

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



*Municipal Building,
Kingsway,
Widnes.
WA8 7QF*

5th August 2008

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

You are hereby summoned to attend an Ordinary Meeting of the Halton Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall on Wednesday, 13 August 2008 commencing at 6.30 p.m. for the purpose of considering and passing such resolution(s) as may be deemed necessary or desirable in respect of the matters mentioned in the Agenda.

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

Chief Executive

-AGENDA-

- 1. COUNCIL MINUTES**
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 3. THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 5. LEADER'S REPORT**
- 6. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**
 - a) 10th April 2008
 - b) 14th May 2008
 - c) 19th May 2008
 - d) 5th June 2008
 - e) 19th June 2008
 - f) 26th June 2008
- 7. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE**
 - a) 10th April 2008
 - b) 8th May 2008
 - c) 5th June 2008
 - d) 25th June 2008
- 8. MINUTES OF THE MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD**
 - a) 19th May 2008

b) 21st July 2008

9. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 8

10. MATTERS REQUIRING A DECISION OF THE COUNCIL

a) Mersey Gateway TWA Order - KEY DECISION

To consider the attached report.

**b) Changing the Name of a Ward - Executive Board 5th June 2008
(minute no. EXB9 refers)**

The Executive Board considered the attached report.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) electors in the Castlefields Ward be consulted on the proposed change of name; and
- (2) a Working Party of elected representatives be nominated to consider any representations received following the consultation.

**c) Primary Capital Programme - Executive Board 5th June 2008
(minute no. EXB11)**

The Executive Board considered the attached report.

RECOMMENDED: That the building projects prioritised for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 be ratified.

d) Annual Reports from PPBs

To consider the attached report.

e) Appointments to Outside Bodies

To consider the attached report.

(NB The list of appointments will be circulated as soon as possible.)

f) Appointment of Independent Member of Standards Committee

To consider the attached report.

11. CHANGE OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with Standing Order 30(4) the Council is advised of the following change of representation on the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board:-

Councillor Bryant has stood down leaving a Liberal Democrat vacancy on the Board.

12. MINUTES OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

- a) Children and Young People - cream pages
- b) Employment, Learning and Skills - yellow pages
- c) Healthy Halton - blue pages
- d) Safer Halton - pink pages
- e) Urban Renewal - green pages
- f) Corporate Services - salmon pages
- g) Business Efficiency Board - white pages

13. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- a) Development Control - pink pages
- b) Standards - white pages
- c) Regulatory - blue pages

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 13 August 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway Transport and Works Act Order

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report relates to the order under section 3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 (the "TWA Order") that is being promoted by the Council in order to secure powers to promote the elements of the Mersey Gateway Project (the "Project") that relate to the Mersey Gateway Bridge, in particular to authorise interference with public rights of navigation by the construction of a new bridge over the River Mersey comprised in the Project.
- 1.2 In accordance with the provisions of section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 as applied by section 20 of the Transport and Works Act 1992, the Council resolved on 23 April 2008 to promote the TWA Order. A copy of the report to Council is attached at Annex 1. A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council on 23 April is attached at Annex 2.
- 1.3 On 30 May 2008 the Council made an application under section 6 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to the Secretary of State for Transport for the TWA Order. A copy of the application letter is attached at Annex 3.
- 1.4 Now that the application for the TWA Order has been made, in accordance with the provisions of section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to confirm its decision to promote the application for the TWA Order.
- 1.5 This report seeks the Council's confirmation of its decision to promote the TWA Order in accordance with the requirements of section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Council note the content of this report and its annexes and have regard to it in considering whether to confirm the resolution of the Council made on 23 April 2008 to promote the TWA Order; and

- 2.2 That in accordance with section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 as applied by the Transport and Works Act 1992 the Council resolves to confirm the resolution of the Council made on 23 April 2008 to promote the TWA Order.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Details of the Project and the reasons why the Council is promoting this major transport initiative were reported to the Council on 23 April 2008, and a copy of this report is attached at Annex 1. There have been no changes to the Project since 23 April.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The project is a key priority for the Council which will deliver benefits locally and across the wider region.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The implementation of Mersey Gateway will have significant benefits for all Council priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 The specific risks are reported in a detailed project risk register linked to the Council's corporate risk management regime.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 8.1 The recommended decisions are required to support the delivery of Mersey Gateway.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 9.1 Alternative options for securing the powers to construct, maintain and operate, including tolling, the MG project have been assessed and rejected.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

- 10.1 The recommended decisions are required to be made as soon as possible after the application for the TWA Order was made, in accordance with the provisions of section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

11.1 Files maintained by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and by the Highways and Transportation Department.

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REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 23 April 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway Transport and Works Act Order

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report relates to the order required to be promoted in order to secure powers to promote the elements of the Mersey Gateway Project (the "Project") that relate to the Mersey Gateway Bridge. It also addresses the other applications and orders required to be promoted for the other elements of the Project to give the overall context. In doing so it also explains the background to the Project.
- 1.2 This report seeks the authority of the Council to promote the proposed Transport and Works Act Order in accordance with the requirements of section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972. In this respect, the Executive Board resolved on 10 April 2008 to recommend to a meeting of the Council that it should resolve to promote an order under s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise interference with public rights of navigation by the construction of a new bridge over the River Mersey comprised in the Project.
- 1.3 Accordingly, this report sets out the basis of the Transport and Works Act Order, what it is intended to achieve, and recommends that the Council should resolve to promote an order under s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise interference with public rights of navigation by the construction of a new bridge over the River Mersey comprised in the Project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Council note the content of this report and have regard to it in considering whether to promote an order under s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 authorising the construction of works that interfere with navigation and certain other matters explained elsewhere in this report; and
- 2.2 That in accordance with the terms of s239 of the Local Government Act 1972 as applied by section 20 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 the Council resolve to promote an order under the provisions of s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 authorising the construction of works that interfere with navigation

and certain other matters explained elsewhere in this report, for effecting all or some of the following objects and purposes:

- 2.2.1 for statutory authority to construct a new bridge across the River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes in the Borough of Halton being works which interfere with public rights of navigation;
 - 2.2.1 for statutory authority to construct works that interfere with navigation in the St Helens Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal;
 - 2.2.3 to authorise permanent and temporary changes to the highway network in the Borough of Halton;
 - 2.2.4 to authorise the compulsory acquisition of land and rights in land for the purposes of this project;
 - 2.2.5 to authorise the charging, levying, setting and collection of tolls or charges for the use of the works and the creation of summary offences in connection with non-payment;
 - 2.2.6 to authorise the making of byelaws and their enforcement, including the creation of summary offences;
 - 2.2.7 to apply and/or disapply legislation relevant to the works;
 - 2.2.8 to make arrangements for the letting of a concession to operate and manage the works and their construction; and
 - 2.2.9 to authorise such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions as may be necessary and/or convenient, and such other purposes as may be determined by the Council.
- 2.3 That the Chief Executive be authorised to settle the areas subject to works to be authorised by the Order and the areas to be the subject to powers of compulsory acquisition contained in the Order and also to settle any documentation required for the Order.
- 2.4 That the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised to make the application for the Order to the Secretary of State and to take all necessary procedural steps prior to and after the making of the application, including the preparation and presentation of the council's case at any public inquiry.
- 2.5 That the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised to sign and serve any notices or documents necessary to give effect to

these recommendations and to take all other actions necessary to give effect to these recommendations.

- 2.6 That the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised as soon as the Order is made by the Secretary of State and comes into effect, to take all necessary procedural steps in order to implement the powers of the Council authorised by the Order as made.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Silver Jubilee Bridge ("SJB") today represents a key vehicular crossing point over the Mersey. It is one of only four main opportunities for road traffic to cross the Mersey between Liverpool and Manchester. From the west, these comprise the two Mersey tunnels, Silver Jubilee Bridge, crossing within Warrington town centre and the Thelwall Viaduct on the M6. As such, the SJB forms a key link in the regional transport network as well as representing the only vehicular and pedestrian link between the Borough towns of Runcorn and Widnes.
- 3.2 The bridge was originally opened in 1961 with one lane in each direction and an opening year traffic flow of 10,000 vehicles per day. The bridge was modified in 1977 to provide for two lanes in each direction. However, these were sub standard (having a total width of just 12.2 m) and lacking in any central divide or current day spacing. Traffic growth on the bridge has since grown but there is no physical scope to provide for additional capacity. The bridge today typically carries circa 83,000 vehicles per day and at peak summer time has been in excess of 93,000. Practical capacity is exceeded for four hours each day and spreading of the morning and evening peak regularly occurs. The bridge has poor facilities for pedestrians, which are rarely used, and no discrete provision for cyclists. Prolonged periods of congestion regularly occur, which affect both regional and local traffic crossing the Estuary as well as causing knock on network effects for local traffic in both Widnes and Runcorn. In addition the public transport routes that do use the bridge for journeys within the Borough cannot rely on journey times or timetabling.
- 3.3 Silver Jubilee Bridge fulfils a pivotal role within the regional highway network. The key north west routes comprise the M62 (linking Merseyside to Manchester and beyond) which runs along the north of the Borough whilst the M56 (linking North Wales with Manchester) skirts along the southern Borough boundary. The only link between the two is the route provided by Silver Jubilee Bridge, which provides for regional movement in and out of Liverpool from Runcorn, Vale Royal, Chester and North Wales. The highway network has sought to maximise this opportunity, with the expressway network in Runcorn providing fast links from Junctions 11 and 12 of the M56 via SJB to Junction 7 of the M62 via the Widnes Eastern bypass. The limiting

factor is the capacity of the bridge rather than the accompanying junction links and network.

- 3.4 Whilst the wider regional network is reasonably robust, the bottleneck provided by SJB undermines network resilience. In addition to regular congestion associated with normal use, the effects of any incident (accident/breakdown/weather related/maintenance) on either the SJB or its approaches severely undermines the role of the SJB.

Mersey Gateway Project

- 3.5 The provision of a second crossing of the River Mersey has been a long-held aspiration of Halton Borough Council. The traffic bottleneck caused by the SJB has been long acknowledged as social and economic constraint. In 1999 the draft UDP identified that the case for a new crossing had also been acknowledged by the then Minister for Transport, making clear the need to develop a scheme for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan.

- 3.6 Halton Borough Council subsequently began to advance the proposals. The work undertaken by and on behalf of the Council between 2000 and 2003 focused on comparing potential alternatives to address problems associated with congestion in Halton. This work was submitted first to the DfT in 2003 and then resubmitted, accompanied by additional data early in 2006. Through this process, certain regional and local objectives were identified as follows:

- To relieve the SJB, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local traffic;
- To maximise development opportunities;
- To improve public transport links across the River; and
- To encourage the increased use of cycling and walking.

- 3.7 For any scheme to be successful the Council required it to fulfil as many of the above objectives as possible, to fit its environment and to be economically viable. Throughout the process a range of alternatives were considered. Those alternatives which satisfied the above objectives, fitted their environment and were economically viable were then considered further until a preferred solution was identified.

- 3.8 A number of strategic alternatives with the potential to solve congestion problems in Halton and achieve the Council's objectives as set out above were considered throughout the development of the Project. These included making better use of existing infrastructure and options for increasing transport capacity. The main topics of investigation were as follows:

- Halton Travel Plans and similar demand management initiatives;
- Road User Charging for using the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge or other roads;

- Dynamic Lane Management to get the best out of the existing road capacity;
- Selective Access to SJB by Vehicle Tagging;
- Road Space Reallocation;
- Park and Ride Facilities;
- Rail Service Improvement;
- New road bridge crossing to the West of the Railway Bridge;
- New road bridge crossing between the SJB and the Railway Bridge;
- New road tunnels to the west and east of the SJB; and
- New road bridge crossing (adjacent to and to the east of the SJB).

- 3.9 Following a thorough assessment of each strategic alternative, it was concluded that a fixed crossing to the east of the SJB represented the only realistic option of delivering improvements in congestion, and achieving the identified scheme objectives.
- 3.10 A series of alternative fixed routes and were then considered to the east of the SJB all of which avoided the more environmentally sensitive lower reaches of the estuary. This concluded that an option known as route 3A lies naturally on the desire line for through traffic and was economic in connecting effectively with the expressway network to the north and south of the river. As a result, it achieved the highest proportion of trip reassignment from the SJB when compared with other routes and therefore provide the strategic and local traffic diversion required. It was found that this option would satisfactorily relieve the SJB and permit its return to local use. The Project alignment also has relatively straightforward junction solutions in comparison to other variations of the route, avoids residential areas, and will have a minimal impact upon industrial areas and the existing highway network.
- 3.11 The discussions with the Department of Transport, leading up to Programme Entry confirmation being granted in March 2006, covered options to fund the project. It was confirmed that Mersey Gateway should be delivered as a tolled road, and a road user charging regime would also extend to the existing SJB in order to deliver the project benefits within the limited funding agreed with Government.
- 3.12 In developing the project, and as an expression of their ongoing corporate support for the project, Halton Borough Council has identified revised strategic objectives for the Mersey Gateway Project as follows (together with a brief explanation):
- i) To relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local transport needs;

The New Bridge would provide an alternative route across the River Mersey that is predicted to attract in the region of 80% of the existing traffic crossing the River by the SJB. As such, provided that both bridges are subject to tolls or charges, the Project will

meet this objective, allowing the redeployment of roadspace on the Silver Jubilee Bridge for local traffic, public transport, cycling and walking.

- ii) To apply minimum toll and road user charges to both the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge consistent with the level required to satisfy affordability constraints;

The proposed funding arrangements and tolling strategy maximise the opportunity for a private sector partner (the concessionaire) to offer a best value bid to the Council for the design build and operate contract (further explained below). The assumption is that toll levels will be commensurate with those charged for the use of the existing Mersey Tunnels.

- iii) To improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities;

The removal of a constraint on transport - both private and public - has been assessed as having real benefits in terms of accessibility and journey reliability. In addition to the Project itself, the Borough council is advancing planning policy designed to seize the advantages offered by the release of land by the project and potential for de-linking of the SJB in Runcorn as well as regeneration opportunities elsewhere in the Borough.

- iv) To improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment;

The environmental impact assessment in respect of the Project has predicted that air quality and noise climates will improve in several locations as a result of the Project. Tolls are expected to constrain traffic growth resulting in reduced greenhouse gases in future years.

- v) To improve public transport links across the River Mersey;

At present public transport is reliant on the congested SJB. As a result of the project, public transport will benefit from freer-flowing traffic conditions. In addition, the borough Council is developing a Sustainable Transport Strategy designed to maximise the advantages offered by the Project.

- vi) To encourage the increased use of cycling and walking; and

The current, unattractive route between Runcorn and Widnes via the SJB will be markedly improved as a result of the Project. This, alongside the Sustainable Transport Strategy will allow the objective to be met.

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

Part of the problems associated with the SJB are that as the only link between the Mersey Tunnels and M6 Thelwall Viaduct it has a significant strategic role. When it fails in this role significant problems result. Moreover, when either of the alternative crossings fail the extra traffic diverting to SJB results in chronic congestion. The provision of an alternative route within the Borough of Halton and at a more strategic level will provide greatly enhanced network resilience for all those people and businesses reliant on journeys that cross the River Mersey.

- 3.13 It can be seen from the above that the Project as described elsewhere in this report will provide substantial transportation, environmental and regeneration benefits. Whereas the environmental statement submitted with planning applications for certain parts of the Project reveals some adverse effects, these are few and - balanced against the benefits of the project - are much more than outweighed by its positive aspects. In light of this, a compelling case exists, in the public interest, for the promotion and delivery of the project, including the acquisition of necessary land.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 To inform the evolution of the Project, two clear strands of consultation have been undertaken over a six year period involving statutory consultees, business stakeholders, landowners, and resident focus groups, including:

- Consultation carried out prior to the Department for Transport confirmation of programme entry for the Project in March 2006 (advised on and managed by MVA Consultancy);
- Consultation after approval by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on 18th June 2007 for 14 weeks between June and September 2007 (advised on and managed by DTW Consultancy) in line with a Consultation Strategy developed specifically for the Project.
- The key stages of pre-application and orders consultation have included the following:
 - September-October 2002 - first consultation took place on crossing options in the form of focus group discussions with residents;
 - February 2003 – assessment of route options with Resident Focus Groups and Business and Stakeholder workshops;
 - July 2004 – following the selection of a preferred route, further consultation was undertaken with residents, major businesses, and 25 local authorities;
 - October 2006 – following the initial design of the Project in March 2006, all affected landowners were contacted, advising of the possible impacts of the Project on their landholdings; and

- June-September 2007 – extensive public consultation was undertaken including 15 exhibitions throughout the Borough, editorial in Council publications, a new website, information campaign in local media, monthly e-newsletter, briefing events for local/regional businesses and groups, gateway newsletter, postal/phone/text feedback system and letters to general stakeholders, statutory consultees and regional MP's and MEP's.

5.0 THE MERSEY GATEWAY WORKS

- 5.1 In response to the aspirations of the Borough Council, the needs of the highway and transportation network and as a product of the consultation described above it has been possible to advance to a stage where a design for the Project can be identified. This then has certain additional characteristics in terms of other, ancillary aspects that are described in further detail below.
- 5.2 Members will be aware of the nature of the project in broad terms. However, this section of this report explains the scope and extent of the Mersey Gateway Project as it stands today.
- 5.3 The works can be divided into two broad categories:
- 5.3.1 Main Works - these are shown on the plan at **Appendix 1** edged blue and described at 6.11 - 6.37 and will be the subject of the proposed order under section 3(1)(b) of the Transport and Works Act 1992, to authorise the construction of the Mersey Gateway bridge and ancillary works; and
- 5.3.2 Remote Works, including SJB - these are shown on the plan at **Appendix 1** edged red and described at 6.38 - 6.47. These works are the subject of the other applications and orders required for the Project, which are also explained in this report by way of context.

Route Description

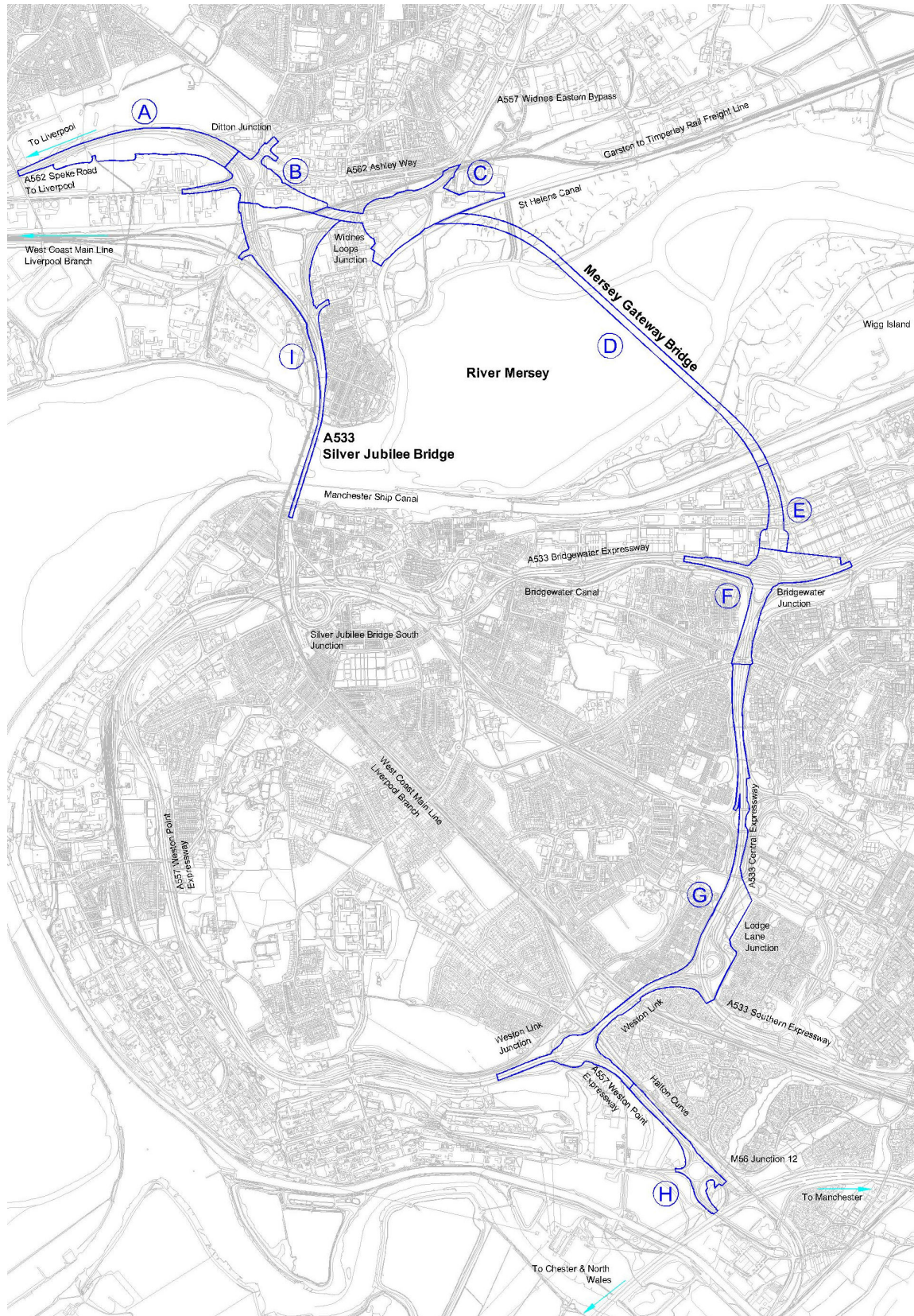
- 5.4 The works that comprise the Project run from the North West of Widnes to a junction with the M56 to the South of Runcorn. They also include the SJB. A scheme has been designed in outline to deliver the objectives of the Project, which is referred to as the "Reference Design". The alignment of the Reference Design is described in greater detail below.
- 5.5 The western extent of the proposed main alignment will be located in Widnes, along the A562 Speke Road to Liverpool, to the west of the existing Ditton Roundabout Junction (Junction of A562 and A533). The alignment will then head eastwards along the line of, and to the south of, Speke Road towards the Ditton Junction. It will then progress, via an embankment, across land currently occupied by industrial units

along Ditton Road and over the Garston to Timperley rail freight line, before crossing the alignment of the existing A557 Widnes Eastern Bypass (via a multi-span viaduct), the Catalyst Trade Park and the western corner of the Thermphos Chemical Works.

- 5.6 A new junction (the "Widnes Loops Junction") will be formed with the A557 at this location. The alignment will then continue south eastward over the St Helens Canal, Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, the River, Astmoor Saltmarsh and Wigg Island, before turning south over the Manchester Ship Canal and Astmoor Industrial Estate. The alignment will then connect into the existing road network in Runcorn at the Junction of the A533 Bridgewater and Central Expressways with the A558 Daresbury Expressway (the Bridgewater Junction).
- 5.7 The route will continue south along the Central Expressway (A533) towards the junctions of the Central/Southern Expressways and the Weston Point Expressway/Weston Link (known respectively as the Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction). The alignment will finally join the M56 Motorway at Junction 12.
- 5.8 The main application sites for the Project are shown at Appendix 1. The areas shown edged red will comprise works for which planning applications have been made pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - see below. The areas shown edged blue will be the subject of an application under the Transport and Works Act 1992. Together, the areas edged red and edged blue are known as the "Project Area".
- 5.9 It will be noted that the Project Area is wider than the Construction areas described below. This is because the Project Area includes all land anticipated to be reasonably required at the date of this report for the construction of the Project. This includes not only the land that will be occupied by the works themselves, but also the areas required for construction sites during the construction period. The final extent of these areas will be settled in due course when the final form of the Transport and Works Act 1992 Application is determined. However, all of the land that will be comprised in the final Project Area will be *necessary* for the purposes of the Project.
- 5.10 For the purposes of understanding and describing the works the structural, highway and construction works for the Project have been split into a number of parts (known as "Construction Areas") (A to I as shown below on Figure 1). The construction areas include the following:
- Area A – Main Toll Plazas;
 - Area B – Ditton Junction to Freight Line;
 - Area C – Freight Line to St Helens Canal including Widnes Loops Junction;
 - Area D – Mersey Gateway Bridge (the "New Bridge");

- Area E – Astmoor Viaduct;
- Area F – Bridgewater Junction;
- Area G – Central Expressway, Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction;
- Area H – M56 Junction 12; and
- Area I – Silver Jubilee Bridge and Widnes De-linking.

Fig1: Mersey Gateway Project Construction Areas



- 5.10 The following section of this Report provides a summary of the highway and structural design for the Project within each of these construction areas.

Area A - Main Toll Plaza

- 5.11 The Main Toll Plaza provides the location of where tolls may be collected for crossing the New Bridge. As the Project must provide for barrier tolling technology it is necessary to provide an area sufficiently large for vehicles to slow, wait and pass through barriers without having a detrimental effect on traffic flows. Toll plazas are situated on the North side of the Mersey only, because this minimises land-take, allows concentration of necessary resources and means that this type of work can be restricted in the extent and location of any of its effects. The toll plaza will require approximately four hectares of land to accommodate the northbound and southbound tollbooths and will be at or just above existing ground level. No major earthworks are envisaged because the land at this location is already relatively flat. Where the Toll Plaza is above ground then fill will be imported. Tolling structures will be required, which are likely to comprise canopies providing sufficient headroom over tollbooths and their equipment for normal traffic use.
- 5.12 Extended link roads to the north and south of the Main Toll Plaza carriageway that bypass the tollbooths will be provided to allow access from Speke Road to Ditton Junction for vehicles not wishing to use the New Bridge. The northern edge of the north link road will coincide with the northern edge of the existing southbound carriageway of Speke Road.
- 5.13 Stewards Brook and a public footpath pass beneath the existing Speke Road to the west of the proposed tolling areas. This brook is contained within a culvert which will need to be extended in length to the south to accommodate the increased width of the carriageway at that location. The public footpath will be diverted around St Michaels Road. Balancing ponds may be formed to the south of the new carriageway on either side of Stewards Brook to control the drainage water outfall flow rate into the brook.

Area B – Ditton Junction to Freight Line

- 5.14 Ditton Junction will be changed from a roundabout to a signal-controlled junction. The new carriageway will increase in level on an embankment as it approaches the new grade separated junction and will be taken over the new ground level link, between Ditton Road and Moor Lane South, on a new, two span bridge. The southbound on-slip and the northbound off-slip will also feature toll collection facilities.
- 5.15 An embankment of up to 9m high will be formed. This crosses land currently occupied by industrial buildings and a scrap metal yard and it

is assumed that these areas will require treatment (owing to contamination) prior to construction of the embankment.

- 5.16 Ditton Road is a long established corridor for services and many of these will need to be diverted to accommodate the revised highway alignment. These will include diversions of electricity, gas, water, sewage and telecommunications mains. The Scottish Power Manweb electricity substation adjacent to the Anglo Blackwell compound on Ditton Road will require relocation.

Area C – Freight Line to St Helens Canal

- 5.17 The following new structures and earthworks will be required in this section of the works:

- The Freight Line Bridge - a single-span bridge over the Garston to Timperley Rail Freight Line.
- Victoria Road Viaduct - a high level, multi-span viaduct connecting the Freight Line Bridge to the edge of the Widnes Loops Junction including the crossing of Victoria Road.
- Two bridges over the new Widnes Loops Junction carriageways.
- Embankments carrying the new carriageway at high level.
- A bridge to carry the Widnes Loops Junction southbound on-slip over itself.
- Toll plazas connecting the Mersey Gateway to the Widnes Eastern Bypass.
- The St Helens Canal Bridge - the high level bridge crossing the potential development corridor to the north of the St Helens Canal and the crossing of the St Helens Canal itself, which would then land on the north abutment of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.

- 5.18 This area forms the link between the New Bridge and the existing A557 Widnes Eastern Bypass that connects with Junction 7 of the M62 to the north. It will be formed primarily by substantial earthworks. The new road between the Freight Line and the Widnes Loops Junction will be carried on a multi-span reinforced concrete structure. The structures within the Widnes Loops Junction will either be portal or box structures in reinforced concrete constructed within the earthworks.

- 5.19 The new carriageway will be taken over the St Helens Canal on a new, reinforced concrete structure, integral with the north abutment of the New Bridge. It will be formed at a height sufficient to permit a further structure to be constructed under it to carry a future light rapid transit system (or similar) at a level to match the possible running surface within the New Bridge and still preserve the required headroom of 5m for craft that may at some future time use the canal.

- 5.20 During construction of the New Bridge, it is expected that the St Helens Canal area will form the main reception/transition area for the main bridge units that will form the decks. As such, it is assumed that it will

be necessary temporarily to infill the canal (maintaining its drainage water transfer function) to provide a working area. On completion, the canal will be reinstated with some minor changes to the alignment.

- 5.21 A corridor for the Trans-Pennine Trail cycle and footpath will be maintained throughout the works.
- 5.22 Upon completion of the Project a landscaping scheme will link the new earthworks with the leisure facilities offered by Spike Island, the St Helens Canal and the Trans-Pennine Trail.

Area D – Mersey Gateway Bridge

- 5.23 The New Bridge will have a total length of around 2.13km from abutment to abutment. The New Bridge will consist of approximately 550m of approach spans from the north abutment to the edge of Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, and 580m from the edge of Astmoor Saltmarsh, over part of Wigg Island, over the Manchester Ship Canal and onto the south abutment within the Astmoor Industrial Estate.
- 5.24 The New Bridge over the Estuary itself will consist of 1,000m of cable-stayed bridge, consisting of up to four spans supported by three towers. The towers will be circular with a diameter of about 10m at water level, but will taper and include architectural features throughout their height.
- 5.25 Typical span lengths of the approach viaducts are 70-100m with an overall deck depth of around 6m. Both approach viaducts are twin, separate structures supported on their own independent substructure. There will be a total of 30 piers on the saltmarshes. Each pier will be of reinforced concrete of about 2m by 5m and the height would vary between 12m (north) and 23m (south) to suit the vertical profile of the deck.
- 5.26 The three towers of the cable-stayed spans are assumed to be concrete below deck level and steel above. The overall height of the towers will be around 120 -140m above the River level. The decks of the cable-stayed spans will be twin parallel decks, similar in form to the approach viaducts, connected at positions of cable stay attachment. The cable stays are arranged in pairs in a harp (i.e. parallel) configuration.

Area E - Astmoor Viaduct

- 5.27 The new carriageway crosses the Astmoor Industrial Estate at a height of approximately 24m above existing ground level. The area will need to be cleared of existing light industrial buildings. On completion of the works, the area below the viaduct may very well be available for future development.

- 5.28 The area between the south abutment of the New Bridge and Bridgewater Junction will comprise a high-level, multi-span viaduct called Astmoor Viaduct. This will cross the existing industrial park at considerable height, linking the high level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal with the new crossing of Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.29 This elevated structure will vary in width up to a maximum of 60m before the southbound slip road splits off onto a separate alignment. The structure splits again at the point where the northbound on-slip road merges with the main line. The main line of the New Bridge will remain at high level while the two slip roads will reduce in level to the south to allow the slip roads to tie in with the roundabout at Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.30 The northern end of Astmoor Viaduct will land on the southern side of the south abutment of the New Bridge. The south abutment of the Astmoor Viaduct will be approximately 85m wide and will be at three levels. The abutment wall will retain the end of the embankment up to Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.31 The viaduct will be 340m long and will comprise 12 spans; 20m end spans and 30m intermediate spans. The deck will be supported by reinforced concrete plate piers, approximately 2m long by 5m wide, with four separate piers at each bent (line of support).

Area F – Bridgewater Junction

- 5.32 Like the Widnes Loops Junction, the Bridgewater Junction is a complex of structures and slip roads that provide grade separation and access to and from the Central Expressway (running north to south) and the Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressways (running east to west). The existing route through Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressway will be closed and brought into the new roundabout.
- 5.33 A two-level interchange is proposed with east-west movements at the lower level and the new road linking to the Central Expressway at the higher level. The lower level will contain the gyratory system, linking slip road movements. The upper level structure is likely to be a five-span steel and concrete viaduct. Similar construction materials will be used for the construction of the new slip road bridges over the Bridgewater Canal. The existing bridges over the Bridgewater Canal will be removed. However, the existing bridges over the Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressway will be retained, although they will no longer span a live carriageway.
- 5.34 The construction can be phased to coincide with routine winter closures of the canal. Retaining walls are also proposed so that adjacent slip roads at different levels to the main carriageway can be

kept tight within the junction without the need for an embankment therefore limiting land take.

- 5.35 Traffic management of the existing traffic flows during the construction phase will affect construction methods and materials. A major feature of the works in this area will be the requirement for demolition of the existing structures. Otherwise, the works are essentially self-contained and can therefore be undertaken independently from the other work areas.
- 5.36 The five-span high level viaduct will be about 150m long and 27m wide. The substructure will be of piled foundations and reinforced concrete piers. The superstructure will be of prefabricated steel or prestressed concrete beams to allow erection to fit in with the phased traffic management regime that will be required to maintain traffic flows during the works.
- 5.37 High abutment structures will be required at both ends of the New Bridge. The south abutment will be on the south bank of the Bridgewater Canal.
- 5.38 The two existing slip road bridges will need to be replaced with two new slip roads bridges on the new alignment of the slip road off the new roundabout. These will be single span bridges with prefabricated steel or pre-stressed concrete beams used to form the decks over the canal.
- 5.39 The existing highway alignment will be re-configured to incorporate the New Bridge and to change the priority of the existing expressways. The free flow link between the Bridgewater and Daresbury Expressways will be removed and replaced by linking into the new roundabout that will be formed at the centre of the junction.
- 5.40 The embankments between this junction and the Central Expressway will be modified for the alignment of the New Bridge and the re-aligned slip roads. This tie-in between the new carriageway and the existing Central Expressway will be at Halton Brow.

Area G – Central Expressway, Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction

- 5.41 Improvements will be required to the alignment of the Central Expressway to bring it up to current geometric standards and to manage its interface with the New Bridge. These should not involve significant earthworks and will be undertaken generally within the existing highway boundary.
- 5.42 The distance between existing junctions along the Central Expressway is too close to meet current merging and weaving standards. The current carriageway configuration will be modified so that the alignment

passes through this corridor with connections only at Bridgewater Junction and Lodge Lane Junction. This will be achieved by converting the existing hard shoulders into distributor lanes with no direct connection to the New Bridge at Halton Brow and Halton Lea Junctions. The existing hard shoulders will need to be strengthened to carry full highway loading and road markings and barriers will be added to prevent merging movements.

- 5.43 Existing footbridges will be replaced and/or reconfigured. To the south of the Halton Lea Junction the existing busway bridge will be replaced with a new bridge on an altered alignment.
- 5.44 Lodge Lane Junction will be modified to change the priority of traffic flow from the Southern Expressway to the Weston Link. The junction will be modified to make provision for dual two lanes of through traffic from the Central Expressway to the Weston Link with single lane slip roads for traffic movements to and from the Southern Expressway. These works will comprise the construction of a new single span bridge, along with modifications to the earthworks and highway alignment.
- 5.45 Weston Link Junction will be modified to change the priority of traffic flow from the northbound to the southbound section of the Weston Point Expressway. These works will use most of the existing junction layout. However, a new slip road will be constructed on the north side of the existing Weston Link Slip Road to allow traffic to slip onto the New Bridge from the northern section of the Weston Point Expressway.

Area H – M56 Junction 12

- 5.46 The existing roundabout to the north of the M56 Junction 12 will be modified to include a signal controlled link directly across the centre of the existing roundabout for the main line of the new highway, leaving the outer roundabout segments for local turning traffic and for eastbound access to the M56 Junction 12. The works will comprise carriageway realignment and the installation of new traffic signals. A new retaining wall will be required to support the carriageway realignment on the south side of the roundabout.

Area I – Silver Jubilee Bridge and Widnes De-linking

- 5.47 The opening of the Project will result in a significant reduction in traffic flow on the SJB. This will allow the downgrading of the carriageway on the existing bridge from two lanes in each direction to a single lane in each direction. This in turn will release space on the deck of the bridge to re-introduce footpaths and to provide a dedicated cycle path. These works will require the re-configuration of the deck layout and will involve kerbing, re-surfacing and the provision of new road markings.

- 5.48 The substandard footpath cantilevered on the eastern side of the SJB could then be closed, although its structure would be retained to support services.
- 5.49 A tolling plaza will be constructed on the existing carriageway of Queensway approximately 330m to the north of the SJB. The embankment and viaduct linking to the Widnes Eastern Bypass will be removed. The link to Ditton Junction will be downgraded to comprise just the existing slip road. The main carriageway and structures will be removed between the Queensway tollbooths and Ditton Junction.
- 5.50 The main link between the SJB and Ditton Junction (after passing through the tolling plaza) will be along the existing northbound slip road. This would be a two-lane single carriageway. A new signal controlled junction will be needed to replace the one-way off and on slips. The remainder of the existing dual carriageway to Liverpool will be closed to traffic and demolished.

6.0 TWA ORDER - MAIN WORKS

- 6.1 In order to obtain authority to carry out the Main Works described above, an order made under s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 (the "TWA Order") will be required. The Main Works are described in section 5 above and are shown edged blue on the plan at Appendix 1. For ease of reference, these works comprise:
- 6.1.1 the main toll plaza and associated highway works (Area A);
 - 6.1.2 the highway works from Ditton Junction to the Garston to Timperley Rail Freight Line (Area B) and from the Freight Line to the St Helen's Canal (Area C);
 - 6.1.3 the Mersey Gateway Bridge (Area D);
 - 6.1.4 the new Astmoor viaduct (Area E); and
 - 6.1.5 works to the Bridgewater Junction (Area F).
- 6.2 The Main Works will interfere with rights of navigation in the River Mersey both in terms of the construction work required to build the Main Works and also the permanent structures that will be retained in the River, such as the towers for the bridge. Such works require specific statutory authority pursuant to s3 Transport and Works Act 1992.
- 6.3 The Main Works will also interfere with three other waterways (the St Helen's Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal, and the Bridgewater Canal) and a railway line (the Garston to Timperley Rail Freight Line), all of which require special powers. The TWA Order would confer such authority.

- 6.4 A TWA Order may also authorise works that are ancillary to any interference with navigation. This would include the Area A and Area B works that do not directly interfere with navigation themselves but are related to the elements of the Main Works that do interfere with navigation.
- 6.5 An order giving statutory authority is made by the Secretary of State on application by a promoter. In order to promote the TWA Order a local authority like the Borough Council must first obtain authority to do so by way of a resolution of the Council, passed by a majority of members eligible to vote. This is a requirement of s239 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of the promotion of or opposition to Bills, which also applies to the promotion of a TWA Order by s20 of the TWA 1992. It is recommended to the Council that it should resolve to promote a TWA Order for the purposes described in this report.
- 6.6 The Main Works will require planning permission. However, in this case it is not necessary to make an application to the Borough Council as local planning authority in the normal way. The Secretary of State may confer deemed planning permission pursuant to s90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 at the same time as making the TWA Order.
- 6.7 The works will require the acquisition of land owned by third parties and the TWA Order would confer powers of compulsory acquisition in respect of land and rights over and in land.
- 6.8 The New Bridge must also be the subject of tolls, which is described below. This would be secured by the TWA Order as well. The relevant provisions would comply with the Strategic Outline Business Case for the project approved by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 7 April (report attached at Appendix 2). Officers are continuing to work up proposals in accordance with that strategy and subject to legal and financial advice.
- 6.9 The changes to the highway network required within the Main Works area would be authorised by the TWA Order.
- 6.10 The TWA Order will contain extensive additional provisions designed to secure the construction, maintenance and operation of the Main Works as part of the Project.

7.0 REMOTE WORKS AND SJB

- 7.1 The statutory authority in relation to these works will be sought as follows:
- 7.1.1 Planning applications were made in respect of the Remote Works and SJB on 31 March 2008.

- 7.1.2 A Listed Buildings Consent application was made in respect of works to the Grade II listed Silver Jubilee Bridge on 31 March 2008.
- 7.1.3 The SJB must be the subject of tolls as described above. This would be secured by a scheme and order made under Part 3 of the Transport Act 2000 - a Road User Charging Order. The relevant provisions would comply with the Strategic Outline Business Case for the project approved by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 7 April (report attached at Appendix 2). Officers will continue to work up proposals in accordance with that strategy and subject to legal and financial advice.
- 7.1.4 Compulsory Purchase Orders will be needed to secure third party property required for these works. Authorisation to promote these was given by the Executive Board on 10 April, the report in relation to which is attached at Appendix 3. (Note: the minutes relating to this meeting will be published during the course of this week and a hard copy will be provided for Members at the Council meeting.)
- 7.1.5 Where the existing highway network and private accesses are affected by these works Side Road Orders will be required under s14 Highways Act 1980. Authorisation to promote these was given by the Executive Board on 10 April, the report in relation to which is attached at Appendix 3.
- 7.1.6 In relation to both sets of works, certain land owned by the Council will be needed that is or may be public open space. To ensure that this can be used for the purposes of the Project it is necessary to *appropriate* the land. This means that instead of the land being held by the Council for one purpose, it will instead be held for another - that of the Project. Again, authorisation to promote these was given by the Executive Board on 10 April, the report in relation to which is attached at Appendix 3.

8.0 FINANCE

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the Project will be procured as a Design Build Finance and Operate (DBFO) scheme. This means that an organisation, known as a concessionaire, will be responsible for the detailed design and for the construction maintenance and operation of the scheme. The concessionaire will also have to obtain finance that allows it to construct, operate and maintain the scheme for a defined period. They will repay the finance that they have raised over the period of the contract that they have agreed to, known as the concession period. For schemes of this nature the concession period is typically 30 to 40 years. Although the DfT is contributing funding to the Project, in the form of PFI Credit, the scheme will be funded mainly through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This means that the

concessionaire will have to raise the money through private finance methods, such as a loan from a bank, supported by PFI credit payments from the DfT.

- 8.2 Consequently, the finance for the Project would rely on revenue recovered from users of the Project through tolling and road user charging. To ensure robust revenue forecasts and to ensure that the Project will ease local congestion it is proposed that tolls / charges will be levied for use of both the New Bridge and the SJB (as explained in the Strategic Outline Business Case summary at Appendix 2). The tolling / charging regimes will also provide a mechanism to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the New Bridge and the SJB. This is intended to achieve demonstrable service reliability and standards.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The project is a key priority for the Council which will deliver benefits locally and across the wider region.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 10.1 The implementation of Mersey Gateway will have significant benefits for all Council priorities.

11.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 11.1 The specific risks are reported in a detailed project risk register linked to the Council's corporate risk management regime.

12.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 12.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

13.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 13.1 The recommended decisions are required to support the delivery of Mersey Gateway.

14.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

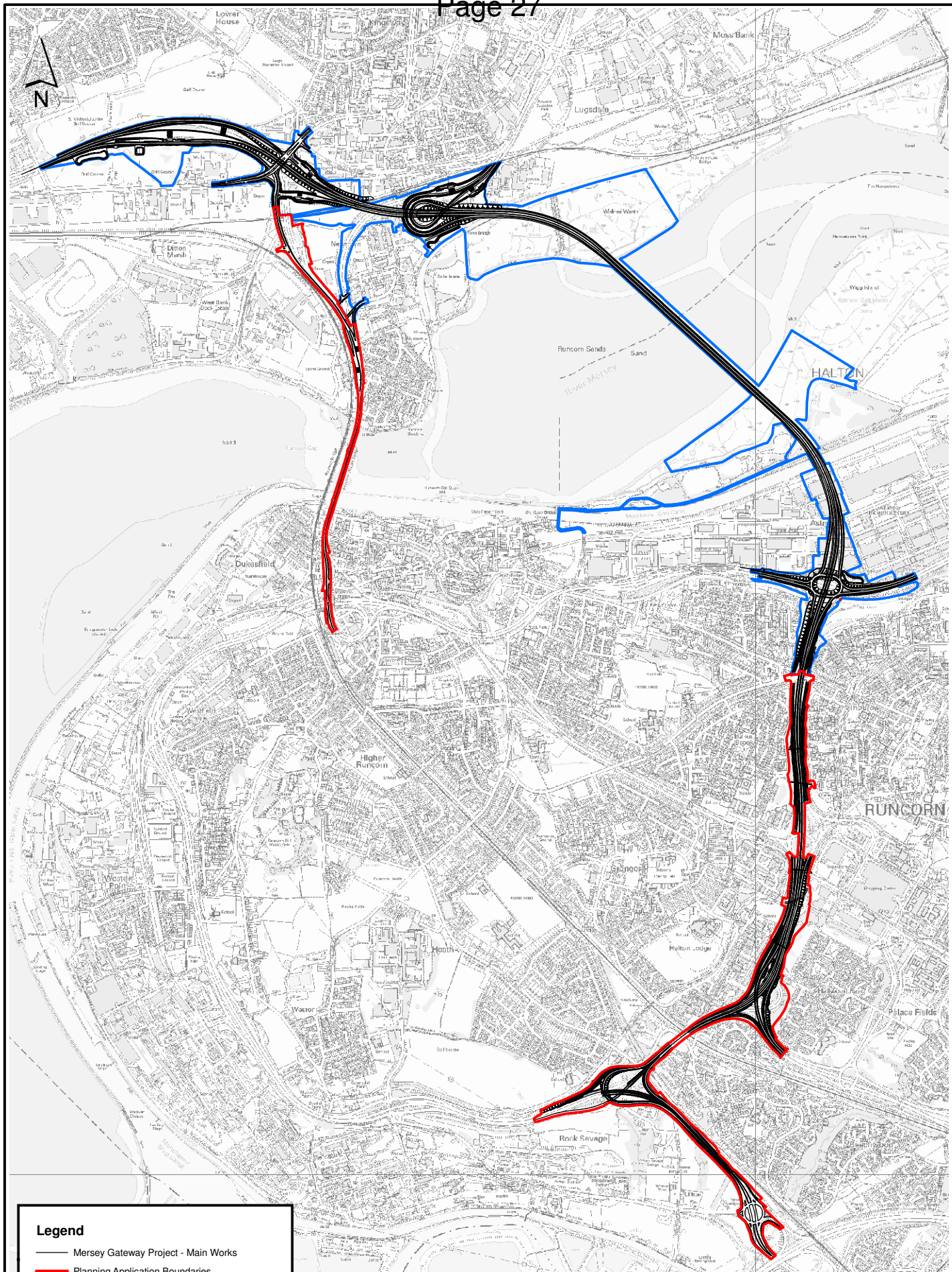
- 14.1 Alternative options for securing the powers to construct, maintain and operate, including tolling, the MG project have been assessed and rejected.

15.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

- 15.1 The recommended decisions are required before the next phase of the statutory process takes place in May 2008.

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

- 16.1 Files maintained by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and by the Highways and Transportation Department



Legend

- Mersey Gateway Project - Main Works
- Planning Application Boundaries
- Transport and Works Act 1992 Application Area

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Report Title
**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

Report Number
MG_REP_EIA_008

Figure Title
**THE MERSEY GATEWAY
 PROJECT**

Figure Number
1.1

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APPENDIX 2 TO ANNEX 1

REPORT: Mersey Gateway Executive Board
DATE: 7 April 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment
SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway Strategic Outline Business Case

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update of the business case that was submitted to the DfT in July 2005 to reflect the considerable developments in the scheme since that time. The information reported provides a summary of the Mersey Gateway Strategic Outline Business Case that has been prepared by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and accepted by the Mersey Gateway Officer Project Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Members

i) Note that Mersey Gateway still benefits from policy support at National, Regional and Local levels.

ii) Agree to the additional project objective “*To restore effective network resilience for road transport across the River Mersey,*” to align the project aims with the Eddington recommendations.

iii) Agree the principal elements of the tolling proposals which are designed to maximize the opportunity to deliver the project within the funding limits and to provide a best value option for funding toll discounts and a Mersey Gateway sustainable transport programme.

iv) Note that the current financial analysis results show that the project remains on course to be delivered within the funding limits agreed with Government, with toll levels based on the current Mersey Tunnels charges.

v) Note that the value for money parameters required by Government as a funding condition are satisfied but the headroom available to satisfy the condition has been reduced.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

THE STRATEGIC CASE

3.1 The planning process for Mersey Gateway will test the extent to which the project proposals fit with planning and economic policies expressed at national, regional and local levels. At the national level the Government’s most recent statement of its transport policy is in the White Paper ‘*Towards a Sustainable Transport System*’ – the Government’s response to Eddington and Stern. The White Paper

sets out the challenge for transport in a world faced with climate change and associated economic considerations. The White Paper acknowledges that congestion is increasing on many motorways and strategic rail and road routes. The motorway boxes are examples of road networks particularly under pressure and links connecting the M62 and the M56 and forming the route across the Runcorn Gap (including the SJB) features in the top category. Network resilience (described as the ability of travel networks to return to normal service patterns following incidents or disruptions) is also a key consideration that has a significant effect on reliability.

- 3.2 Eddington stresses the importance of reliable transport and network resilience for business but similar requirements apply to ensure that effective civil contingency plans are in place. Mersey Gateway would provide the additional road capacity required to restore network resilience for road river crossings between the Mersey Tunnels and M6 at Thelwall. These benefits to the regional road network are reflected in the Highways Agency expressed support for Mersey Gateway. To ensure the potential operational benefits are realised the following additional project objective has been proposed in the SOBC.
- To restore effective network resilience for road transport across the River Mersey.
- 3.3 The need to combat climate change is also being embedded in Government policy. The White Paper referred to above also foreshadows the approach intended by Government to limit carbon products in transport. The Mersey Gateway tolling proposals combined with the outputs from the on-going Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Study (commissioning of the study was approved by the MGEB in January) will deliver carbon benefits by removing congestion without inducing additional traffic and by improving travel choice for Halton residents.
- 3.4 The project is supported by the North West Regional Assembly and features as a scheme of Regional and Sub-Regional Significance in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. There is no other transport project in the North West Region in the planning stage which offers such strong support to local policies and objectives, which would serve to meet local, regional and national objectives and which serves both the local, regional and national highway networks. Mersey Gateway continues to benefit from strong support in the Regional and Sub-Regional economic programmes.
- 3.5 At a local policy level the promotion of Mersey Gateway in a formal planning sense relies on a few key policies in the adopted Halton Unitary Development Plan (April 2005). The Programme Entry funding approval by the Department for Transport in March 2006 enabled the supporting policy for Mersey Gateway to be developed in more detail and brought up to date. These supporting policies will be embraced in the next iteration of the Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan and the Local Development Framework. To understand the wider issues and opportunities

arising from Mersey Gateway and to consider how best to capture the benefits arising, the Council have commenced preparation of a Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. The outcome of the Regeneration Strategy will also inform the Councils priorities for physical investment and urban renewal. Local consultation on regeneration options is currently taking place and during the summer it is planned to put final proposals in the public domain to inform the consideration of the Mersey Gateway formal Planning Applications

- 3.6 As part of the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system for the Borough, the Council has commissioned a Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Study. The key objective of the first phase of investigation was to identify and assess public transport options which would be likely to be commercially viable and practically affordable and which would also be complementary to, and be supported by the Mersey Gateway Project as a whole. In summary, the report recommended that a bus based transit system utilising new as well as existing infrastructure and facilities would be the most achievable and affordable way forward and enable step change improvements to be delivered in the short to medium term. The report recognised that the development of light rail should not however be precluded but this should be seen as an option for the longer term. Consequently the Mersey Gateway scheme now includes passive provision for LRT infrastructure to be provided in the future, supported by the potential for a lower deck to be constructed in the New Bridge providing for access and egress through the bridge abutments..
- 3.7 The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Study has progressed to more detail since it was reported to this Executive Board in January 2008. Potential schemes that will deliver the required improvements to bus services, and cycling and walking facilities have been identified. The Study is on-going and is based soundly on the relief of SJB and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. A series of focused public consultations and group interviews have been undertaken to understand the views of Halton's residents on public transport in Halton now and in the future with the Mersey Gateway Project.
- 3.8 The Sustainable Transport Study is aimed at delivering service improvements in 2015. As such there is a long lead time to put in place the delivery process. The current requirements are for proposals to be developed sufficiently to inform the consideration of the Planning Applications for Mersey Gateway. A series of draft strategy elements have been developed from which specific proposals will emerge and be evaluated. These will be developed, tested against the consultation responses and prioritised but they provide a clear statement of the Council's intent to maximise the opportunities provided by Mersey Gateway to improve integrated and sustainable transport. Examples of the schemes under consideration are:-
- Creation of a Sustainable Transport Corridor across the Silver Jubilee Bridge

- Connections between SJB and Widnes and Runcorn main service and retail centres.
- Creation of a Halton Transit Network under a single service brand name.
- Quality Partnership or Contracts with bus operators
- High Frequency Strategic Bus Corridor for Local Services
- Design and Access Specifications for Public Transport Interchange Hubs
- Enhancement of the Local Distributor Bus Network
- Door to Door Service
- Halton Hopper upgrade
- Regeneration of the Runcorn Busway
- Expansion of the Real Time Information for Public Transport
- Cycling and Walking Core Network

3.9 The above options have considerable potential to increase travel choices and to reduce the impact of tolls for local trips. In addition, around thirty percent of Halton residents do not have access to a car or van. Many of these are in deprived social and economic groups. Although tolling the Mersey Gateway will not have a direct impact on travel options for the non-car ownership group, any benefits in sustainable transport access will extend to this large group. Mersey Gateway presents a step change in the prospects for delivering sustainable transport options for Halton residents. The proposed concession arrangements (see below) include provisions for Halton Borough Council to share in the toll revenue, where the revenue passed to the Council will be used to support toll discount schemes and would also provide funding for the preferred sustainable transport programme.

TOLLING STRATEGY

3.10 The Council has established a tolling policy that is intended to allow successful delivery of Mersey Gateway within funding limits agreed with Ministers. The principal objectives of tolling are:

O7. To operate a toll concession scheme, within the limits of affordability, so as to mitigate the impact of tolls on local users who are currently able to use the SJB free of charge, many of whom are frequently crossing the river and some fall within social inclusion target groups;

O8. To manage demand to ensure the delivery of transport and environment benefits, by maintaining free flow traffic conditions on the Mersey Gateway and SJB and delivering priority for public transport on the SJB; and

O9. To transfer demand risk to the Concessionaire for the duration of the concession, by allowing the operator to manage that demand through the toll charged, within the constraints of the legal powers and the regulations agreed in the Concession Contract, consistent with the objective of protecting local users.

- 3.11 In addition to facilitating the investment required to deliver the new bridge, the tolling regime will provide a lever to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the new link, thereby locking in the delivery of the projected service reliability and standards throughout the concession. The removal of through traffic from SJB will provide an opportunity to re-establish the existing bridge for local transport use so that the sustainable transport and environmental benefits are delivered. The new traffic model forecasts support the projected benefits from tolls as future traffic levels are suppressed by the tolling charges. The lower traffic levels with tolling prevent any general increase in traffic noise and air pollution (including carbon green house gases) across the Borough that would otherwise occur without the scheme.
- 3.12 Affordability considerations, coupled with demand management and sustainable transport objectives, dictate that most or all private car and commercial cross-river traffic between Widnes and Runcorn must be subject to tolls. This includes traffic across the previously free-to-use SJB. Its proximity to the new MG means that if left untolled it would be impossible to prevent substantial revenue leakage and maintain free flow traffic conditions thereby jeopardising the affordability position and the sustainable transport objectives explained above. The proposed statutory process is to secure tolling powers for MG using the Transport and Works Act and to apply for a Road User Charging Scheme under the Transport Act 2000 for SJB.
- 3.13 The Council envisage the initial toll levels matching the levels charged at the Mersey Tunnels, although during the bidding process prospective operators will have the opportunity to submit variant proposals that may prove more attractive for the Council. The funding agreement with Government assumes that toll revenue will be used to counter unexpected inflation and cost increases. Thus some flexibility in managing the revenue, or revenue projections, from tolls is required both prior to concluding the concession agreement and during the concession period. The statutory process means that it is necessary for the Council as promoter to set the regulatory boundaries for toll charging. The tolling proposals will be drafted to allow the affordability risk to be managed leading up to financial close and thereafter to provide the concessionaire sufficient flexibility and scope to manage demand and its revenue so that it can offer the Council the best value bid.
- 3.14 The Council announced its commitment to prioritising toll discounts for local residents in the results of public consultation published in November 2007. Any discounted or concession scheme for toll charging will need to be constructed so as to be both affordable and acceptable within the terms of UK and EU law in respect of discriminatory pricing and State Aid. One way of providing protection for local users would be to incorporate a discount toll mechanism in the concession agreement, most likely to be based on frequency of use but potentially also linked to the place of residence in the case of private vehicles. The drawbacks with such a proposal are that the cost of the discount scheme would be for bidders to determine and the agreed terms for the discount scheme would be fixed for the concession term. This presents considerable uncertainty for bidders to deal with in estimating the number of users qualifying for discounts and the Council would face potentially expensive change terms should modifications to the discount scheme be required, which is a likely scenario at some stage in the concession period.

- 3.15 On best value terms an alternative scheme for delivering discounted toll levels is preferred. The toll levels required to finance a commercial bid, on top of the PFI Credit subsidy agreed with Government will determine the overall project revenue required to support a bid. In addition to presenting the overall project revenue required to finance their bid, bidders will also have to take into account the extent of toll revenue share they are prepared to offer the Council. The Council would use their share of toll revenue to fund discounts on tolls for local residents or frequent users through a separate concession scheme run by the authority and to provide revenue support for public transport in line with the sustainable transport objectives of MG. This approach is likely to raise the maximum revenue available for mitigating the impact of tolls on local residents and the Council would have flexibility to choose how to spend its revenue share throughout the concession period. The downside is that the funding available to support any discount scheme will only be known initially when commercial bids are return and confirmed when actual toll revenues are received.
- 3.16 It is proposed that bidders (probably in their Standard Bid) should be asked to assume that toll levels are set initially at levels matching those at the Mersey Tunnels, increasing thereafter in line with inflation. It is further proposed that they be told to assume that a fixed level of central government funding is available for the project. It is proposed that bidders should then be asked to bid the level of economic interest in the toll revenue which they are prepared to make available to HBC. This arrangement produces a banded system of project revenues as shown in fig 1.

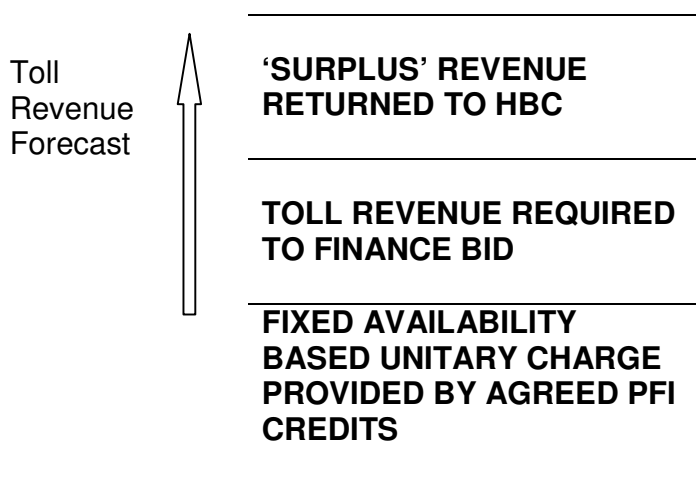


Fig 1. – Project Revenue

- 3.17 The above project funding arrangement has been modelled in the financial analysis reported below.

THE FINANCIAL CASE

- 3.18 The purpose of the Financial Case is to demonstrate that the scheme is based on sound costings and revenues, and that the projections are in keeping with the funding agreement with Government. A review of the financial case has been

undertaken using the financial model produced for the Programme Entry bid but updated with revised input values and assumptions.

3.19 The Scheme Cost Estimate and Quantified Risk Assessment (QRA) have been revised in full by the project team to take account of all changes since Programme Entry. The headline scheme cost results are in table 1.

	Current Assumption (at March 2007 Prices)
Construction Costs	£362,524,000
Maintenance Costs	£21,279,500
Operating Costs	£179,681,581
50%ile Risk	£20,000,000
Optimism Bias	23.5%

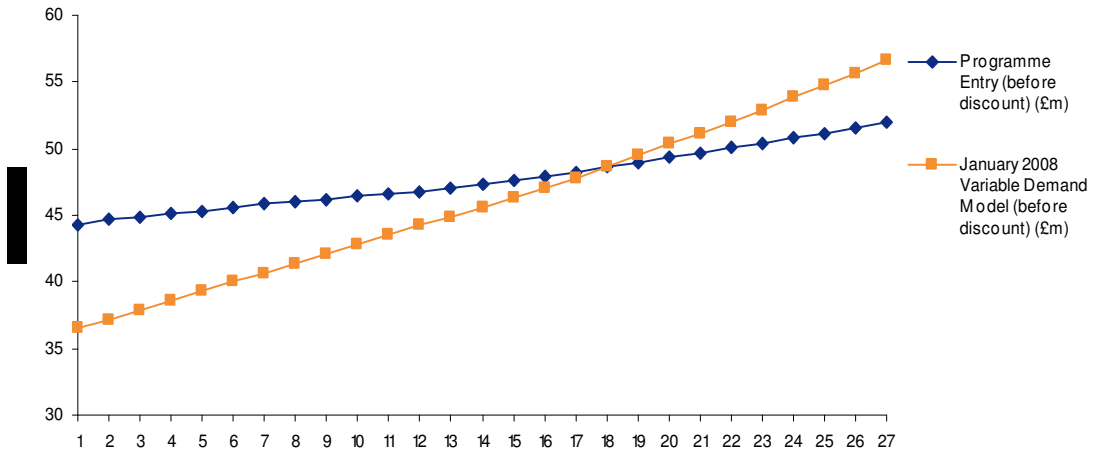
Table 1: Scheme Cost and Risk

3.20 The current traffic forecasts are the product of a very detailed modelling exercise utilising the latest variable demand forecasting techniques and prudent underlying assumptions. The modelling has followed DfT guidance and has been subject to DfT oversight at all stages of development. The traffic forecasts underpin the toll revenue projections and the current results are considered to be much more robust than was the case at programme entry because:-

- Projections show trips being suppressed by toll charges where the level of suppression is reduced as alternative routes become congested
- Underlying growth is modest (at between 1 and 2%)
- Local evidence of cross river travellers paying toll charges equivalent to Mersey Tunnels.

3.21 The graph below presents the current revenue forecasts alongside the forecasts used to support the programme entry submission. It should be noted that to reflect the greater uncertainty attached to revenue projections made to support the programme entry bid only 75 percent of the revenue projections shown in the graph below were used in the PE bid

Toll Revenue - Programme Entry vs January 2008



3.22 The PFI Credit agreed with Government will be used to supplement the current toll revenue projections. For the purposes of the business case financial analysis the term over which the £123m of PFI credit support is received has been determined to best meet the requirements of the project. The result of this calculation is an assumption that the project receives the PFI credit support over a period of 15 years, resulting in circa £12.5m pa in 2011 prices. In net present value terms this annual support does not exceed the £123m PFI Credit award.

3.23 The comparison of current financial assumptions compared with the programme entry bid is given in table 2.

	PFI credit requirement (total)	Unitary charge (Nominal p.a)	Present Value (at 3.5% real to 2011) of			
			Unitary charge	Toll Revenue	Const'n costs	Operating costs
Case Description	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Programme Entry	123	11.9	103	633	358	176
Revised Base Case (Jan 2008) for SOBC	123	12.5	103	746	440	122

Table 2: PFI Financial Analysis

3.24 Although the project team are confident that the risk allowances in the financial model are robust, financial risks do remain that could translate to affordability risks in the future. The most significant of these are:

- The ability to effectively match the support from Government to the needs of the project;

- The treatment of toll revenue forecasts by potential concessionaires and lenders;
- The currently assumed Composite Trade tax relief may not be achievable in practise. This has resulted from the abolition of the Industrial Buildings Allowance relief from 2011 as announced in the 2007 budget. This issue is outside the control of the Council and has been discussed with DfT. Should this risk materialise then HBC would wish to discuss with DfT options for making good the funding shortfall that might result. All current financial modelling assumes that Composite Trade treatment is achieved.
- The scale of the proposed Mersey Gateway Project is such that relatively small changes in key parameters such as capital cost, inflation and senior debt interest rate can have a significant impact on the toll revenue required to fund the project

3.25 The current base case financial analysis shows that the revenue received by the project over the contract life is significantly greater than the total requirement and therefore the project is affordable in overall terms. Should the project be delivered with the current financial assumptions confirmed then the Council revenue share (as indicated in the proposed funding structure in Fig 1) available to support toll discounts and to fund the sustainable transport programme would be £190 million cash outturn over the 30 year concession term (equivalent to £52 million net present value at 2011).

THE VALUE FOR MONEY CASE

3.26 The purpose of the Value for Money Case is to demonstrate the likely benefits and disbenefits of the scheme against its likely costs. One of the DfT funding conditions is a requirement for the value for money of the scheme to “be re-assessed against the Department’s value for money criteria in the light of the economic results from the new traffic model before the scheme progresses to public inquiry. It should also be noted that the Department reserves the right to re-consider its offer of funding for the Mersey Gateway if the scheme is re-assessed as offering worse than “medium” value for money. The minimum Benefit Cost Ratio for qualifying as medium value for money is 1.5:1. The current economic results reported in draft to DfT show the project to remain as high value for money with a BCR of just over 2:1. It should be noted that this BCR is lower than the Programme Entry submission (circa 2.8) and hence the headroom to withstand any downward adjustment by DfT has been reduced.

4.0 POLICY, RESOURCE AND OTHER ISSUES

4.1 The Strategic Outline Business Case establishes the resource requirements for the next stage plan that will progress the project through the planning process and procurement, culminating with the start of construction in 2011. A resource plan is in preparation and will be reported to the Mersey Gateway Executive Board in May.

5.0 KEY RISKS

5.1 The key risks identified in the Strategic Outline Business Case are covered in section 3 above.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

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

7.1 Files maintained by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and by the Highways and Transportation and Logistics Department.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 10 April 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway: Overarching Report on the Statutory Process

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report is one of three before this Executive Board relating to the applications and orders required to be promoted in order to secure powers to promote the Mersey Gateway Project (the "Project"). The contents of the report inform the other reports and explains the way in which the applications and orders will function.
- 1.2 The other reports referred to above are:
- i) a report seeking authority to make compulsory purchase orders and side roads orders required for the Project; and
 - ii) a report seeking authority to appropriate land held by the Council for other purposes for the purposes of the Project.
- 1.3 This report also seeks authority for certain important matters relating to the project, which are explained in greater detail below:
- i) to recommend to a meeting of the full Council that it should resolve to promote an order under S3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise interference with public rights of navigation by the construction of a new bridge over the River Mersey comprised in the Project;
 - ii) to authorise promotion of a road user charging scheme for the Silver Jubilee Bridge and adjacent roads pursuant to Part 3 of the Transport Act 2000, including to publish the scheme order and supporting documentation and to commence a 6-week consultation period on the scheme; and
 - iii) to authorise officers to take such steps as are necessary or expedient for the discharge of the two above matters, including settling, agreeing and approving the terms of necessary applications, orders, consultation documents and all ancillary documentation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- i) note the content of this report and have regard to it in considering the other reports referred to above;
- ii) recommend to the full Council that in accordance with the terms of S239 of the Local Government Act 1972 it should resolve to promote an order under the provisions of S3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 authorising the construction of works that interfere with navigation and certain other matters explained elsewhere in this report; and
- iii) resolves to commence consultation in relation to a Road User Charging Order under the provisions of Part 3 of the Transport Act 2000, imposing charges on motorists for the use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge.
- iv) authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to take such steps as are necessary and appropriate to give effect to the above.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Silver Jubilee Bridge ("SJB") today represents a key vehicular crossing point over the Mersey. It is one of only four main opportunities for road traffic to cross the Mersey between Liverpool and Manchester. From the west, these comprise the two Mersey tunnels, Silver Jubilee Bridge, crossing within Warrington town centre and the Thelwall Viaduct on the M6. As such, the SJB forms a key link in the regional transport network as well as representing the only vehicular and pedestrian link between the Borough towns of Runcorn and Widnes.
- 3.2 The bridge was originally opened in 1961 with one lane in each direction and an opening year traffic flow of 10,000 vehicles per day. The bridge was modified in 1977 to provide for two lanes in each direction. However, these were sub standard (having a total width of just 12.2 m) and lacking in any central divide or current day spacing. Traffic growth on the bridge has since grown but there is no physical scope to provide for additional capacity. The bridge today typically carries circa 83,000 vehicles per day and at peak summer time has been in excess of 93,000. Practical capacity is exceeded for four hours each day and spreading of the morning and evening peak regularly occurs. The bridge has poor facilities for pedestrians, which are rarely used, and no discrete provision for cyclists. Prolonged periods of congestion regularly occur, which affect both regional and local traffic crossing the Estuary as well as causing knock on network effects for local traffic in both Widnes and Runcorn. In addition the public transport routes that do use the bridge for journeys within the Borough cannot rely on journey times or timetabling.

- 3.3 Silver Jubilee Bridge fulfils a pivotal role within the regional highway network. The key north west routes comprise the M62 (linking Merseyside to Manchester and beyond) which runs along the north of the Borough whilst the M56 (linking North Wales with Manchester) skirts along the southern Borough boundary. The only link between the two is the route provided by Silver Jubilee Bridge, which provides for regional movement in and out of Liverpool from Runcorn, Vale Royal, Chester and North Wales. The highway network has sought to maximise this opportunity, with the expressway network in Runcorn providing fast links from Junctions 11 and 12 of the M56 via SJB to Junction 7 of the M62 via the Widnes Eastern bypass. The limiting factor is the capacity of the bridge rather than the accompanying junction links and network.
- 3.4 Whilst the wider regional network is reasonably robust, the bottleneck provided by SJB undermines network resilience. In addition to regular congestion associated with normal use, the effects of any incident (accident/breakdown/weather related/maintenance) on either the SJB or its approaches severely undermines the role of the SJB.

Mersey Gateway Project

- 3.5 The provision of a second crossing of the River Mersey has been a long-held aspiration of Halton Borough Council. The traffic bottleneck caused by the SJB has been long acknowledged as social and economic constraint. In 1999 the draft UDP identified that the case for a new crossing had also been acknowledged by the then Minister for Transport, making clear the need to develop a scheme for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.6 Halton Borough Council subsequently began to advance the proposals. The work undertaken by and on behalf of the Council between 2000 and 2003 focused on comparing potential alternatives to address problems associated with congestion in Halton. This work was submitted first to the DfT in 2003 and then resubmitted, accompanied by additional data early in 2006. Through this process, certain regional and local objectives were identified as follows:
- To relieve the SJB, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local traffic;
 - To maximise development opportunities;
 - To improve public transport links across the River; and
 - To encourage the increased use of cycling and walking.
- 3.7 For any scheme to be successful the Council required it to fulfil as many of the above objectives as possible, to fit its environment and to be economically viable. Throughout the process a range of alternatives were considered. Those alternatives which satisfied the

above objectives, fitted their environment and were economically viable were then considered further until a preferred solution was identified.

3.8 A number of strategic alternatives with the potential to solve congestion problems in Halton and achieve the Council's objectives as set out above were considered throughout the development of the Project. These included making better use of existing infrastructure and options for increasing transport capacity. The main topics of investigation were as follows:

- Halton Travel Plans and similar demand management initiatives;
- Road User Charging for using the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge or other roads;
- Dynamic Lane Management to get the best out of the existing road capacity;
- Selective Access to SJB by Vehicle Tagging;
- Road Space Reallocation;
- Park and Ride Facilities;
- Rail Service Improvement;
- New road bridge crossing to the West of the Railway Bridge;
- New road bridge crossing between the SJB and the Railway Bridge;
- New road tunnels to the west and east of the SJB; and
- New road bridge crossing (adjacent to and to the east of the SJB).

3.9 Following a thorough assessment of each strategic alternative, it was concluded that a fixed crossing to the east of the SJB represented the only realistic option of delivering improvements in congestion, and achieving the identified scheme objectives.

3.10 A series of alternative fixed routes and were then considered to the east of the SJB all of which avoided the more environmentally sensitive lower reaches of the estuary. This concluded that an option known as route 3A lies naturally on the desire line for through traffic and was economic in connecting effectively with the expressway network to the north and south of the river. As a result, it achieved the highest proportion of trip reassignment from the SJB when compared with other routes and therefore provide the strategic and local traffic diversion required. It was found that this option would satisfactorily relieve the SJB and permit its return to local use. The Project alignment also has relatively straightforward junction solutions in comparison to other variations of the route, avoids residential areas, and will have a minimal impact upon industrial areas and the existing highway network.

3.11 The discussions with the Department of Transport, leading up to Programme Entry confirmation being granted in March 2006, covered options to fund the project. It was confirmed that Mersey Gateway should be delivered as a tolled road, and a road user charging regime would also extend to the existing SJB in order to deliver the project benefits within the limited funding agreed with Government.

3.12 In developing the project, and as an expression of their ongoing corporate support for the project, Halton Borough Council has identified revised strategic objectives for the Mersey Gateway Project as follows (together with a brief explanation):

- i) To relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local transport needs;

The New Bridge would provide an alternative route across the River Mersey that is predicted to attract in the region of 80% of the existing traffic crossing the River by the SJB. As such, provided that both bridges are subject to tolls or charges, the Project will meet this objective, allowing the redeployment of roadspace on the Silver Jubilee Bridge for local traffic, public transport, cycling and walking.

- ii) To apply minimum toll and road user charges to both the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge consistent with the level required to satisfy these constraints;

The proposed funding arrangements and tolling strategy maximise the opportunity for a private sector partner (the concessionaire) to offer a best value bid to the Council for the design build and operate contract (further explained below). The assumption is that toll levels will be commensurate with those charged for the use of the existing Mersey Tunnels.

- iii) To improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities;

The removal of a constraint on transport - both private and public - has been assessed as having real benefits in terms of accessibility and journey reliability. In addition to the Project itself, the Borough council is advancing planning policy designed to seize the advantages offered by the release of land by the project and potential for de-linking of the SJB in Runcorn as well as regeneration opportunities elsewhere in the Borough.

- iv) To improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment;

The environmental impact assessment in respect of the Project has predicted that air quality and noise climates will improve in several locations as a result of the Project. Tolls are expected to constrain traffic growth resulting in reduced greenhouse gases in future years.

- v) To improve public transport links across the River Mersey;

At present public transport is reliant on the congested SJB. As a result of the project, public transport will benefit from freer-flowing traffic conditions. In addition, the borough Council is developing a Sustainable Transport Strategy designed to maximise the advantages offered by the Project.

- vi) To encourage the increased use of cycling and walking; and

The current, unattractive route between Runcorn and Widnes via the SJB will be markedly improved as a result of the Project. This, alongside the Sustainable Transport Strategy will allow the objective to be met.

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

Part of the problems associated with the SJB are that as the only link between the Mersey Tunnels and M6 Thelwall Viaduct it has a significant strategic role. When it fails in this role significant problems result. Moreover, when either of the alternative crossings fail the extra traffic diverting to SJB results in chronic congestion. The provision of an alternative route within the Borough of Halton and at a more strategic level will provide greatly enhanced network resilience for all those people and businesses reliant on journeys that cross the River Mersey.

- 3.13 It can be seen from the above that the Project as described elsewhere in this report will provide substantial transportation, environmental and regeneration benefits. Whereas the environmental statement submitted with planning applications for certain parts of the Project reveals some adverse effects, these are few and - balanced against the benefits of the project - are much more than outweighed by its positive aspects. In light of this, a compelling case exists, in the public interest, for the promotion and delivery of the project, including the acquisition of necessary land.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 To inform the evolution of the Project, two clear strands of consultation have been undertaken over a six year period involving statutory consultees, business stakeholders, landowners, and resident focus groups, including:

- Consultation carried out prior to the Department for Transport confirmation of programme entry for the Project in March 2006 (advised on and managed by MVA Consultancy);
- Consultation after approval by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on 18th June 2007 for 14 weeks between June and September 2007 (advised on and managed by DTW Consultancy)

in line with a Consultation Strategy developed specifically for the Project.

- The key stages of pre-application and orders consultation have included the following:
- September-October 2002 - first consultation took place on crossing options in the form of focus group discussions with residents;
- February 2003 – assessment of route options with Resident Focus Groups and Business and Stakeholder workshops;
- July 2004 – following the selection of a preferred route, further consultation was undertaken with residents, major businesses, and 25 local authorities;
- October 2006 – following the initial design of the Project in March 2006, all affected landowners were contacted, advising of the possible impacts of the Project on their landholdings; and
- June-September 2007 – extensive public consultation was undertaken including 15 exhibitions throughout the Borough, editorial in Council publications, a new website, information campaign in local media, monthly e-newsletter, briefing events for local/regional businesses and groups, gateway newsletter, postal/phone/text feedback system and letters to general stakeholders, statutory consultees and regional MP's and MEP's.

5.0 THE MERSEY GATEWAY WORKS

- 5.1 In response to the aspirations of the Borough Council, the needs of the highway and transportation network and as a product of the consultation described above it has been possible to advance to a stage where a design for the Project can be identified. This then has certain additional characteristics in terms of other, ancillary aspects that are described in further detail below.
- 5.2 Members will be aware of the nature of the project in broad terms. However, this section of this report explains the scope and extent of the Mersey Gateway Project as it stands today. This is then used in the ensuing section of this report to explain the suite of applications and orders that are required in order to secure powers for the construction and operation of the Project.

Route Description

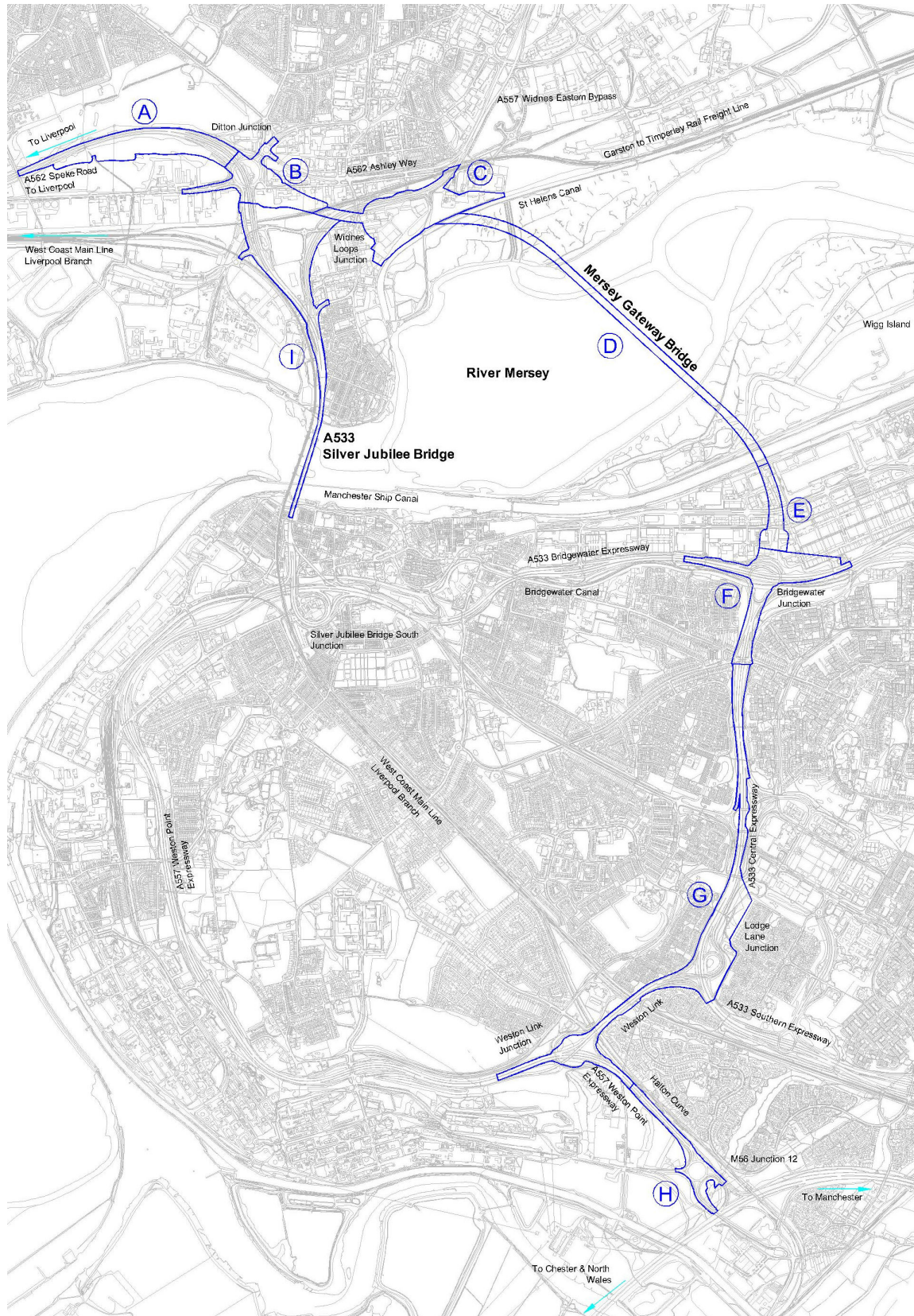
- 5.3 The works that comprise the Project run from the North West of Widnes to a junction with the M56 to the South of Runcorn. They also include the SJB. A scheme has been designed in outline to deliver the objectives of the Project, which is referred to as the "Reference Design". The alignment of the Reference Design is described in greater detail below.
- 5.4 The western extent of the proposed main alignment will be located in Widnes, along the A562 Speke Road to Liverpool, to the west of the existing Ditton Roundabout Junction (Junction of A562 and A533). The

alignment will then head eastwards along the line of, and to the south of, Speke Road towards the Ditton Junction. It will then progress, via an embankment, across land currently occupied by industrial units along Ditton Road and over the Garston to Timperley rail freight line, before crossing the alignment of the existing A557 Widnes Eastern Bypass (via a multi-span viaduct), the Catalyst Trade Park and the western corner of the Thermphos Chemical Works.

- 5.5 A new junction (the “Widnes Loops Junction”) will be formed with the A557 at this location. The alignment will then continue south eastward over the St Helens Canal, Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, the River, Astmoor Saltmarsh and Wigg Island, before turning south over the Manchester Ship Canal and Astmoor Industrial Estate. The alignment will then connect into the existing road network in Runcorn at the Junction of the A533 Bridgewater and Central Expressways with the A558 Daresbury Expressway (the Bridgewater Junction).
- 5.6 The route will continue south along the Central Expressway (A533) towards the junctions of the Central/Southern Expressways and the Weston Point Expressway/Weston Link (known respectively as the Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction). The alignment will finally join the M56 Motorway at Junction 12.
- 5.7 The main application sites for the Project are shown at Appendix 1. The areas shown edged red will comprise works for which planning applications have been made pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - see below. The areas shown edged blue will be the subject of an application under the Transport and Works Act 1992. Together, the areas edged red and edged blue are known as the “Project Area”.
- 5.8 It will be noted that the Project Area is wider than the Construction areas described below. This is because the Project Area includes all land anticipated to be reasonably required at the date of this report for the construction of the Project. This includes not only the land that will be occupied by the works themselves, but also the areas required for construction sites during the construction period. The final extent of these areas will be settled in due course when the final form of the Transport and Works Act 1992 Application is determined. However, all of the land that will be comprised in the final Project Area will be *necessary* for the purposes of the Project.
- 5.9 For the purposes of understanding and describing the works the structural, highway and construction works for the Project have been split into a number of parts (known as “Construction Areas”) (A to I as shown below on Figure 1). The construction areas include the following:
 - Area A – Main Toll Plazas;
 - Area B – Ditton Junction to Freight Line;

- Area C – Freight Line to St Helens Canal including Widnes Loops Junction;
- Area D – Mersey Gateway Bridge (the "New Bridge");
- Area E – Astmoor Viaduct;
- Area F – Bridgewater Junction;
- Area G – Central Expressway, Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction;
- Area H – M56 Junction 12; and
- Area I – Silver Jubilee Bridge and Widnes De-linking.

Fig1: Mersey Gateway Project Construction Areas



- 5.10 The following section of this Report provides a summary of the highway and structural design for the Project within each of these construction areas.

Area A - Main Toll Plaza

- 5.11 The Main Toll Plaza provides the location of where tolls may be collected for crossing the New Bridge. As the Project must provide for barrier tolling technology it is necessary to provide an area sufficiently large for vehicles to slow, wait and pass through barriers without having a detrimental effect on traffic flows. Toll plazas are situated on the North side of the Mersey only, because this minimises land-take, allows concentration of necessary resources and means that this type of work can be restricted in the extent and location of any of its effects. The toll plaza will require approximately four hectares of land to accommodate the northbound and southbound tollbooths and will be at or just above existing ground level. No major earthworks are envisaged because the land at this location is already relatively flat. Where the Toll Plaza is above ground then fill will be imported. Tolling structures will be required, which are likely to comprise canopies providing sufficient headroom over tollbooths and their equipment for normal traffic use.
- 5.12 Extended link roads to the north and south of the Main Toll Plaza carriageway that bypass the tollbooths will be provided to allow access from Speke Road to Ditton Junction for vehicles not wishing to use the New Bridge. The northern edge of the north link road will coincide with the northern edge of the existing southbound carriageway of Speke Road.
- 5.13 Stewards Brook and a public footpath pass beneath the existing Speke Road to the west of the proposed tolling areas. This brook is contained within a culvert which will need to be extended in length to the south to accommodate the increased width of the carriageway at that location. The public footpath will be diverted around St Michaels Road. Balancing ponds may be formed to the south of the new carriageway on either side of Stewards Brook to control the drainage water outfall flow rate into the brook.

Area B – Ditton Junction to Freight Line

- 5.14 Ditton Junction will be changed from a roundabout to a signal-controlled junction. The new carriageway will increase in level on an embankment as it approaches the new grade separated junction and will be taken over the new ground level link, between Ditton Road and Moor Lane South, on a new, two span bridge. The southbound on-slip and the northbound off-slip will also feature toll collection facilities.
- 5.15 An embankment of up to 9m high will be formed. This crosses land currently occupied by industrial buildings and a scrap metal yard and it

is assumed that these areas will require treatment (owing to contamination) prior to construction of the embankment.

- 5.16 Ditton Road is a long established corridor for services and many of these will need to be diverted to accommodate the revised highway alignment. These will include diversions of electricity, gas, water, sewage and telecommunications mains. The Scottish Power Manweb electricity substation adjacent to the Anglo Blackwell compound on Ditton Road will require relocation.

Area C – Freight Line to St Helens Canal

- 5.17 The following new structures and earthworks will be required in this section of the works:
- The Freight Line Bridge - a single-span bridge over the Garston to Timperley Rail Freight Line.
 - Victoria Road Viaduct - a high level, multi-span viaduct connecting the Freight Line Bridge to the edge of the Widnes Loops Junction including the crossing of Victoria Road.
 - Two bridges over the new Widnes Loops Junction carriageways.
 - Embankments carrying the new carriageway at high level.
 - A bridge to carry the Widnes Loops Junction southbound on-slip over itself.
 - Toll plazas connecting the Mersey Gateway to the Widnes Eastern Bypass.
 - The St Helens Canal Bridge - the high level bridge crossing the potential development corridor to the north of the St Helens Canal and the crossing of the St Helens Canal itself, which would then land on the north abutment of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.
- 5.18 This area forms the link between the New Bridge and the existing A557 Widnes Eastern Bypass that connects with Junction 7 of the M62 to the north. It will be formed primarily by substantial earthworks. The new road between the Freight Line and the Widnes Loops Junction will be carried on a multi-span reinforced concrete structure. The structures within the Widnes Loops Junction will either be portal or box structures in reinforced concrete constructed within the earthworks.
- 5.19 The new carriageway will be taken over the St Helens Canal on a new, reinforced concrete structure, integral with the north abutment of the New Bridge. It will be formed at a height sufficient to permit a further structure to be constructed under it to carry a future light rapid transit system (or similar) at a level to match the possible running surface within the New Bridge and still preserve the required headroom of 5m for craft that may at some future time use the canal.
- 5.20 During construction of the New Bridge, it is expected that the St Helens Canal area will form the main reception/transition area for the main bridge units that will form the decks. As such, it is assumed that it will

be necessary temporarily to infill the canal (maintaining its drainage water transfer function) to provide a working area. On completion, the canal will be reinstated with some minor changes to the alignment.

- 5.21 A corridor for the Trans-Pennine Trail cycle and footpath will be maintained throughout the works.
- 5.22 Upon completion of the Project a landscaping scheme will link the new earthworks with the leisure facilities offered by Spike Island, the St Helens Canal and the Trans-Pennine Trail.

Area D – Mersey Gateway Bridge

- 5.23 The New Bridge will have a total length of around 2.13km from abutment to abutment. The New Bridge will consist of approximately 550m of approach spans from the north abutment to the edge of Widnes Warth Saltmarsh, and 580m from the edge of Astmoor Saltmarsh, over part of Wigg Island, over the Manchester Ship Canal and onto the south abutment within the Astmoor Industrial Estate.
- 5.24 The New Bridge over the Estuary itself will consist of 1,000m of cable-stayed bridge, consisting of up to four spans supported by three towers. The towers will be circular with a diameter of about 10m at water level, but will taper and include architectural features throughout their height.
- 5.25 Typical span lengths of the approach viaducts are 70-100m with an overall deck depth of around 6m. Both approach viaducts are twin, separate structures supported on their own independent substructure. There will be a total of 30 piers on the saltmarshes. Each pier will be of reinforced concrete of about 2m by 5m and the height would vary between 12m (north) and 23m (south) to suit the vertical profile of the deck.
- 5.26 The three towers of the cable-stayed spans are assumed to be concrete below deck level and steel above. The overall height of the towers will be around 120 -140m above the River level. The decks of the cable-stayed spans will be twin parallel decks, similar in form to the approach viaducts, connected at positions of cable stay attachment. The cable stays are arranged in pairs in a harp (i.e. parallel) configuration.

Area E - Astmoor Viaduct

- 5.27 The new carriageway crosses the Astmoor Industrial Estate at a height of approximately 24m above existing ground level. The area will need to be cleared of existing light industrial buildings. On completion of the works, the area below the viaduct may very well be available for future development.

- 5.28 The area between the south abutment of the New Bridge and Bridgewater Junction will comprise a high-level, multi-span viaduct called Astmoor Viaduct. This will cross the existing industrial park at considerable height, linking the high level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal with the new crossing of Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.29 This elevated structure will vary in width up to a maximum of 60m before the southbound slip road splits off onto a separate alignment. The structure splits again at the point where the northbound on-slip road merges with the main line. The main line of the New Bridge will remain at high level while the two slip roads will reduce in level to the south to allow the slip roads to tie in with the roundabout at Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.30 The northern end of Astmoor Viaduct will land on the southern side of the south abutment of the New Bridge. The south abutment of the Astmoor Viaduct will be approximately 85m wide and will be at three levels. The abutment wall will retain the end of the embankment up to Bridgewater Junction.
- 5.31 The viaduct will be 340m long and will comprise 12 spans; 20m end spans and 30m intermediate spans. The deck will be supported by reinforced concrete plate piers, approximately 2m long by 5m wide, with four separate piers at each bent (line of support).

Area F – Bridgewater Junction

- 5.32 Like the Widnes Loops Junction, the Bridgewater Junction is a complex of structures and slip roads that provide grade separation and access to and from the Central Expressway (running north to south) and the Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressways (running east to west). The existing route through Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressway will be closed and brought into the new roundabout.
- 5.33 A two-level interchange is proposed with east-west movements at the lower level and the new road linking to the Central Expressway at the higher level. The lower level will contain the gyratory system, linking slip road movements. The upper level structure is likely to be a five-span steel and concrete viaduct. Similar construction materials will be used for the construction of the new slip road bridges over the Bridgewater Canal. The existing bridges over the Bridgewater Canal will be removed. However, the existing bridges over the Daresbury/Bridgewater Expressway will be retained, although they will no longer span a live carriageway.
- 5.34 The construction can be phased to coincide with routine winter closures of the canal. Retaining walls are also proposed so that adjacent slip roads at different levels to the main carriageway can be

kept tight within the junction without the need for an embankment therefore limiting land take.

- 5.35 Traffic management of the existing traffic flows during the construction phase will affect construction methods and materials. A major feature of the works in this area will be the requirement for demolition of the existing structures. Otherwise, the works are essentially self-contained and can therefore be undertaken independently from the other work areas.
- 5.36 The five-span high level viaduct will be about 150m long and 27m wide. The substructure will be of piled foundations and reinforced concrete piers. The superstructure will be of prefabricated steel or prestressed concrete beams to allow erection to fit in with the phased traffic management regime that will be required to maintain traffic flows during the works.
- 5.37 High abutment structures will be required at both ends of the New Bridge. The south abutment will be on the south bank of the Bridgewater Canal.
- 5.38 The two existing slip road bridges will need to be replaced with two new slip roads bridges on the new alignment of the slip road off the new roundabout. These will be single span bridges with prefabricated steel or pre-stressed concrete beams used to form the decks over the canal.
- 5.39 The existing highway alignment will be re-configured to incorporate the New Bridge and to change the priority of the existing expressways. The free flow link between the Bridgewater and Daresbury Expressways will be removed and replaced by linking into the new roundabout that will be formed at the centre of the junction.
- 5.40 The embankments between this junction and the Central Expressway will be modified for the alignment of the New Bridge and the re-aligned slip roads. This tie-in between the new carriageway and the existing Central Expressway will be at Halton Brow.

Area G – Central Expressway, Lodge Lane Junction and Weston Link Junction

- 5.41 Improvements will be required to the alignment of the Central Expressway to bring it up to current geometric standards and to manage its interface with the New Bridge. These should not involve significant earthworks and will be undertaken generally within the existing highway boundary.
- 5.42 The distance between existing junctions along the Central Expressway is too close to meet current merging and weaving standards. The current carriageway configuration will be modified so that the alignment

passes through this corridor with connections only at Bridgewater Junction and Lodge Lane Junction. This will be achieved by converting the existing hard shoulders into distributor lanes with no direct connection to the New Bridge at Halton Brow and Halton Lea Junctions. The existing hard shoulders will need to be strengthened to carry full highway loading and road markings and barriers will be added to prevent merging movements.

- 5.43 Existing footbridges will be replaced and/or reconfigured. To the south of the Halton Lea Junction the existing busway bridge will be replaced with a new bridge on an altered alignment.
- 5.44 Lodge Lane Junction will be modified to change the priority of traffic flow from the Southern Expressway to the Weston Link. The junction will be modified to make provision for dual two lanes of through traffic from the Central Expressway to the Weston Link with single lane slip roads for traffic movements to and from the Southern Expressway. These works will comprise the construction of a new single span bridge, along with modifications to the earthworks and highway alignment.
- 5.45 Weston Link Junction will be modified to change the priority of traffic flow from the northbound to the southbound section of the Weston Point Expressway. These works will use most of the existing junction layout. However, a new slip road will be constructed on the north side of the existing Weston Link Slip Road to allow traffic to slip onto the New Bridge from the northern section of the Weston Point Expressway.

Area H – M56 Junction 12

- 5.46 The existing roundabout to the north of the M56 Junction 12 will be modified to include a signal controlled link directly across the centre of the existing roundabout for the main line of the new highway, leaving the outer roundabout segments for local turning traffic and for eastbound access to the M56 Junction 12. The works will comprise carriageway realignment and the installation of new traffic signals. A new retaining wall will be required to support the carriageway realignment on the south side of the roundabout.

Area I – Silver Jubilee Bridge and Widnes De-linking

- 5.47 The opening of the Project will result in a significant reduction in traffic flow on the SJB. This will allow the downgrading of the carriageway on the existing bridge from two lanes in each direction to a single lane in each direction. This in turn will release space on the deck of the bridge to re-introduce footpaths and to provide a dedicated cycle path. These works will require the re-configuration of the deck layout and will involve kerbing, re-surfacing and the provision of new road markings.

- 5.48 The substandard footpath cantilevered on the eastern side of the SJB could then be closed, although its structure would be retained to support services.
- 5.49 A tolling plaza will be constructed on the existing carriageway of Queensway approximately 330m to the north of the SJB. The embankment and viaduct linking to the Widnes Eastern Bypass will be removed. The link to Ditton Junction will be downgraded to comprise just the existing slip road. The main carriageway and structures will be removed between the Queensway tollbooths and Ditton Junction.
- 5.50 The main link between the SJB and Ditton Junction (after passing through the tolling plaza) will be along the existing northbound slip road. This would be a two-lane single carriageway. A new signal controlled junction will be needed to replace the one-way off and on slips. The remainder of the existing dual carriageway to Liverpool will be closed to traffic and demolished.

6.0 OTHER POWERS

- 6.1 It can be seen from the preceding section of this report that the works comprised in the Project are both extensive and complex. In addition to authority to carry out these works, the project comprises certain other elements that are not works. These also require statutory authority and include:
- The New Bridge will cross four watercourses - the St Helen's Canal, the River Mersey, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal. This will interfere with public rights of navigation and requires specific authorisation;
 - Changes will be required to the highway network - including public rights of way on foot, cycle or horseback - and to certain private rights of access;
 - The compulsory acquisition of land needed to build the project and rights of land to allow it to be built and/or maintained;
 - Powers to make charges or levy tolls, including arrangements to set them, revise them, collect them and take enforcement action should tolls be unpaid (including creating summary criminal offences, which are prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court);
 - Authorising the making of bylaws;
 - Applying and disapplying legislation - for instance in relation to compulsory acquisition of land, tolling/road user charging and the carrying out of works in the River Mersey; and
 - Making provision for the grant of a concession or other arrangement to secure the construction, operation and maintenance of the Project.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the Project will be procured as a Design Build Finance and Operate (DBFO) scheme. This means that an organisation, known as a concessionaire, will be responsible for the

detailed design and construction of the scheme. The concessionaire will also have to obtain finance that allows it to construct, operate and maintain the scheme for a defined period. They will repay the finance that they have raised over the period of the contract that they have agreed to, known as the concession period. For schemes of this nature the concession period is typically 30 to 40 years. Although the DfT is contributing funding to the Project, the scheme will be funded mainly through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This means that the concessionaire will have to raise the money through private finance methods, such as a loan from a bank, supported by PFI credit payments from the DfT.

- 6.3 The finance for the Project would rely on revenue recovered from users of the Project through tolling and road user charging. To ensure robust revenue forecasts and to ensure that the Project will ease local congestion it is proposed that tolls / charges will be levied for use of both the New Bridge and the SJB. The tolling / charging regimes will also provide a mechanism to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the New Bridge. This is intended to achieve demonstrable service reliability and standards.

7.0 APPLICATIONS AND ORDERS

- 7.1 In order to obtain authority to carry out the works described above and to secure the additional powers described the applications and orders described in this section of this Report are needed. For this purpose, the works can be divided into two broad categories:

- Main Works - these are shown on the plan at appendix 1 edged blue; and
- Remote Works, including SJB - these are shown on the plan at appendix1 edged red.

Main Works

- 7.2 The statutory authority in relation to these works will be sought as follows:
- 7.2.1 As the Main Works will include the New Bridge they will interfere with navigation. This requires specific statutory authority pursuant to s3 Transport and Works Act 1992. In order to promote an order under that section (a "TWA Order") a local authority like the Borough Council must first obtain authority to do so by way of a resolution of the full Council, passed by a majority of members eligible to vote. It is recommended to the Executive Board that it should propose such an application to the full Council. The application will be determined by the Secretary of State for Transport.

- 7.2.2 The Main Works will also interfere with three other waterways and a railway line, all of which requires special powers. The TWA would confer such authority.
- 7.2.3 The Main Works will require planning permission. However, in this case it is not necessary to make an application to the Borough Council as local planning authority in the normal way. The Secretary of State may confer deemed planning permission pursuant to s90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 at the same time as making a TWA Order.
- 7.2.4 The works will require the acquisition of land owned by third parties and the TWA Order would confer powers of compulsory acquisition in respect of land and rights over and in land.
- 7.2.5 The New Bridge must be the subject of tolls as described above. This would be secured by the TWA Order as well. Subject to members approval in this meeting, officers will continue to work up proposals in accordance with the Strategic Outline Business Case for the project (being considered by members at the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 7 April - report attached at Appendix 2), subject to legal and financial advice.
- 7.2.6 The changes to the highway network required within the Main Works area would be authorised by the TWA Order.
- 7.2.7 The TWA Order will contain extensive additional provisions designed to secure the construction, maintenance and operation of the Main Works as part of the Project.

Remote Works and SJB

- 7.3 The statutory authority in relation to these works will be sought as follows:
 - 7.3.1 Planning applications were made in respect of the Remote Works and SJB on 31 March 2008.
 - 7.3.2 A Listed Buildings Consent application was made in respect of works to the Grade II listed Silver Jubilee Bridge on 31 March 2008.
 - 7.3.3 The SJB must be the subject of tolls as described above. This would be secured by a scheme and order made under Part 3 of the Transport Act 2000 - a Road User Charging Order. The relevant provisions would comply with the Strategic Outline Business Case for the project (being considered by members at the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 7 April - report attached at Appendix 2). Subject to members approval in this meeting, officers will continue to work up proposals in accordance with that strategy and subject to legal and financial advice.

- 7.3.4 Compulsory Purchase Orders will be needed to secure third party property required for these works. This is explained in a separate report that is before this meeting.
- 7.3.5 Where the existing highway network and private accesses are affected by these works Side Road Orders will be required under s14 Highways Act 1980. This is explained in a separate report that is before this meeting.
- 7.4 In relation to both sets of works, certain land owned by the Council will be needed that is or may be public open space. To ensure that this can be used for the purposes of the Project it is necessary to *appropriate* the land. This means that instead of the land being held by the Council for one purpose, it will instead be held for another - that of the Project. Again, this is explained in a separate report.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The project is a key priority for the Council which will deliver benefits locally and across the wider region.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 9.1 The implementation of Mersey Gateway will have significant benefits for all Council priorities.

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 10.1 The specific risks are reported in a detailed project risk register linked to the Council's corporate risk management regime.

11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 11.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

12.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 12.1 The recommended decisions are required to support the delivery of Mersey Gateway.

13.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 13.1 Alternative options for securing the powers to construct, maintain and operate, including tolling, the MG project have been assessed and rejected.

14.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

14.1 The recommended decisions are required before the next phase of the statutory process takes place in May 2008.

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

15.1 Files maintained by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and by the Highways and Transportation Department.

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COUNCIL

*At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 23 April 2008 in the Council Chamber,
Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Hodgkinson (Chairman), P. Blackmore, S. Blackmore, Bradshaw, Bryant, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Cross, Drakeley, Findon, Fraser, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, Higginson, Hignett, Howard, D. Inch, Jones, Leadbetter, Lloyd Jones, Loftus, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, McDermott, McInerney, Morley, Murray, Nelson, Nolan, Norddahl, Osborne, Parker, Philbin, Polhill, M. Ratcliffe, Redhead, Rowan, Rowe, Sly, Stockton, Swain, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace, Wharton, Worrall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dennett, Edge, Horabin, C Inch, Lewis, Marlow, E. Ratcliffe and Swift

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Cairns, C. Foley, I. Leivesley, P. McWade, G. Meehan, S. Nicholson, D. Parr, M. Reaney and D. Sutton

Also in attendance: None

Action

(NB Prior to the start of the meeting, the Council watched a DVD celebrating the 10th birthday of Halton as a Unitary Authority.)

COU80 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 5th March and 20th February 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings be confirmed and adopted.

COU81 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had been presented with a small glass plaque by the British Amateur Rugby League Association at Stobart Stadium when the Young Lions versus French Under 21s match had taken place on 19th March 2008.

COU82 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported on the following issues:

- The Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) and Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection had just finished and official feedback was expected in July 2008. The informal feedback received so far had been positive.
- The Police precept had been over the capping limit. This precept would be included with the Council's Council Tax Bills. The Department for Communities and Local Government was currently discussing whether it needed to be reviewed and the Council had written to outline its position, ie that it would be costly for the Authority to have to re-bill residents on behalf of the Police Authority.
- A number of youth events had been held, including the Youth Ball, which had been very popular and well attended. This work was a tribute to Councillor Wright.

COU83 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board from meetings held on 21st February, 6th March and 20th March 2008.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

(NB Councillor Wharton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of minute number ES87 in the following item of business due to being a Board Member of Halton Transport.)

COU84 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board Sub-Committee from meetings held on 21st February, 6th March and 20th March 2008.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU85 MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board from the meeting held on 7th April 2008.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU86 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

COU87 MERSEY GATEWAY TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT ORDER - KEY DECISION

The Executive Board had considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment relating to the applications and orders required to be promoted in order to secure powers to promote the Mersey Gateway Project (the “Project”), and seeking authority for a number of important matters relating to the Project outlined within the report. The minutes of the Executive Board meeting, held on 10th April 2008, had been published on the Council’s website and a copy was tabled for Members’ information (NB Councillor Higginson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of minute number EXB129 in these minutes due to a family member being employed by Halton Housing Trust. In addition, Councillor M. Ratcliffe declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of minute number EXB129 due to being a Halton Housing Trust Director.)

An updated report had been circulated with the Summons further expanding on the need for the Council to resolve to promote the proposed Transport and Works Act Order in accordance with the requirements of Section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972, setting out the basis of the Transport and Works Act Order, and what it intended to achieve.

In this respect, the Executive Board resolved on 10th April 2008 to recommend to a meeting of the Council that it should resolve to promote an order under Section 3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise interference with public rights of navigation by the construction of a new bridge over the River Mersey comprised in the Project and certain other matters.

Reason for Decision

The recommended decisions were required to support the delivery of Mersey Gateway.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Alternative options for securing the powers to construct, maintain and operate, including tolling, the

Mersey Gateway project had been assessed and rejected.

Implementation Date

The recommended decisions were required before the next phase of the statutory process took place in May 2008.

By a show of hands it was unanimously

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council note the content of this report and have regard to it in considering whether to promote an order under s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 authorising the construction of works that interfere with navigation and certain other matters explained elsewhere in this report;
- (2) in accordance with the terms of s239 of the Local Government Act 1972 as applied by section 20 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 the Council resolve to promote an order under the provisions of s3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 authorising the construction of works that interfere with navigation and certain other matters explained elsewhere in this report, for effecting all or some of the following objects and purposes:
 - (i) for statutory authority to construct a new bridge across the River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes in the Borough of Halton being works which interfere with public rights of navigation;
 - (ii) for statutory authority to construct works that interfere with navigation in the St Helens Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal;
 - (iii) to authorise permanent and temporary changes to the highway network in the Borough of Halton;
 - (iv) to authorise the compulsory acquisition of land and rights in land for the purposes of this project;
 - (v) to authorise the charging, levying, setting and collection of tolls or charges for the use

of the works and the creation of summary offences in connection with non-payment;

- (vi) to authorise the making of byelaws and their enforcement, including the creation of summary offences;
 - (vii) to apply and/or disapply legislation relevant to the works;
 - (viii) to make arrangements for the letting of a concession to operate and manage the works and their construction; and
 - (ix) to authorise such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions as may be necessary and/or convenient, and such other purposes as may be determined by the Council;
- (3) the Chief Executive be authorised to settle the areas subject to works to be authorised by the Order and the areas to be the subject to powers of compulsory acquisition contained in the Order and also to settle any documentation required for the Order;
- (4) the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised to make the application for the Order to the Secretary of State and to take all necessary procedural steps prior to and after the making of the application, including the preparation and presentation of the council's case at any public inquiry;
- (5) the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised to sign and serve any notices or documents necessary to give effect to these recommendations and to take all other actions necessary to give effect to these recommendations; and
- (6) the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) be authorised, as soon as the Order is made by the Secretary of State and comes into effect, to take all necessary procedural steps in order to implement the powers of the Council authorised by the Order as made.

(NB The Councillors listed below declared personal and prejudicial interests in the following item of business due to having relatives working at the Council and left the meeting for the duration of its consideration:

Councillors Bryant (NB Councillor Bryant remained in the Chamber but took no part in the debate), D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Gerrard, Hignett, Howard, Murray, Nelson, Osborne, Polhill, M. Ratcliffe.)

COU88 JOB EVALUATION - UPDATE - APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE 28TH FEBRUARY 2008 (MINUTE NO. APC5 REFERS)

The Appointments Committee had considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the implementation of the National Job Evaluation Scheme.

With regards to a question from Councillor Harris about the appeal process that would apply where the management representative and trade union representative were not in agreement, it was agreed that a written response be provided.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

In addition, staff were commended on their professionalism that had continued throughout the process, for example the work that had been carried out as part of the Joint Area Review (JAR) process.

RESOLVED: That the process be endorsed.

(NB Councillor Hignett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item of business due to being employed by CIC and left the room for the duration of its consideration.)

COU89 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - EXECUTIVE BOARD 10TH APRIL 2008 (EXECUTIVE BOARD AGENDA ITEM NO. 4B REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community regarding the forecast outturn for the 2007/08 housing capital programme and seeking approval for the 2008/09 programