting solutions.
	Ensuring the most effective use of land	Facilitate investment and development opportunities as a result as an improved transport infrastructure.
	Water resources	Manage water effectively on site.
	Climate change	Reducing the number of journeys made by carbon-intensive modes of transport.
	Industrial legacy	Remediation of contaminated land.

Table 3: Summary of key sustainability issues in Halton (as identified in the Halton Core Strategy) and how the MGSTS may contribute

4.4 The SA Framework: Objectives, indicators and targets

4.4.1 Sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the strategy, though they may in some cases overlap with them. They provide a way of checking whether the objectives of MGSTS are likely to contribute to sustainability. The SA Objectives were initially set out in the Scoping Report and have since been consulted upon.

4.4.2 The SA Objectives were largely agreed with by statutory consultees. Comments received from English Heritage have contributed to a revision of the indicators used to support SA Objective 17 on the historic environment. The SA Framework has been tested for internal compatibility to help identify key areas where conflict may occur (Appendix 3). There were 48 compatible interactions between the SA framework objectives and no incompatible interactions. Some objectives were considered to be neutral demonstrating no links.

4.4.3 The SA framework used is based on the objectives of HBC's Core Strategy SA. HBC's framework provided indicators for each sustainability objective. The purpose of the indicators is to establish relevant baseline information and to measure and monitor changes over time and in relation to specific projects, schemes or strategies such as the MGSTS. The objectives and indicators are presented below in Table 4.

Number	Objective	Indicators
1	To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	a) Population in employment and unemployment b) Job Density
2	To improve educational attainment and opportunities for life long learning and employment	a) % of 15 yr olds achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A-C or equivalent b) % of adults educated to NVQ level 2, 3 or 4
3	To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	a) Total number of VAT registered businesses b) Percentage of business registrations and de-registrations
4	To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	a) Gross Value Added (GVA) per head
5	To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes)	a) Footfall within the town centre b) Vacancy rates within the town centre
6	To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment	a) Number of investment enquiries and the number of conversations (enquiries that are translated into actual, completed investment or expansion projects)
7	To improve health and reduce health inequalities	a) Years of healthy life expectancy b) Number of people who have a long-term illness
8	To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	a) Recorded crimes per 1,000 population b) Number of people reporting fear of crime
9	To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	a) Proportion of different housing types and tenures b) Average household income
10	To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities, through the use of safe, convenient, affordable and sustainable forms of transport.	a) Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre.
11	To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural green space incorporating green infrastructure	a) Number and area of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) b) Number of LNRs and parks accessible by sustainable transport modes c) Number of Green Flag Parks
12	To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	a) Index of Deprivation

Number	Objective	Indicators
13	To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst, protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	a) Water quality (chemical & biological) classification of rivers, canals, estuaries and coastal waters and percentage lengths in different classes
14	To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	a) Number and total area of international and nationally designated conservation sites b) Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest
15	To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	a) Level and percentage of household waste recycled b) Total annual amount of municipal waste generates and % recycle or composted
16	To improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources.	a) Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and populations living in AQMAs b) Travel to work by mode c) Number of journeys made by public transport (Carbon emission reductions)
17	To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast.	a) Loss or damage to listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic landscapes and their settings. b) Percentage of conservation area demolished or otherwise lost. c) Loss or damage to historic view lines and vistas d) Number of buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments 'at risk'.
18	To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources	a) Proportion of housing built on previously developed land per year b) Proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources.

Table 4: SA objectives and indicators

5. APPRAISAL OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS

5.1.1 A key requirement of the SA/SEA is to consider reasonable alternatives. Two options were assessed:

- Option One – 'Do Nothing' Business as Usual/Without MGSTS Option;
- Option Two – Implement MGSTS.

5.1.2 Option One was included should the MG Project not progress, this scenario would result in the continued adoption of LTP2. It is considered that if the Project is not taken forward, the ability of the Council and key stakeholders to generate Step Change improvements toward sustainable transport will be greatly reduced.

5.1.3 The LTP currently funds local transport improvement works. However, the LTP is not considered to be able to provide the funding necessary to deliver the step change improvements towards the high quality sustainable transport system envisaged.

5.1.4 Option Two assumes that the MG scheme is constructed and fully operational. As such, the MGSTS is designed to complement and work in a holistic manner with the new crossing. The preferred option is Option Two and this will be taken forward for the purpose of this SA.

5.1.5 Option Two incorporates a Road User Charging scheme designed to facilitate the desired Step Change improvements. The guaranteed revenue stream will encourage key stakeholders such as bus operators to expand the bus network, provide new vehicles and improve services across the whole integrated network. The revenue stream reduces risk for the bus operators and enables a process of continuous improvement to go forward in the long term.

5.1.6 Within Option 2 a comprehensive assessment of alternative transit options were considered. The Mersey Gateway Team commissioned a First Stage Public Transit Options Study (Reid Rail May 2007). The evaluation was based on:-

- Spatial characteristics, to determine the ease with which each system could be integrated into the existing commercial centres within Halton Borough, the suitability for accommodation of each option within the structure of the existing SJB, and the proposed new bridge structures and associated infrastructure;
- Alternative energy and power supply options to minimise emissions and carbon footprint;
- Vehicle capacity and system capacity matched to likely future demand including indicative networks;
- Indicative system performance for each public transport option; and
- Indicative vehicle and infrastructure costs for each public transport option.

5.1.7 The study included a review of various public transport route development options including:

Personalised Rapid Transit (PRT)

5.1.8 This alternative would address accessibility in the borough, particularly those areas which are currently not well served by public transport. This approach would build a market and demand for public transport in such areas and would contribute toward mainstream operated bus routes being more financially viable in the future. The inclusion of this service in the MGSTS would directly contribute to sustainability objectives. PRT would contribute to reducing fear of crime and improving safety (Objective 8) offering a service in under resourced areas and provide access to basic goods, services and amenities (Objective 10). Importantly, PRT would also help address social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities which exist in the Borough of Halton.

Light Railway

5.1.9 Light railway was considered to provide a basic north – south transit system. The option of connecting such a service to proposed Merseytram Lines 2 & 3 was abandoned as it was considered to offer poor value for money in comparison with other modes which would facilitate the desired step change improvements in the sustainability and accessibility of a public transport system for Halton. A light railway system would not offer the same sustainability contribution and coverage offered by other modes such as the bus based options. The light railway option is restricted to a north – south transit system and would not address accessibility in deprived areas away from the route. Busses offer a more flexible alternative to light railway in terms of generating step change improvements. This option would not contribute significantly to reducing and addressing social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities or provide access to basic goods or services outside of the considered north – south transit system.

Guided Busway (also including Trolley Bus) & Busway

5.1.10 Several bus based options were considered including guided and non guided, alternative power and traction and priority options. The strength of the bus based option lies in the sound basis provided by the Runcorn Busway for developing a network to serve a wider part of Halton. Optimistic caution was expressed in relation to guided bus technology as at the current time, it is deemed that the technology is insufficiently developed. Elements may however be considered for incorporation for docking and providing for narrow rights of way and for guidance on the MG.

5.1.11 A range of clean vehicle technologies have been proposed and considered including trolley busses (electrification) and dual modes using diesel or low emission biofuel.

5.1.12 The relatively modest costs involved with adopting high or medium level priority measures were identified as being a strength of the bus based options.

5.1.13 Bus based options offer the largest coverage of Halton reducing inaccessibility and social exclusion and contributing positively toward sustainability particularly when combined with alternative fuel sources. Bus based options would help regenerate the town centres of Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes offering improved accessibility to a greater proportion of the local population and improving the competitiveness and productivity of business.

Tram – Train

5.1.14 Tram – Train options were considered a possibility to provide a basic north – south transit system as with the light rail option. These options have not been ruled out but would complement the bus options potentially in the future. It was felt that such options operating in isolation would not yield the scale of improvements to sustainability as other options. A Tram – Train system would not offer the same coverage as other modes such as the bus based options. This option would not contribute significantly to reducing social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities or provide access to basic goods or services outside of the considered north – south transit system.

Heavy Railway

5.1.15 It was decided that Heavy Railway Enhancements should not form part of the MGSTS. They were deemed not to offer the flexibility and feasibility of alternatives modes of transport. Existing and future heavy railway facilities will require integration into the proposed transit systems.

Study Conclusions

5.1.16 The study concluded that the Council should develop a Bus Rapid Transit system, linked into the heavy rail network, utilising medium level bus priority measures, delivered through a corridor approach. The characteristics of the system being:

- Metro quality service;
- Integrated network of routes and corridors;
- Segregated Busway (in key places based on the existing Runcorn Busway);
- Typically pre-board fare payment / verification;
- Higher quality stations;
- Clean vehicle technologies;
- Marketing Identity; and
- Superior quality service.

5.1.17 A Bus Rapid Transit System was deemed to be the most effective way to create step change improvements in the sustainability and accessibility of a public transport system for Halton. This is to be supported by the 'door to door demand response service' which will act primarily to serve areas of low demand. The demand response service is also expected to help build a market in order for more mainstream bus routes to be financially viable in the future.

5.2 Objective Appraisal

5.2.1

The MGSTS Project comprises of the following objectives:

- Further improve accessibility for residents living in the most deprived wards in Halton Borough to a wide range of key facilities including – employment, learning / training, health, leisure and retail facilities;
- Reduce the future reliance on carbon-intensive modes of travel through the promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options;
- Support the continued regeneration of the Borough, through ensuring new high quality sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Project and associated MGRG;
- Improve the modal share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres of the Borough (Runcorn Town Centre, Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby supporting the regeneration of the centres; and
- Further develop new strategic high quality sustainable transport links / corridors through the Borough utilising the opportunities provided by the Project and thereby improving complementary Merseyside Region linkages.

5.2.2 To ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive/Regulations are met, it is necessary to consider the likely significant effects of the MGSTS in terms of secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

5.2.3 Secondary impacts are assessed where appropriate in Table 5 under 'explanation'. Cumulative effects are considered where necessary within Appendix 1. PPPs goals and objectives have been examined alongside those of the MGSTS and have been scrutinised to ensure compatibility.

5.2.4 Table 6 assesses the effects of the MGSTS in terms of timescale, short (0-3 years), medium (4-10 years) and long term (10+ years) and whether the effect is considered positive or negative in terms of sustainability.

5.2.5 Table 5 illustrates the scoring matrix used to assess the sustainability of MGSTS against the objectives. The scores are colour coded for quick reference and comparison. The score is assigned using professional judgement and experience. Supporting baseline information and key issues in the Halton Borough are taken into consideration.

A	B	C	D	E
Significant contribution to achieving sustainability objectives.	Contributes to achieving sustainability objectives. The contribution is not considered to be significant.	Neutral contribution	Detracts from achieving sustainability objectives but is not considered significant.	Significantly detracts from achieving sustainability objectives.

Table 5: SA scoring matrix

5.2.6 The sustainability assessment carried out in Table 6 considers the MGSTS as a whole against each of the SA objectives. This decision was taken as the MGSTS is a holistic strategy and does not comprise of discreet components sufficient enough to assess on a case by case basis.

5.2.7 The 'detailed criteria' presented in Table 6 are taken from HBC's Core Strategy SA Framework and help to target the sustainability objectives against which the MGSTS is assessed. The detailed criteria was consulted upon and agreed with statutory consultees.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
Economic													
1. To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate	Social inclusiveness Economic development	Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs?									✓	MGSTS is expected to facilitate inward investment and increase business opportunity. The associated economic regeneration is expected to reduce the unemployment rate particularly during the construction phase. However, increases in employment opportunities are not entirely consistent with local needs to due a narrow skills base.	Target local companies for the construction and operation phases of the MGSTS.
2. To improve educational attainment and opportunities for life long learning and employment	Social inclusiveness Economic development	Will it provide improved access to vocational training, education and skills for young people?										The MGSTS will improve physical access to vocational training and education.	No mitigation measures recommended.
		Will it provide improved skills and knowledge in the workplace?									✓	The MGSTS will draw inward investment which will diversify the employment mix offering potential for new training and job opportunities.	No mitigation measures recommended.
3. To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development	Economic development	Will it encourage the growth of indigenous businesses?									✓	Improvements will be made in accessing the three town centres supporting business growth and regeneration.	No mitigation measures recommended.
		Will it provide or contribute to the availability of a balanced portfolio of employment									✓	The MGSTS will present opportunities to continue to diversify the current narrow employment and skills base in Halton.	No mitigation measures recommended.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
		sites?											
		Will it improve the number of new, competitive businesses that last?									✓	The MGSTS will provide an improved transport infrastructure which will better serve businesses and aid their competitiveness. Businesses can locate where transport issues would previously have been a problem.	No mitigation measures recommended.
4. To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business	Economic development	Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness ?									✓	The MGSTS is expected to draw inward investment developing businesses and enhancing competitiveness with improved transportation links, locally and regionally. While works are being undertaken there is a potential to impact upon local businesses.	Prior awareness of construction activities including all roads which will be closed/ disrupted to local customers and businesses to ensure that day to day business operations are not affected. Prior awareness and adequate signage to local customers and businesses of diversionary and alternative routes will be required. Business advertising will be needed for businesses remaining open

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
													during any works.
5. To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes)	Economic development	Will it provide an improvement to one or more of the town centres?									✓	Improved transport links will help facilitate regeneration and improve accessibility to the three town centres. Increased economic activity within Halton as a borough, brought about by increased employment rates and the potential importing of labour from outside the borough will enhance the economic environment within Halton and should lead to increased activity within the town centres. The introduction of 2 new high quality shuttle bus services linking key regeneration sites to Widnes and Runcorn town centres and the introduction of improved frequencies and hours of operation on the Core Bus Route Network linking the key three commercial centres to their surrounding residential areas will significantly contribute to town centre improvements. The introduction of improved frequencies and hours of operation on the Core Bus Route Network linking the key three commercial centres to their surrounding residential areas. While works are being undertaken there is a potential to impact upon local businesses.	Prior awareness of construction activities including all roads which will be closed/ disrupted to local customers and businesses to ensure that day to day business operations are not affected. Prior awareness and adequate signage to local customers and businesses of diversionary and alternative routes will be required. Business advertising will be needed for businesses remaining open during any works.
6. To improve and promote the	Economic development	Will it encourage inward								✓		Regeneration of the town centres and improved transportation links will	No mitigation measures

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment		investment?										encourage more investment in Halton. There is a potential to increase residential attractiveness through access to employment	recommended.
Social													
7. To improve health and reduce health inequalities	Population and human health, Social inclusiveness	Will it improve the standard of healthcare, particularly for the elderly?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.
		Will it support healthy lifestyles?								✓		The MGSTS supports and sets out a framework for increasing transport through less carbon intensive means promoting and facilitating walking and cycling. Introduction of 20 new cycle hire nodes in the Borough and improved linkages for pedestrians and cyclists over the SJB will help promote healthy lifestyles.	Monitor the number of new cycle hire nodes in the Borough and monitor travel to work information to ascertain whether MGSTS has increased the number of cycle to work journeys.
8. To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	Social inclusiveness	Will it encourage crime-sensitive design?								✓		Improved lighting and inclusion of CCTV at bus stops. Making public transport more appealing and promoting safety.	No mitigation measures recommended.
		Will it target, reduce and sustain a reduction in crime?								✓		Improved lighting and inclusion of CCTV at bus stops improving safety.	No mitigation measures recommended.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
		Will it reduce the likelihood of violence and antisocial behaviour?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.
9. To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	Social inclusiveness	Will it provide for affordable housing for local people?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.
		Will it ensure that new housing is of a high standard or design and layout?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.
		Will it provide safe, secure and decent housing?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.
10.To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities	Social inclusiveness	Will it improve transport provision and accessibility?									✓	MGSTS will increase transport provision and accessibility particularly by public transport and walking and cycling. The 2001 Census reveals that the majority of journeys are relatively short within Halton. For example 47.16% of economically active people, aged 16-74 years, travel less than 5km to work. The MGSTS provides greater reliable transport options reducing the need to travel by private vehicle which would incur tolls on the crossing.	No mitigation measures recommended.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
		Will it provide for local retail needs?								✓		Regeneration of the town centres and improved transportation links will encourage more investment in Halton.	No mitigation measures recommended.
		Will it improve public access to services and amenities?									✓	Access will improve to services and amenities.	No mitigation measures recommended.
11. To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural green space incorporating green infrastructure	Social inclusiveness Biodiversity, fauna and flora, Cultural heritage and landscape	Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable distance from where they live?							✓			MGSTS will increase the accessibility to existing areas of open space but will not provide additional areas.	Monitoring is required to ascertain the number of existing natural green spaces that have increased access by sustainable modes (eg bus, train, cycling and walking) as a result of the MGSTS.
		Will it improve access to natural green space?								✓		MGSTS will increase the accessibility to existing areas of open space but will not provide additional areas	
12.To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities	Social inclusiveness	Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion in those areas most affected?								✓		Improved cycle links are proposed between the top five most deprived areas of the Borough and key regeneration sites. The introduction of a new 'Door 2 Door' service (operating 24 / 7) will improve accessibility to Key Employment sites in East Runcorn. The SMART card will be used to target young people aged 16 – 21. This will help to support a range of initiatives to encourage greater participation by socially excluded young people in	No mitigation measures recommended.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
												education, training, employment and leisure activities.	
13. To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst, protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters	Water and soil	Will it improve the quality of controlled waters?							✓			Water quality is not expected to be adversely affected.	No mitigation measures recommended.
14. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	Biodiversity, flora & fauna	Will it protect sites and habitats of nature conservation value from inappropriate development?								✓		The MGSTS will not contribute to the protection of sites of conservation value.	Subsequent development should not compromise areas of conservation value.
		Will it improve the number and diversity of sites and habitats of nature conservation value in the											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
		Borough?											
15. To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates	Water and soil	Will it result in a reduction in the amount of waste requiring treatment and disposal?										Operational effects of waste generation of the MG project are not anticipated to be significant. The landfilling of materials will be considered as a last option. Research has been conducted of waste facilities in the North West and suitability assessed to accommodate MGSTS wastes.	The MGSTS will where possible reduce waste and will encourage materials to be reused or recycled.
16. To improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources.	Air, Human Health, Climatic factors	Will it minimise the need to travel?							✓			The MGSTS provides a range of measures supporting the use of public transport, walking and cycling. The MGSTS discourages the use of private motor vehicles. The MGSTS will reduce the need to travel especially by private motor vehicle offering suitable alternatives supporting relevant planning policy including PPG13 and PPS 1.	Monitoring is required to ascertain if the implementation of the MGSTS has reduced the need to travel (Travel to work information) and whether it has reduced carbon emissions.
		Will it reduce car use and encourage the use of integrated and public transport?									✓	The MGSTS provides a range of measures which support the use of public transport and walking and cycling whilst discouraging use of private motor vehicles through tolling. Disruption will be caused during the implementation of the MGSTS.	Prior awareness of any road/footpath/cycle way closures and disruption. Provision of adequate signage detailing diversionary routes.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
			N/A	A	B	C	D	E	ST	MT	LT		
													Provision of alternative/diversionary footpath and cycleway routes with adequate signage.
		Will it improve air quality?								✓		The MGSTS encourages alternatives to private motorized transport including public transport, walking and cycling which will increase air quality. The imposition of tolls for the MG crossing will help control trip generation. Improvements in air quality for users of the SJB are expected. The air quality assessment of the MG project indicated that there would be no exceedence of the relevant Government objectives for local air quality in 2015 as a result of the Project.	No mitigation measures recommended.

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
17. To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast.	Cultural heritage and landscape	Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance?								✓		The MGSTS will not adversely affect sites of archaeological importance.	No mitigation measures recommended.
		Will it preserve and enhance buildings which contribute to Halton's heritage?									✓	Increasing levels of congestion have an impact on towns, cities and countryside. Queues of traffic detract from historic areas and buildings. English Heritage encourages a switch to less damaging forms of transport and promotes planning policies that help to reduce the need to travel. English Heritage further state that "walking, cycling and use of public transport should be encouraged, both by increased and sustained investment to improve services, and by soft measures such as improving public places, including streets, stations and bus stops, to make alternatives to the car appealing and accessible". The MGSTS supports these aims and will make a positive contribution to the historic environment.	No mitigation measures recommended.
18. To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable	Water and soil, Climatic factors	Will it enable development to re-use brownfield land and convert existing buildings?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective
		Will it encourage prudent and efficient use of											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this

SA Objective	SEA Directive	Detailed Criteria	Assessment						Timescale			Explanation	Mitigation
sources		energy?											sustainability objective
		Will it use water efficiently and with care?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective
		Will it encourage the development of appropriate types of renewable energy?											The MGSTS itself will not directly contribute to this sustainability objective

Table 6: MGSTS Sustainability Assessment

6. CONSULTING ON THE SA REPORT

6.0.1 This SA Report has been issued for consultation to the following bodies as required by the SEA Directive:

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency

6.1.2 Table 7 presents comments received from the statutory consultees during the final round of consultation and provide a commentary explaining if responses were included or omitted.

Consultee	Comments	Commentary
EA	"We support any strategy that aims reduce the impact to climate change and increasing air quality through the reduction of car emissions by the encouragement of alternatives to motorized transport".	No changes required.
Natural England	Objective 7: Mitigation. We would suggest adding: Monitor the number of new cycle hire nodes in the Borough and monitor travel to work information to ascertain whether MGSTS has increased the number of cycle to work journeys.	Mitigation measures have been updated.
	Objective 11: Mitigation. We would suggest adding: Monitoring is required to ascertain the number of existing natural green spaces that have increased access by sustainable modes (e.g. bus, train, cycling and walking) as a result of the MGSTS.	Mitigation measures have been updated
	Objective 16: Mitigation. We would suggest amending to: Monitoring is required to ascertain if the implementation of the MGSTS has reduced the need to travel (Travel to work information) and whether it has reduced carbon emissions.	Mitigation measures have been updated.

Table 2: Consultation responses from statutory consultees

6.1.3 Copies of the final consultation responses from Natural England and the Environment Agency are included in Appendix 8 and 9 respectively.

6.1.4 English Heritage informed Gifford that they had no further comments beyond those raised during the scoping stage of this SA.

6.1.5 The SEA Directive also requires that the SA Report is publicly consulted on. The finalised report will be available and signposted on Halton Borough Council's website.

7. MITIGATION AND MONITORING

7.1.1 The appraisal of the MGSTS suggests that implementation will have positive impacts, because of this, mitigation measures will be aimed at maximising these positive effects. Mitigation measures are presented in Table 6. Once implemented the mitigation measures that have been proposed to offset or reduce adverse effects should be monitored.

7.1.2 The MGSTS presents a framework to measure the effectiveness of the Strategy both in terms of outputs and impacts which directly relate to the objectives of the MGSTS (See Appendix 4). It is proposed that annual updates will be produced in line with the normal reporting mechanisms for the Halton Local Transport Plan (or successor documents) by the Halton Local Strategic Transport Board.

7.1.3 It is proposed that the concessionaire who will be responsible for the Road User Charging will also manage the proposed ITSO compatible SMART card, which will form a common platform for the payment of transport services and :-

- Bridge tolls;
- Public transport journeys;
- Leisure facilities;
- Cycle hire facilities; and
- 'Door 2 Door' services.

7.1.4 The SMART card will provide instant and up to date information on travel behaviour which can be used to monitor services provision and provide continuous improvements and carefully match supply and demand. This will be an invaluable tool to monitor the implementation and success of the MGSTS.

8. DIFFERENCE THE PROCESS HAS MADE

8.1.1 The undertaking of this SA has acted as a catalyst to facilitate consultation with statutory consultees. Consultation responses on the Scoping Report have fed back into this SA, addressing concerns and ensuring all relevant information is included and available in order to comprehensively assess the sustainability of the MGSTS.

8.1.2 Changes made as a result of the SA process have included:

- Increased emphasis and inclusion of the issue of air quality and climate change. Air quality is now incorporated into the core MGSTS objectives.
- The SA process has stressed the importance of addressing the issue of deprivation and low incomes within Halton. The proposed SMART card system was introduced as a result of findings and information presented by the SA. This multi modal SMART card system is designed to offer a flexible way to travel, targeting people on low incomes and will help open up new public transport markets. Discounts will be easily administered and issued to persons on low incomes through the SMART card.

APPENDIX 1

REVIEW OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

APPENDIX 1: REVIEW OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives

International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**MGSTS contribution to policy objectives**
Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)	Commitment from UN member states to the achievement of sustainable development.	The project will encourage the sustainable use of resources, energy efficiency and protect and enhance biodiversity.
Kyoto Protocol (1997)	Key objectives are to limit emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. Target: Reducing emissions by 5% of 1990 levels over the period 2008-2012. UK agreement is of 12.5% of 1990 levels over the period 2008-2012.	Transport is a significant contributor to climate change. The project will aim to help reduce climate change
Rio Declaration on Environment and Development	Consists of 25 principles with the overall goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people, whilst working towards international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system.	
The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (amended 1982)	Requires signatory states to designate important wetlands for conversation in particular waterfowl habitats. Designation of Ramsar sites to be protected from development.	The project should encourage the sustainable use of resources and protect and enhance biodiversity.
European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)	The three fundamental goals of European policy should be achieved equally in all parts of the EU: • Economic and social cohesion; • Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; • More balanced competitiveness of the European territory. However, due to cultural variety, spatial development policies must not standardise local and regional identities in the EU, which help enrich the quality of life of its citizens.	

International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**MGSTS contribution to policy objectives**
EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan	The Action Plan identifies four environmental areas to be tackled for improvements: • Climate Change • Nature and Biodiversity • Environment and Health and Quality of Life • Natural Resources and Waste The Action Plan provides the environmental component of the European strategy for sustainable development, placing environmental plans in a broad perspective, considering economic and social conditions.	The project will encourage the sustainable use of resources and protect and enhance biodiversity. Transport is a significant contributor to climate change. The project is likely to help reduce climate change
European Landscape Convention 2006	In 2006 the UK signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention. This is the first international convention for the management and protection of landscape. It provides a basis for recognising the importance of landscapes and sharing experience across Europe. The Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. Landscape is defined as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. The Convention applies this definition to all parts of a countries territory, urban as well as rural areas, to both outstanding and ordinary landscapes, to degraded as well as preserved places.	The MGSTS considers the preservation of existing landscapes and potential enhancement of degraded landscapes by drawing inward investment.
Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive)	The main aim of this Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. This Directive makes a contribution to the general objective of Sustainable Development; whereas the maintenance of such biodiversity may in certain cases require the maintenance, or indeed the encouragement, of human activities. There are 189 habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and 788 species listed in Annex II which are protected by means of a network of sites.	The biodiversity and habitat impacts of the project should be considered along with possible mitigation measures.
The Birds Directive 79/409/EEC	This Directive as well as its amending acts seek to: • protect, manage and regulate all bird species naturally living in the wild within the European territory of the Member States, including the eggs of these birds, their nests and their habitats; • regulate the exploitation of these species	The project should consider the effects of transport on European protected bird species.

International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**MGSTS contribution to policy objectives**
Air Quality Directive 1999/30	The objectives of this Directive shall be to: • establish limit values and, as appropriate, alert thresholds for concentrations of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air intended to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole, • assess concentrations of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air on the basis of common methods and criteria, • obtain adequate information on concentrations of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air and ensure that it is made available to the public, • maintain ambient-air quality where it is good and improve it in other cases with respect to sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead.	Transport is a significant contributor to air quality. The project should include objectives for air quality.
Waste Framework Directive 75/442/EEC	The Directive establishes a framework for the management of waste across the European Community. It also defines certain terms, such as 'waste', 'recovery' and 'disposal', to ensure that a uniform approach is taken across the EU. It requires Member States to: • give priority to waste prevention and encourage reuse and recovery of waste; • ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health and without using processes which could harm the environment; • prohibit the uncontrolled disposal of waste, ensure that waste management activities are permitted (unless specifically exempt); • establish an integrated and adequate network of disposal installations; • prepare waste management plans; • ensure that the cost of disposal is borne by the waste holder in accordance with the polluter pays principle; and • ensure that waste carriers are registered.	The MGSTS should seek to minimise waste, and the environmental effects caused by it. Policies should promote re-use and recycling.

International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**MGSTS contribution to policy objectives**
European Water Framework Directive Integrated River Basin Management for Europe (2000/60/EC)	The Water Framework Directive applies to all surface freshwater bodies (including lakes, streams and rivers), groundwaters, groundwater dependant ecosystems, estuaries and coastal waters out to one mile from low-water. The Water Framework Directive is an inclusive approach to managing water as it flows through catchments from lakes, rivers and groundwater to estuaries and the sea, and aims to: • create better habitats for wildlife that lives in and around water, for example by improving the chemical quality of water; • improve the ecological health of inland and coastal waters and prevent further deterioration, especially by protecting against diffuse pollution in urban and rural areas through better land management. There is a requirement for nearly all inland and coastal waters to achieve 'good status' by 2015; • sustainable use of water as a natural resource; • progressively reduce or phase out discharges, emissions and losses of priority substances and priority hazardous substances; • progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater; • contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.	Surface water run-off from roads and hard surfaced areas can cumulatively pollute watercourses. The project should consider the effects on groundwater, surface water and river water quality.
Aarhus Convention	The Aarhus Convention is an environmental agreement. It links environmental rights and human rights. It establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders. It links government accountability and environmental protection. It focuses on interactions between the public and local authorities in a democratic context and it is forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements.	Consultation will take place both with statutory consultees and the public.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
Roads – Delivering Choice and Reliability July 2008	This command paper sets out a clear strategy for getting the best out of roads in the coming years so people have the reliable journeys they want. Plans to help the road system flow more readily include the introduction of toll and car sharing lanes and opening up around 500 miles of hard shoulder.	MGSTS is tackling congestion providing a more integrated and sustainable transport system.
Stern Report: The economics of Climate Change	The Stern report assesses the nature of the economic challenges of climate change and how they can be met, both in the UK and globally. Three elements of policy are required for an effective response: carbon pricing, technology policy and energy efficiency. Carbon pricing, through taxation, emissions trading or regulation, will show people the full social costs of their actions. The aim should be a global carbon price across countries and sectors.	Transport contributes to climate change through vehicle emissions. The MGSTS aims to reduce reliance on the private car by making new developments more accessible by a wider range of transport options and encouraging sustainable travel.
The Eddington Transport Report: The case for Action	The Eddington study highlighted transport's pivotal role in supporting the UK's future economic success. It recommended a number of reforms to the planning, funding and delivery of transport interventions to maximise sustainable returns from investment, as well as recognising the need to improve the environmental performance of transport.	The MGSTS Supports the principles identified by Eddington. It supports economic gain, social benefits, sustainability and environmental improvements.
Towards a Sustainable Transport System TaSTS	The document has three core aims. Firstly to respond to recommendations made in the Eddington Study to improve transport's contribution to economic growth and productivity. Secondly, it sets out the Department for Transport's policy and investment plans for the period to 2013-14. Thirdly, it proposes a new approach to longer-term transport strategy, building on the model recommended by Sir Rod Eddington. This document has five goals: • Goal 1 is to maximise the competitiveness and productivity of the economy. • Goal 2 is to address climate change, by cutting emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases. • Goal 3 is to protect people's safety, security and health. • Goal 4 is to improve quality of life, including through a healthy natural environment. • Goal 5 is to promote greater equality of opportunity.	MGSTS supports the goals of TaSTS.
Urban White Paper	This report identifies the need to address, education, transport, crime reduction, housing and planning as being instrumental in tackling urban decline. There is also a need to improve people's prosperity and quality of life.	The MGSTS takes account of local and regional policies on sustainable urban development.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPS (Planning Policy Statement) 1 - Creating Sustainable Communities	Planning for sustainable development should ensure that the following four Government aims are tackled in a integrated way: • Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth. • Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone. • Effective protection of the environment. • The prudent use of natural resources.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.
PPS 6 – Planning for Town Centres	This PPS provides the policy for the future development of town centres. The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by: • planning for the growth and development of existing centres; • promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres; and • encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all. Consideration should also be given to: • enhancing consumer choice by making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially-excluded groups; • supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors, with improving productivity; and • improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should adhere to the following key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered. • Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas. • Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. • Plan policies on the form and location of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology, and recognise the contributions that sites, areas and features, both individually and in combination, make to conserve these resources. • Plan policies should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological features within the design of development. • Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests should be permitted. • The aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPS 10 – Planning and Sustainable Waste Management	Regional planning bodies and all planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, prepare and deliver planning strategies that: • help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy, addressing waste as a resource and looking to disposal as the last option, but one which must be adequately catered for; • provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste, and enable sufficient and timely provision of waste management facilities to meet the needs of their communities; • help implement the national waste strategy, and supporting targets, are consistent with obligations required under European legislation and support and complement other guidance and legal controls such as those set out in the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994; • help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment, and enable waste to be disposed of in one of the nearest appropriate installations; • reflect the concerns and interests of communities, the needs of waste collection authorities, waste disposal authorities and business, and encourage competitiveness; • protect green belts but recognise the particular locational needs of some types of waste management facilities when defining detailed green belt boundaries and, in determining planning applications, that these locational needs, together with the wider environmental and economic benefits of sustainable waste management, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be given planning permission; • ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.	The waste hierarchy will be applied to waste materials generated as a result of the MGSTS. Where possible waste will be reduced or materials reused or recycled. The landfilling of materials will be considered as a last option. Research has been conducted of waste facilities in the North West and suitability assessed to accommodate MGSTS wastes.
PPS 11 – Regional Spatial Strategies	Sets out the procedural policy on the nature of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and focuses on what should happen in preparing revisions to them and explains how this relates to the Act and associated regulations.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks	Local development frameworks are intended to streamline the local planning process and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development. The key aims of the system are: • Flexibility. Local planning authorities can respond to changing local circumstances and ensure that spatial plans are prepared and reviewed more quickly than development plans under the old system; • Strengthening community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities. Local communities and all stakeholders will be involved from the outset and throughout the preparation of local development documents; • Front loading. Local planning authorities should take key decisions early in the preparation of local development documents. The aim will be to seek consensus on essential issues early in the preparation of local development documents and so avoid late changes being made; • Sustainability appraisal. To ensure that local development documents are prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; • Programme management. The efficient management of the programme for the preparation of a range of local development documents in accordance with the local development scheme; and • Soundness. Local development documents must be soundly based in terms of their content and the process by which they are produced. They must also be based upon a robust, credible evidence base.	The MGSTS supports the delivery of the LDF and is consistent with development plans such as the MGSTS Regeneration Strategy.
PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control	The following matters should be considered in the preparation of development plan documents: • The possible impact of potentially polluting development on land use, including effects on health, the natural environment or general amenity; • The need to identify land, or establish criteria, for the acceptable location of potentially polluting developments and the availability of alternative sites; • The need to separate necessary but potentially polluting and other land uses (recognising the potential conflict with sustainable development over mixed-use developments) so as to reduce conflicts; and, • The need to limit and, where possible, reduce the adverse of light pollution, for example on local amenity, rural tranquillity and nature conservation.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk	The aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.	The MGSTS should follow the principles of PPS25 and ensure that the development mitigates any flood risk on or off site.
Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 2 – Green Belt	The fundamental aim of this guidance on Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. The objectives of the policy are to: • to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population; • to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas; • to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live; • to improve damaged and derelict land around towns; • to secure nature conservation interest; and • to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.
PPG 4 – Industrial, Commercial and Small Business Development	Guidance for industrial and commercial development in enacting the government sustainability objectives	
PPG 13- Transportation	The objectives of PPG13 are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to: • Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight; • Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel, especially by car.	
PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment	This PPG provides a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment.	
PPG 16: Archaeology and planning	Sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.	

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	Planning objectives state that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life. Well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives. These include: • supporting an urban renaissance • supporting a rural renewal • promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion • health and well being • promoting more sustainable development	The MGSTS increases access to open spaces which will help to regenerate areas of the Borough. The MGSTS supports social inclusion by increasing the accessibility of key services by sustainable transport means and by helping to deliver regeneration within the Borough and the sub region.
PPG 21 – Tourism	Outlines the role of tourism in contributing to regeneration, stimulating growth, providing training and employment opportunities, revitalising rural economies and communities, and conserving historic buildings.	The MGSTS follows local policies which promote sustainable development and is aware of the policies under which its planning applications will be reviewed. It specifically supports the implementation of the Regeneration STS.
PPG 24: Planning and noise	Guides local authorities in England on the use of their planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. It outlines the considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications both for noise-sensitive developments and for those activities which generate noise.	
The Future of Transport: (White Paper, July 2004);	Details the need for a transport network that can meet the challenges of a growing economy and the increasing demand for travel, but also measures to achieve environmental objectives. This white paper identifies the need for coherent transport networks with: • the road network providing a more reliable and free-flowing service for both personal travel and freight, with people able to make informed choices about how and when they travel; • the rail network providing a fast, reliable and efficient service, particularly for interurban journeys and commuting into large urban areas; • bus services that are reliable, flexible, convenient and tailored to local needs; • making walking and cycling a real alternative for local trips; and • ports and airports providing improved international and domestic links.	The white paper promotes walking and cycling and more sustainable transport modes. The MGSTS aims to ensure that these sustainable modes are integrated into new development.
Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone: The First Three Year Review (April 2004)	Details 10 key themes and key strategy commitments including: Safer for children, safer drivers (training, testing, drink drugs and drowsiness), safer Infrastructure, safer speeds, safer vehicles, safer motorcycling, safer for cyclists, horses and pedestrians, better enforcement and promoting safer road use.	The MGSTS should be consistent with the principles and key strategy commitments of this document where relevant.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
Highways Agency's 'Tackling Congestion by Influencing Travel Behaviour';	The Influencing Travel Behaviour programme is designed to promote sustainable travel and reduce congestion on England's 'strategic road network'. The main objectives of this document are to: • "Promote sustainable transport choices and improve quality of life" (DfT Objective). • To encourage use of sustainable modes. • Promote health benefits of alternative travel and transport. • "To improve the environmental performance of transport" (DfT key task). • Agency PSA target. Improve reliability through reduced congestion. "Improving current operation and capacity of transport networks" (DfT key task). • Provide local economic benefits (spatial planning based travel plans).	The MGSTS addresses the six main objectives.
Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion (2003)	This report examines the links between social exclusion, transport and the location of services. It is particularly focused on access to those opportunities that have the most impact on life-chances, such as work, learning and healthcare. The strategy has two main pillars: • A new framework of 'accessibility planning'. This will ensure that there is clear responsibility and accountability for identifying accessibility problems and deciding how to tackle them. • National policy changes to enable improved public transport, better land-use planning, safer streets, and improved specialist support to help people get to work, learning, healthcare and food shops.	Social exclusion and deprivation are significant issues in Halton. The MGSTS will help enhance accessibility by providing better links with public transport networks and increase access to jobs and services for non car owners.
Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan (June 2004)	The action plan describes the different ways in which the Government is aiming to increase walking and cycling. These are: • supporting a rural renewal; • creating places that people want to walk and cycle in; • providing high quality facilities for safe walking and cycling; • influencing travel behaviour, through education, training, marketing and promotion; • building skills and capacity; • monitoring success through better targets and indicators.	The MGSTS addresses all the relevant Government aims.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
National Cycling Strategy (September 1996) and Modified (October 2004)	This strategy aims to establish a culture favourable to the increased use of bicycles for all age groups; to develop sound policies and good practice; and seek out effective and innovative means of fostering accessibility by bike. The central target is to quadruple the number of cycle trips on 1996 figures by 2012. As well as setting a central target for cycle trips, the National Cycling Strategy encourages local authorities and others to establish local targets for increased cycle use.	The MGSTS includes policies to improve transport safety, reduce the fear of crime and improve accessibility levels.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (January 2004)	The UK BAP is the Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed in 1992. It: • describes the UK's biological resources; • commits a detailed plan for the protection of these resources; • has 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions.	Interactions between wildlife and transport.
Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002)	Aims to ensure that biodiversity consideration becomes embedded in all main sectors of economic activity. It is the principal means by which the UK Government will comply with duties under Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) Act 2000.	The biodiversity and habitat impacts of the project should be considered along with possible mitigation measures. Interactions between wildlife and transport.
Securing the Future – Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (March 2005);	This Strategy for Sustainable Development aims to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. The Government has a new purpose and principles for Sustainable Development and new shared priorities agreed across the UK, including the Devolved Administrations. The strategy contains a new integrated vision building on the 1999 strategy – with stronger international and societal dimensions containing five principles – with a more explicit focus on environmental limits, four agreed priorities – sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource protection and sustainable communities; and a new indicator set, which is more outcome focused, with commitments to look at new indicators such as on wellbeing.	The MGSTS is consistent with and supportive of the UK Government sustainable development objectives

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
Creating a Sustainable Built Environment (July 2005);	Utilises the five best practice themes adopted from constructing excellence: 1. Adopting Constructing Excellence principles – partnering, supply chain management, value engineering, Respect for People. 2. Raising environmental standards – reducing construction process waste, currently 70% of landfill, through better design, recycling/reuse, reduced water consumption, increased specification and demand for renewable energies, improved BREEAM/ECO homes rating. 3. Introducing training agreements – to require and more crucially to enable local supply partners to recruit and invest in local labour markets. 4. Changing attitudes to brownfield sites - remediation and reintroduction. 5. Improving design – increasing use of mechanisms such as Design Quality Indicators, design champions and design panels.	The MGSTS incorporates best practice wherever possible.
Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance (November 2000)	This is a long term programme of change and development in our towns and cities. The Government has set out its commitment and will lead the way forward but action will ultimately depend on everyone contributing to the change with local representatives creating the vision for their town or city.	Social exclusion and deprivation are significant issues in Halton. The MGSTS will help enhance accessibility by providing better links with public transport, walking and cycling networks and increase access to jobs and services for non car owners.
Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (July 2007);	Identifies the main UK sources of each air pollutant and the health and environmental hazards associated with them. Details the strategy's objectives and European Directive limit or target values for each pollutant including: Particulate matter (PM-PM10 and PM2.5), Oxides of Nitrogen, Ozone, Sulphur Dioxide, Polycyclic Aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), Benzene, 1,3-butadiene, Carbon Monoxide, Lead and Ammonia.	Transport is a significant contributor to reductions in air quality. Measures to encourage greater use of sustainable travel, incorporated into the MGSTS will assist in reducing pollutants.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
Waste Strategy for England and Wales (May, 2007);	Sets out the Government's key objectives: • decouple waste growth (in all sectors) from economic growth and put more emphasis on waste prevention and re-use; • meet and exceed the Landfill Directive diversion targets for biodegradable municipal waste in 2010, 2013 and 2020; • increase diversion from landfill of non-municipal waste and secure better integration of treatment for municipal and non-municipal waste; • secure the investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill and for the management of hazardous waste; and get the most environmental benefit from that investment, through increased recycling of resources and recovery of energy from residual waste using a mix of technologies.	Waste management in the construction and operational phase and regard for development the completion of the road will facilitate.
Mineral Policy Guidance 6: Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England (1994);	Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) set out the government's policy on minerals and planning issues and provide advice and guidance to local authorities and the minerals industry on policies and the operation of the planning system with regard to minerals.	The MGSTS should take the contents of this document into account when preparing the development plan.
Power of Place (2000)	English Heritage was asked by Government in February 2000 to co-ordinate a wide-ranging review of all policies relating to the historic environment. A steering Group, chaired by English Heritage Chairman Sir Neil Cossons, oversaw the work of the Review. Research was commissioned from MORI to accompany the report. Power of Place was submitted to the Government and published in December 2000. Power of Place is about the future of England's historic environment, its role in people's lives, and its contribution to the cultural and economic well-being of the nation. It demonstrates that with, proper understanding and sensitive and open management, there can be desirable change without loosing the places we value.	Transport and new development schemes affect the historic environment in several ways including the ambience of the historical structures and features.
The Historic Environment – A force for our future	Aims include that the historic environment is accessible to everybody and is seen as something with which the whole of society can identify and engage the historic environment is protected and sustained for the benefit of our own and future generations	Transport and new development schemes affect the historic environment in several ways including the ambience of the historical structures and features. Measures proposed within the MGSTS will help to increase the accessibility of these sites by facilitating and encouraging the use of sustainable transport.

National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance to MGSTS**
Natural Environment and Rural Communities *Act* 2006	The Act will created a new integrated agency Natural England to act as a powerful champion for the natural environment. A Commission for Rural Communities acting as a national rural adviser was formally established, a watchdog charged with ensuring that Government policies are making a real difference on the ground in tackling rural disadvantage. Section 40(1) of the 2006 act places a duty on public authorities to conserve biodiversity ('the biodiversity duty'). The biodiversity duty does not constitute an obligation to conserve biodiversity but imposes the rather lesser obligation to "have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". Conserving biodiversity is defined in subsection 40(2) as including, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, "restoring or enhancing a population or habitat."	Economic prosperity (regeneration) has an essential role in achieving both social and environmental benefits. The biodiversity duty should be given consideration during the regeneration process.

Regional Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives

Regional Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Moving forward – The Northern Way (2004)	The Action Plan – Progress Report sets out the key milestones and activities for all the proposals outlined in Moving Forward: the Northern Way. The Plan sets out ten investment priorities, of which Number eight is about transport: 'invest in creating better integrated public transport services within and between our city regions; these are key to efficient labour markets and to enable those living in deprived communities to access jobs elsewhere. Bus services will be the dominant mode of travel but it will be essential to extend and upgrade light rail systems.' The plan also sets out four strategic themes for Merseyside: • a premier destination city region; • a connected city region; • a creative and competitive city region; • a city region of sustainable communities.	The Northern Way encourages investment in better integrated public transport services enabling deprived communities to access jobs and services. The MGSTS will help promote this aim.
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West	The RSS for the North West is the draft North West Plan. The North West Plan sets out the scale, priorities and broad locations for future development across the region, providing a framework for where and how much development should take place. It covers a broad range of issues including housing, retail and the environment, and includes the Regional Transport Strategy. Ultimately the document seeks to ensure the sustainable growth and development of the North West.	SA/SEA and MGSTS complement policies set out in the RSS, especially on transport.
Regional Sustainable Development Framework – Action for Sustainability	Action for Sustainability is the North West Sustainable Development Framework. It sets out priorities and long-term goals for sustainable development for the Region. The goal for transport states: 'Sustainable transport and access, reducing the need to travel and allowing access for all to places, goods and services'	The MGSTS will help to deliver sustainable development by facilitating ad encouraging the use of sustainable transport.
Wild about the North West: A Biodiversity Audit of North West England (1999)	The Audit identifies priority habitats and species of conservation importance at a regional level, it also informs the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and provides a basis for targeting the allocation of resources as well as strategic regional planning and economic initiatives. The audit identifies priority and important areas in Merseyside such as the sand dune coast and estuaries which are internationally important for their habitats and species, some of the industrial "wasteland", of which there is plenty, also supports very interesting and uncommon plant and animal communities. Other natural habitats of importance include the saltmarshes, mosslands, heathlands and wooded cloughs, with farming having created woods, pasture, hay meadows and ponds.	Consideration of biodiversity and the impact transport schemes can have.

Regional Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
The Cultural Strategy for England's North West (2001)	The Strategy sets out the overall context for the region including its cultural strengths and assets and what the NWCC believes can and should be done together with its partners to develop and improve the cultural opportunities and add significantly to the well-being of the north west. One of the aims of the strategy is that: Culture and creativity are central to economic prosperity and growth and we aim to: • Develop a sustainable cultural economy and build on the existing clusters of businesses in all parts of the region; • Ensure that more of the region's citizens gain and sustain employment in the cultural industries through promotion and export, and the exchange of ideas, skills and products; • Promote the benefits of culture and creative innovation to businesses and visitors including the attraction of inward investment.	The MGSTS supports the objectives by facilitating ad encouraging the use of sustainable transport.
North West Economic Strategy 2006	The vision for the regions set out in the RES is 'A dynamic, sustainable international economy which competes on the basis of knowledge, advanced technology and an excellent quality of life for all'. The RES sets out priorities for economic growth, culture, environment, community and transport. One of the aims for transport is to reduce levels of congestion by increasing use of public transport and reducing peak traffic volumes.	The MGSTS will contribute towards the aim for transport by facilitating ad encouraging the use of sustainable transport.
Draft North West Sustainability Checklist for Developments	The NWRA and BRE with funding from WWF have recently completed work on the Sustainability Checklist for Developments. The Checklist, which will be considered shortly at the Examination in Public of the Regional Spatial Strategy, can be used by both developers and architects to review good practice and demonstrate the sustainability performance of their proposed developments, whilst planners can use it to assess planning applications and compare the sustainability of different site options at the forward planning stage. The transport category objective states: 'To ensure people can reach the facilities they need by designing out the need to travel, encouraging walking and cycling, encouraging public transport use and accommodating private cars in away that minimises their impact and promotes a reduction in their use.'	The MGSTS should help developers achieve the requirements of the sustainability checklist by proving greater accessibility to new developments by all modes of transport.
Rising to the Challenge – A Climate change Action Plan for England's North West 2007-2009	The Action Plan sets out a Vision for the region *'A low carbon and well adapted northwest by 2020'.* In order to achieve this, the action plan focuses on the twin objectives of reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to those effects of climate change which are now unavoidable.	Transport contributes to climate change through vehicle emissions. The MGSTS aims to reduce reliance on the private car by making new developments more accessible by a wider range of transport options and encouraging sustainable travel.

Regional Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
North West Regional Freight Strategy	The aims and objectives of the Regional Freight Strategy are as follows. To assist the promotion of sustainable economic growth by: • maximising the efficient use of existing transport infrastructure and services; • implementing selective enhancements where necessary; • minimising the environmental and social impacts of freight transport; • taking full account of the inter-relationship of land-use planning and freight transport; and • ensuring that all decisions are taken within the context of an integrated transport and land-use strategy. • To underpin the competitiveness of indigenous business, attract and retain inward investment and reduce the threat of peripherality in Europe by improving accessibility to, from and within the North West for those who use or operate freight transport. • To provide a vibrant, efficient and safe freight industry in the North West by developing and maintaining a range of high quality transport networks and services. • To involve both private and public sector interests by encouraging partnership working to facilitate a better understanding amongst stakeholders of the needs of modern supply chains.	The MGSTS encourages sustainable transport by facilitating and encouraging the use of sustainable transport and as such will assist a number of the objectives by reducing the demand to travel by car.
Regional Waste Strategy for the North West – September 2004	Key Objectives are: • Reducing waste produced in the region; • Maximising the reuse of waste products; • Recycling and composting waste; • Recovering value (in the form of energy) from waste that is not recycled; and • Maintaining sufficient landfill capacity for the disposal of final residues following treatment and recovery.	The MGSTS should seek to minimise waste, and the environmental effects caused by it. Policies should promote re-use and recycling.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (May 2008)	The purpose of the Regeneration Strategy is to provide a holistic economic, social, physical and environmental framework in which the delivery of the Mersey Gateway is the catalytic investment that will trigger the programme. The Regeneration Strategy will deliver a range of outputs and outcomes that will contribute to the Regional Economic Strategy, the City Region Development Programme and a number of local priorities.	Each of the Options presented in the Regeneration Strategy has been developed in co-ordination with the MGSTS to ensure that all options for regeneration facilitate improved permeability and accessibility for public transport.
Halton Economic Profile 2008	This profile attempts to place into context statistics about the state of the economic and labour market within Halton. The report makes reference to: • Employment and Enterprise • Claimant Count Rates • Deprivation • Education • Local Area Agreement Targets • State of the Borough	The MGSTS address issues highlighted within the Economic Profile and will significantly contribute to the regeneration of the Borough.
Halton LTP2 – Interim Review	The Interim Review Report is structured around the 4-shared transport priorities agreed between Government and Local Authorities: 'Tackling Congestion', 'Delivering Accessibility', 'Safer Roads' and 'Better Air Quality'. Network Management Duties are included under 'Tackling Congestion'. The report discusses each of the priorities in turn; setting out the background and highlighting case studies of work undertaken before reporting on relevant indicators, spend and future risks to delivery. An overview of: progress as measured by indicators; spend during the two years; and a risk assessment, is provided at the end of the report. Throughout the report, key links between the LTP and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) priorities have been identified and highlighted.	The MGSTS will increase the options for sustainable transport in Halton by providing greater access to key services through infrastructure improvements and initiatives. It is therefore consistent and supportive of LTP2

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March 2006)	Contains the information relating to the appraisal of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD): • Baseline data collected by HBC for the new LDF in Appendix 2 • Identifies 37 key economic, social and environmental sustainability issues • Introduces the Sustainability Appraisal Framework with objectives, criteria, indicators and targets. • The 18 objectives are tested for compatibility The objectives have been derived from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive topics and SA Themes, including: Biodiversity, fauna and flora; Population and human health; Water and soil; Air; Climatic factors; Cultural heritage and landscape; Social inclusiveness; and economic development. With documents such as the Community Strategy, the sub regionally agreed Merseyside objectives and the regional sustainability framework – 'Action for Sustainability' indicators influencing the content of the SAF objectives, indicators and targets.	This is of high importance in informing the SA of MGSTS since it contains recent, well researched information on the area of interest including baseline information expected by HBC to be consistently applied to all appraisals within Halton. The objectives and targets are also pertinent to this SA.
Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (July 2006)	The Interim Report has been prepared as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Core Strategy. This document contains the information relating to the appraisal of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) in relation to how it contributes to meeting environmental, social and economic objectives.	This is of high importance in informing the SA of MGSTS since it contains recent, well researched information on the area of interest including baseline information expected by HBC to be consistently applied to all appraisals within Halton. The objectives and targets are also pertinent to this SA.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Corporate Plan for Halton Borough Council 2006-2011	The Corporate Plan provides the following strategic priorities for Halton: • Good health • Urban Renewal • Children and Young People are achieving, healthy and happy. • Employment, Learning and Skills • A Safer Halton • Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency. Example targets to be met by 2011: • Narrow the gap between life expectancy at birth in Halton and the national average by at least 10%. • Reduce the death rate from coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke and related diseases in people under 75 by 53%. • Increase the number of jobs in Halton by 10% • Bring 50ha of derelict land back into use • Ensure 50% of all new building is on brownfield sites • Increase prime rents on commercial property by 15% • Increase employment by 2% • Reduce the British Crime Survey comparator rate by 17.5% • Reduce burglary from dwellings by 40%	The key strategic priorities for Halton are incorporated and reflected in the MGSTS. This document may also provide suitable information on targets that may be suitable for inclusion in this SA.
Community Strategy for a sustainable Halton 2006-2011	Outlines the same vision, five key areas and specific targets as the Corporate Plan, plus targets to: • To increase average household income in Halton to 90%+of the national average • To see Halton outside the 40 most deprived districts in England • To narrow the gap between life expectancy at birth, in Halton and the national average by at lat 10% by 2010.	The key strategic priorities for Halton are incorporated and reflected in the MGSTS.
Halton Borough Local Transport Plan (LTP2) 2006/7-2010/11	The overall objective of the LTP2 is to deliver a smart, sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system and infrastructure that seeks to improve the quality of life for people living in Halton by encouraging economic growth and regeneration, and the protection and enhancement of the historic, natural and human environment. .	The MGSTS will increase the options for sustainable transport in Halton by providing greater access to key services through infrastructure improvements and initiatives. It is therefore consistent and supportive of LTP2

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Housing Strategy 2005/6-2007/8	Housing Strategy Action Plan. Aims to: • Improve housing conditions • Meet identified housing needs • Improve services and • Ensure the continuous development of the Strategy. Example Targets: • Improve energy rating of private sector stock by improving the SAP rating from 48 to 50 2010 • Achieve 330 net new dwellings per year over duration of Strategy.	The MGSTS and associated improvements to the transport infrastructure will facilitate further housing developments, by helping to deliver the MG Regeneration Strategy.
Halton's Natural Assets Strategy	This strategy is both a policy and an action document. It provides information on the trees and woodlands, nature conservation and the landscape of Halton and how actions will be carried out to protect, manage and enhance this resource. Details of actions and policies.	Proximity to mentioned areas.
Halton Unitary Development Plan (April 2005)	The UDP sets out an extensive range of aims and objectives across all policy areas For sustainable transport and land use within Halton Borough, the aims are:- • To provide an efficient and effective land use pattern and transport infrastructure, which will reduce overall demand for travel and allow improved accessibility by a variety of transport modes; • To develop safe, efficient and inclusive integrated transport systems and infrastructure that encourage sustainable economic growth and regeneration; • To promote a new sustainable crossing of the River; and • To encourage increased use of walking and cycling as modes of transport.	The UDP policies clearly identify the need to resolve the transport, accessibility and economic constraints imposed by the current river crossings. The need for a new river crossing is explicitly recognised: in particular Policy S14 states that:- *'A scheme for a new crossing of the River, east of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge will be promoted to relieve congestion on the existing bridge as part of an integrated transport system for Halton Borough and the wider regional transport network'.*

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Halton Local Area Agreement (June 2008 – April 2011)	In June 2008, the Halton Strategic Partnership published the new LAA for Halton. It reiterated the strategic policy framework for Halton Borough, the key priorities of which are:- • A Healthy Halton – To create a healthier community and work to promote well being – a positive experience of life and good health; • Halton's Urban Renewal – To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, the develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough; • Halton's Children and Young People – To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy; • Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth; and • A Safer Halton – To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.	These principles are embedded in the MGSTS. The LAA recognises the importance of the Project and the accompanying MGSTS in terms of supporting new employment opportunities and improving accessibility across Halton Borough and beyond.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008	'Halton Gateway to Prosperity' is the new Economic and Tourism Development Strategy for Halton. Its vision is very much informed by two key policy documents - the Regional Economic Strategy and Halton's Community Strategy. The Strategy has four key aims: 1. Enterprise and Performance - Fostering the development of enterprise culture and improving the performance of business. 2. Employment and Skills - Increasing levels of employment and improving workforce skills to meet business need. 3. Property and Infrastructure - Consistently improving infrastructure and enabling investment in land and property to create a supply of good quality business premises. 4. Environment and Image - Improving the quality of the environment and improving the image of Halton. The Strategy seeks to : • diversify the local economic business base • improve the skills of the local workforce • increase the capacity to secure jobs for those seeking work • focus property and site developments to meet identifiable industrial and commercial property shortages, and • target inward investment activities at business sectors/clusters that offer strong growth potential. Target: • Annual 5% increase in enquiries from target sectors • To have the Mersey Gateway Bridge open by 2012 • Daresbury science park: significant expansion • To have the Mersey Gateway Bridge open by 2012	Refers to the Mersey Gateway project to which MGSTS supports.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Sports Strategy 2002 – 2007	Key themes are: • Working in partnership with key partners • Increase participation • Sporting excellence • Finance and funding for sport • Voluntary sports clubs • Raise the profile of sport • Sport through education • Sports facilities	MGSTS may help increase participation through better access.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	This document contributes to the Cheshire Region Countdown BAP and contains a series of action plans for 2habitats and 7 species, each with a defined timetable and responsibility for a specific action. Selected example targets for BAP habitats and species: <u>Reedbed</u> • The overall objective is to maintain, in favourable condition, the current extent of the reedbed in Halton. • Expand the current area of reedbed by 2 ha by 2010. <u>Coastal Saltmarsh</u> • The overall objective is to maintain, in favourable condition, the current extent of the Coastal Saltmarsh in Halton. <u>Bluebell</u> • Maintain the population at levels no lower than those recorded as part of the Biodiversity Audit 1999. <u>Purple Hairstreak Butterfly</u> • Establish the population extent by 2010. <u>Great Crested Newt</u> • Increase the population of Great Crested Newt pairs by 20% by 2015. • Maintain the number of sites (ponds and terrestrial habitat) in Halton likely to be suitable. <u>Redshank</u> • Increase the population of Redshank pairs by 20% and wintering numbers by 20% by 2015. <u>Skylark</u> • Increase the population of breeding pairs by 20% by 2015. <u>Song Thrush</u> • Increase the population of song thrush pairs by 20% by 2015. <u>Reed Bunting</u> • Increase the population of breeding pairs by 20% by 2015.	Proximity of MGSTS to BAP habitats.

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
Equal Opportunities Policy	The vision: • The Council values diversity and encourages fairness and justice. • The Council wants equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. • The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers.	Equal opportunities should be considered as part of the social sustainability of the MGSTS.
Waste Management Strategy	The main aim of this document is to provide a framework for Halton to plan and manage its waste services in an integrated way in order to: • reduce reliance on landfill in line with European and UK directives • maximise recycling and recovery of waste • increase public awareness on waste issues • strive for best value in all aspects of waste management, and manage waste in a way that takes account of Halton's five strategic priorities. Business Target and Pledge: • The Council proposes to appoint an officer to encourage greener practice by businesses in the Borough's industrial estates and business parks. • Influence business to adopt greener practices throughout the borough • Increased volume of trade waste by-products and less residual waste	Waste should be considered as part of the environmental sustainability of the strategy.
Waterside Development Strategy	The vision: High quality, attractive and accessible waterfronts where people choose to come to live, work, invest and visit, and enjoy the environmental assets of the waterways. Objective is to use waterways as a catalyst for regeneration • to establish the perception of Halton's waterfronts as a positive asset • to promote and attract high quality developments that use the waterfront setting • to deliver sustainability through the use of waterways and waterfronts • to protect and enhance the waterways' environmental assets • to increase awareness and understanding of the heritage and environmental values of Halton's waterways • to encourage healthy lifestyles and activities by providing leisure opportunities along the waterways	The MGSTS encourages greater use of waterways.
Homelessness Strategy	This document aims to provide a comprehensive network of the provision of services within the Borough aimed at assisting people who are homeless or likely to become homeless.	

Local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Sustainable Development Objectives		
Title	**Main Issues**	**Relevance**
LA 21 Strategy Action Plan for Halton	The overall aim of the LA21 Strategy is: • To identify key priorities for the local community through consultation and participation • Deliver services and any other necessary action in a more sustainable way • Improve the quality of life within Halton, socially, economically and environmentally • To measure progress towards sustainable development in way that is meaningful to everyone • To identify where progress is not being made so that resources can be targeted more effectively	The MGSTS will help to deliver access to key services by encouraging and facilitating sustainable travel.

APPENDIX 2

KEY ISSUES

APPENDIX 2: KEY ISSUES

Key economic, social and environmental sustainability issues in Halton and the wider area. Adapted from Halton Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal

Key Issues	Source
Economic	
Unemployment: The official claimant count unemployment rate in Halton halved between 1992 and 1998 and has halved again since. Unemployment rates have generally been some 40% to 50% higher than regional averages though the gap is now narrowing and is presently 15% to 20%. In December 2004 the average Borough claimant count was 2.6% compared with the North West average of 2.2%.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Disparity in employment: There remain significant concentrations of unemployment in the 20-29 age band for both males and females. There are also concentrations of unemployment for males in the 30-39 age band and for females in the 17-19 band.	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Access to Employment – The economic activity rate measures the percentage of the population who are in employment or actively seeking employment, and is therefore a useful general measure of the local economy, labour market and the opportunities available to people. It is usually expressed as a percentage of the working age population. Halton's economic activity rate in 2003 was 72.7%, in comparison the average for the north west was 77.8% and for England 79.3%.	State of the North West Economy (Sub –regional Report) (Oct 2004)
The need to raise the levels of education & skills – The proportion of working age people with 'higher end' skills in Halton is lower than Great Britain	The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
The need to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship – The level of entrepreneurship is slightly above average with a new business formation rate of 14.4% compared to the national average of 10.7%. The survival rate of new business is also good	The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
Reliance on a narrow economic base and low wage economy – With the exception of chemicals	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
The need to improve the Economy – Halton's economy is relatively small by national standards (the economic scale score of 81.2 is below the national average which is benchmarked to an index score of 100)	The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
The need to revitalise the Town Centres – Rental yields are an indicator of investor confidence in a centre (the lower the confidence	Community Strategy (2006)
The image of the Borough – In 2003 the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. It discovered there is limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas	'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
Social	
The need to improve health & life expectancy – statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country	North West Public Health Observatory
Long-term ill – 41% of Halton's households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness	2001 Census.
Ageing residents & the need to grow the health-care sector - The 2001 Census shows that 18% of Halton's population were aged 60 or over and of these	2001 Census Department of Health
Perception of crime levels and fear of crime – crime / community safety was the top concern for the public, mentioned by four out of five survey respondents as one of the three biggest problems for Halton	'Quality of Life Survey' of 1999
Increased demand for affordable housing – Significant house price increases across Halton over the last 5 years. From the period July – Sept 2001 to July – Sept 2005 the average house price has increased by just over £55,000, with Semi-detached housing doubling in price and flats/maisonettes more than doubling in price between 2001 and 2003.	Land Registry

Key Issues	Source
Providing an appropriate and balanced housing supply – The average household size has fallen from 2.8 in 1991 to 2.44 in 2001, and the proportion of single person households has increased from 22.7% to 27% over the same period. The over 75-year-old group has increased by 17%, which will affect the demand for supported housing provision.	Housing Strategy 2005/06 to 2007/08
Providing appropriate sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers – Gypsies and Travellers are believed to experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England. Research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for gypsies and travellers and poor health and education. Circular 01-2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' states that the core strategy should set out criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant DPD.	Circular 01-2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites'
Improve access to Services from the East of Runcorn – The majority of residents living within Runcorn can access either Halton Lea or Runcorn town centre by public transport within 20 minutes travelling time from their home. The only significant exception to this is the rapidly expanding residential area at Sandymoor to the eastern edge of Runcorn which has only limited access to either commercial centre during the off peak periods.	Local Transport Plan 2
Improve access to Services in Widnes – On average journey times by public transport to Widnes town centre for Widnes residents are longer, with the average journey time during the off peak period of between 20 and 40 minutes. During the off peak period it takes residents living in Farnworth and Halebank between 40minutes and 1 hour to access Widnes town centre. There are also significant numbers of residents in the Upton Rocks area of Widnes who do not have public transport access to Widnes. During evenings and early mornings access to Widnes by public transport declines considerably. Large parts of the town are totally unserved by direct public transport links to Widnes town centre, especially Hough Green, Ditton, Farnworth areas.	Local Transport Plan 2
Improve access to Services to those who do not own cars – 29% of all households in Halton do not have access to a car or van. However, there are striking differences between wards with 45% of households in Castlefields, and 3% of households in Birchfield, not having access to a vehicle.	2001 Census PMP Open Space study. Nomis 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
Community facilities – The quality and distribution of libraries, One Stop Shops, Post Offices, employment centres and other community resources are also an important factor in the quality of life of residents.	2001 Census PMP Open Space study. Nomis 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
Amount, location and access to Recreational Space – no ward within Halton currently meets the minimum standard of 0.3 hectares of equipped play facilities per 1,000 population, and very few have sufficient areas of formal open space.	2001 Census PMP Open Space study. Nomis 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
Population - The estimated population of the Borough in mid 2004 was 118,900. Halton's population peaked at 126,500 in 1989, and has fallen consistently by a few hundred each year since, until 2004 where there was an increase of 500.	2001 Census PMP Open Space study. Nomis 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Key Issues	Source
Deprivation – The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Halton within the worst 10% of all districts in England on both the 'Average of Ward Scores' and 'Average of Ward Ranks' measures, with ranks of 21 and 30 respectively. Halton's rank for 'Average of Ward Scores' is higher reflecting the fact that this measure takes into account very extreme scores. The most deprived wards in Halton are Windmill Hill, Halton Lea and Castlefields all with deprivation scores of more than 50. The least deprived wards are Birchfield, Daresbury, Beechwood and Farnworth all with scores less than 20.	2001 Census PMP Open Space study. Nomis 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
Environment	
Water quality – The northwest contains a third of the poorest quality rivers in England and Wales. However, over the past 20 years water quality of the River Mersey has improved significantly following changes in legislation and investment by industry.	Environment Agency Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy English Nature, April 2005
Conserving biodiversity, habitats and species – Some experts assess the rate at which species are becoming extinct at 1,000 to 10,000 times higher than the natural rate would be. There are 2 habitats and 7 species that are particular interest within Halton these are: Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Bluebell, Purple Hairstreak, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song thrush and Reed bunting. SSSI - Flood Brook Clough SSSI remains in an unfavourable condition although it is now considered to be recovering.	Environment Agency Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy English Nature, April 2005
Waste Management – Household waste in England is growing at a rate of 3% annually. At this rate the volume of England's municipal waste will double by 2020 and will cost £1.6 billion a year more (at today's prices) to manage and dispose of. Halton Borough Council deals with about 64,000 tonnes (2002/03) of 'household' waste per year (including the waste which is recycled) plus a further 7500 tonnes of other waste consisting of commercial, grounds maintenance and construction waste. All of this waste goes to make up the total 'municipal' waste in Halton.	Halton's Waste Management Strategy 2004
Transport congestion & pollution – The major and overriding congestion problem within the borough is largely restricted to the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which performs both a local function, linking Widnes and Runcorn, and a strategic role for the region. Flows on the bridge regularly reach 90,000 vehicles per day, exceeding its theoretical capacity by 50%.	LTP2
An air quality update was undertaken in 2006 and the results showed that there were no substantially increased levels of emissions in the Borough. However initial monitoring did identify several potential future 'hotspots' for NO_2 and PM10. Milton Road is an unclassified road in Widnes which links Kingsway (B5419) with the Simms Cross area. The street is urban and has a traditional 'terrace' layout with the fronts of properties adjacent to the road: this is known to have a 'canyon' effect which makes it difficult for pollutants to disperse. The street has both residential and commercial properties and a recent supermarket development. Monitoring undertaken during 2006/07of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) using diffusion tubes indicates that levels of NO_2 at this location may be at risk of exceeding Air Quality Objectives in the future.	LTP2 Interim Review
Design quality in development – CABE's 'Housing Audit -Assessing the design quality of new homes in the North East, North West and Yorkshire & Humber' shows that the vast majority of new housing in the north of England is failing to measure up on design quality.	Housing Audit (CABE, 2005)
Protecting cultural & built heritage – Halton has 126 Listed Buildings, 2 of which are Grade I listed, 17 are Grade II* listed and the remaining are Grade II listed. There are 7 Ancient Monuments, 10 Conservation Areas. There are 2 buildings (comprising Grade I, II* and scheduled ancient monuments which are structures as opposed to earthworks) at risk and 2 Scheduled Monuments at high or medium risk.	English Heritage - Heritage Counts and at Risk Register (2008)

Key Issues	Source
Obtaining energy from renewable sources – By 2050, global energy demand could double as populations rise and developing countries expand their economies.	Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy
Requiring energy efficiency improvements – Every household in the UK creates around six tonnes of carbon dioxide each year – enough to fill six hot air balloons 10 metres in diameter. By taking energy efficiency measures, the average household could reduce this by one third (2 tonnes) and save £200 per year.	Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy
Ensuring the most effective use of land – Of the total land area within the North West region, 3.5% is classified as derelict land or buildings, compared to an English average 1.7%. In 2003/4, just over a quarter (29.5%) of new dwellings constructed in the North West in schemes of 10 dwellings or more occurred in low-density schemes (i.e. less than 30 dwellings per hectare).	Draft RSS 2006
Water resources – Issues related to the protection and provision of water supplies and infrastructure. Within 25 years, half the world's population could have trouble finding enough freshwater for drinking and irrigation.	Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy
Climate change – Projections of future climate change indicate that global average temperature could rise by between 1.4ºC and 5.8ºC between 1990 and 2100 depending on emissions.	Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy
Industrial legacy • Dereliction and contamination - Despite reclaiming over 182 hectares of derelict land since 1974, the remaining derelict sites are often the more difficult and more expensive to bring back into beneficial use. • COMAH – Halton has a number Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites. These are sites where accidents could result in off site loss of life or damage to the environment (usually by release of toxic chemicals or explosions). These sites are sources of local employment but the storage and use of chemicals can have a blighting effect on certain kinds of development in the surrounding areas.	Draft Community Strategy (Jan 2006)

APPENDIX 3

COMPATIBILITY OF OBJECTIVES

APPENDIX 3: COMPATIBILITY OF OBJECTIVES

Internal compatibility of environmental objectives ✓ compatible ✗ incompatible - no links

		ENVIRONMENTAL						SOCIAL						ECONOMIC					
	OBJECTIVE	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
ECONOMIC	1	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓		
	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓			
	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
	5	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	✓					
	6	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-						
SOCIAL	7	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓								
	9	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-									
	10	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓										
	11	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓											
	12	-	-	✓	-	-	-												
ENVIRONMENTAL	13	✓	-	-	-	✓													
	14	-	-	✓	-														
	15	✓	-	-															
	16	✓	-																
	17	-																	
	18																		

Key to Objectives

1 To continue reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increase the economic activity rate

2 To improve educational attainment and opportunities for life long learning and employment

3 To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development

4 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business

5 To enhance the vitality and viability of the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes)

6 To improve and promote the overall image of the Borough in order to attract investment

7 To improve health and reduce health inequalities

8 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime

9 To provide well designed, good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing

10 To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities

11 To ensure access to high quality public open space and natural green space incorporating green infrastructure

12 To reduce social exclusion, deprivation and social inequalities

13 To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new & existing development whilst, protecting, improving and where necessary, restoring the quality of inland, estuarine and coastal waters estuarine and coastal waters

14 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity

15 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates

16 To improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel and improving choice and use of sustainable transport modes and reducing air pollution from other sources.

17 To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the cultural and built environment and archaeological assets, whilst maintaining and strengthening a local distinctiveness through the enhancement of the character and appearance of the local landscape, townscape and coast.

18 To use land, energy, and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewable sources

APPENDIX 4

OUTPUTS INDICATORS AND TARGETS FROM MGSTS

APPENDIX 4: OUTPUTS INDICATORS AND TARGETS FROM MGSTS

Output Indicator	Impact Target
Further improve accessibility for residents living in the most deprived Wards in the Borough to a wide range of key facilities including – employment, learning / training, health, leisure and retail facilities.	
Improved cycle links between the top five most deprived areas of the Borough and key regeneration sites.	Increase the percentage of people living in the top five most deprived areas of the Borough, regularly cycling to education, employment, health, leisure and shopping facilities to 10% in 2021 and 25% in 2031.
Improved accessibility to key employment sites in eastern Runcorn through the introduction of a new 'Door 2 Door' service (operating 24 / 7)	Reduction in the journey time for residents living in the top 5 most deprived Wards living within 40 minutes end to end journey time from their home to place of employment in eastern Runcorn. Specific targets will be identified when base data becomes available. Performance will be monitored using the Accession model.
Reduce the future reliance on carbon intensive modes of travel through the promotion of greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options.	
Improvements to local bus services on the Core Bus Route Network, as set out in Themes 1 and 2.	Increase the percentage of people travelling to and from work by bus from 8% in 2001 to 15% in 2021, and 25% in 2031.
Introduction of 20 new cycle hire nodes in the Borough.	Generate 1,000 active members of the cycle hire scheme by 2021 (Active members are defined as using the scheme at least twice per month).
Introduction a fleet of at least 40 buses running on bio fuel or alternative low carbon fuel as part of the Strategy.	Reduce reliance on conventional diesel sources for operators providing services on the local public transport network by 75% by 2021.
Support the continued regeneration of the Borough, through ensuring new high quality sustainable transport opportunities are delivered as part of the Mersey Gateway Project and associated Regeneration Strategy.	
The introduction of 2 new high quality shuttle bus services linking key regeneration sites to Widnes and Runcorn town centres.	90% of the population of Halton should be within 45mins travel time of key regeneration areas by public transport by 2021. Performance will be monitored using the Accession model.
Improved accessibility to key employment sites in eastern Runcorn through the introduction of a new 'Door 2 Door' service (operating 24 / 7)	Delivering a 20 minute 'connecting' target for passengers arriving and transferring to / from the new proposed eastern Runcorn 'Door 2 Door' service at Murdishaw Bus Interchange or Runcorn East Station, Specific targets will be identified when base data becomes available. Performance will be monitored using the Accession model.
Better linkages for pedestrians and cyclists over the SJB.	Increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling over the SJB by 100% by 2021 compared with current levels of use as at 2008.
Improve the modal share of journeys into the 3 main commercial centres (Runcorn town centre, Widnes town centre and Halton Lea) by sustainable forms of transport, thereby supporting the regeneration of the centres.	
The introduction of improved frequencies and hours of operation on the Core Bus Route Network, which links the key three commercial centres to their surrounding residential areas.	Increase the percentage of people travelling into the three main commercial centres by public transport to 25% by 2021, and 35% by 2031 compared with 2008 levels.

Output Indicator	Impact Target
Introduction of improved cycle links and facilities into the main commercial centres from the surrounding areas.	Increase the percentage of people travelling into the three main commercial centres, by cycling to 15% by 2021 and 25% by 2031 compared with 2008 levels.
Improve the footfall in the three main commercial centres through measures to improve the pedestrian environment.	Increase the percentage of people walking to the three main commercial centres by 25% from 2008 to 2021.
Further develop new strategic high quality sustainable transport links / corridors through the Borough utilising opportunities provided by the Mersey Gateway Project and thereby improving key Mersey Belt and Liverpool City Region linkages.	
Better cycle links between the Trans Pennine Trail and Runcorn via SJB.	Increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling over the SJB by 100% by 2021.

APPENDIX 5

MGSTS SA SCOPING REPORT CONSULTATION

APPENDIX 5: MGSTS SA SCOPING REPORT CONSULTATION

Question	Section of Report
1. Are there any additional plans or programmes at the international, national, regional or local level which have been excluded which your organisation thinks are relevant to the MGSTS?	**3**
Answer:	
2. Do you think the environmental, social and economic baseline data collected for Halton is appropriate and relevant?	**4**
Answer:	
3. Is any environmental, social and economic baseline information currently missing?	**4**
Answer:	
4. Is there any inaccurate environmental, social and economic baseline information?	**4**
Answer:	

Question	Section of Report
5. Do you agree with the review of the current key sustainability issues in the Halton Area?	**5**
Answer:	
6. Are the sustainability objectives and associated indicators suitable for the MGSTS?	**6**
Answer:	
7. Which of the sustainability objectives do you see as the most important?	**6**
Answer:	
8. Does the wording of any existing objectives need to be changed, added or removed?	**6**
Answer:	

Question	Section of Report
9. Do the draft sustainability appraisal indicators provide a relevant measure for the objectives (Appendix 6)? If not can you suggest appropriate alternatives?	**6**
Answer:	
10. Do you have any other comments on the scoping report?	**All**
Answer:	

APPENDIX 6

SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Council Internal Governance – Government Consultation Paper on Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the way forward for the Council's internal Governance arrangements in light of the Government's latest Consultation document.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

(1) That the Council notes the Consultation Paper and defers a decision on consultation and on the choice between the two models for internal governance until the Government has published the final version of its guidance; and

(2) that the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy be authorised to determine the Council's response to the Consultation paper on the basis set out at paragraph 3.10

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Internal Governance – Two new models

3.1 On 30 December 2007 section 64 and Schedule 4 the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force. This inserts new provisions into the Local Government Act 2000. These compel Councils to adopt one of two new governance models. In Halton's case this decision must be taken by no later than 31 December 2010.

3.2 The two new governance models are (1) New-style Leader and cabinet executive OR (2) Mayor and cabinet executive. *No change* is not an option. Only these two models are now allowed.

3.3 The key features of these new models are:-

3.3 (1) **New style leader and cabinet executive** - The executive comprises a councillor elected as leader by the Council, and two or more councillors of the authority appointed to the executive by the executive leader. If the whole Council is elected every four years, the leader holds office until the annual meeting after the next elections. If the Council is elected by

halves or thirds, the Leader holds office until his or her term of office as a councillor expires. The constitution may allow the Council to remove a leader from office prematurely. These differ from the present "old style" arrangements in that there is no annual election of a leader (unless he or she is removed from office), and the leader must select and appoint the members of the executive and allocate delegated powers, not the Council.

3.3 (2) **Mayor and cabinet executive** - The executive comprises a directly elected mayor who appoints two or more councillors to the executive. The mayor holds office for four years. He or she appoints the members of the executive and allocates delegated powers.

3.4 The maximum number of members that an executive may have remains 10.

3.5 The decision on which of the two models to adopt is subject to various procedural, notice and consultative requirements. It could be taken at any time from 30 December 2007 to 31 December 2010 and no later although the absence - as things stand - of the now expected statutory guidance is unhelpful. It provides a measure of risk if decisions are taken in advance of the issue of the guidance.

3.6 The Council has to take reasonable steps to consult electors, and other interested persons in its area, over the choice between the two models then draw up proposals, including a timetable. In drawing up the proposals, the Council must consider the extent to which they would be likely to assist in securing continuous improvement in the way in which the Council's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.7 **Outline provisional timetable – Internal Governance (assuming final government guidance issued May 2009):-**

- September 2009 - All Member - consideration.
- December 2009 – Report to Executive seeking approval of public consultation document and process
- January 2010-March 2010 – Public Consultation on options.
- March 2010 – consider outcome of consultation, officers draw report
- April 2010 – Full Council – CX having identified which of two options is favoured following consultation submits report via Executive moving to new model. Council passes resolution.
- May 2010 new internal governance arrangements take effect.

Guidance and Decisions

3.8 The Council must have regard to any guidance to be issued by the Secretary of State. As yet no such guidance has been published. While a decision could legally be taken without such guidance it is recommended, in the interests of prudent government, that a decision on the model and consultation about the decision is not taken until the

guidance has been issued. There is a risk that a decision taken or consultation undertaken before such guidance exists would have to be rescinded and the process restarted. No doubt the consultation process will need to have regard to the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation and the council's own public consultation strategy but the government's guidance may include special features associated with the choice between the two models.

3.9 In December 2008 the Government published a consultation paper on Changing Council Governance Arrangements- Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders. It is important to bear in mind that this NOT the guidance itself. It is consultation ***about*** the Guidance.

3.10 The consultation paper sets out seven consultation questions to which the Council may choose to respond and the deadline for responses is 13 March 2009:-

	Question	Proposed Halton Response
Q1	Should we remove the special requirements that a proposal to move from a mayor and cabinet executive must include a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change and the council's reasons for wanting to make that change?	No. It seems entirely appropriate that a rationale for change should be required from those proposing the change.
Q2	Do you agree with the proposal that the moratorium period should be reduced from ten years to four years where a governance referendum does not result in a change?	No the moratorium period should In the Interests of stable governmental arrangement be retained at ten years.
Q3	Should the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum be reduced across the board? If yes, to what level should the threshold be reduced, bearing in mind the considerations about the balance between the practicalities of collecting signatures and the demonstration of a significant level of interest in change.	The threshold should be retained at current level. It certainly should not be reduced. There should be a requirement for a substantial number of signatures before the costs associated with testing the electorate are Incurred.

Q4	Should numerical thresholds be set? If so, what should the basis and bands for these thresholds be?	No
Q5	Should the threshold be a percentage, but subject to certain minimum and maximum numerical thresholds? What should those percentage and numerical thresholds be?	Yes - adhere to present threshold.
Q6	Do you agree that a traditional paper based petition calling for a governance referendum may be supplemented, if the petition organiser so wishes, by e-petitioning?	no
Q7	Do you agree that e-petitioning for a governance referendum must be through a secure e-petitioning facility provided by the council concerned?	E petitioning is not supported

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 None

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Communities in Control – real people, real power	Website	Robert Barnett

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted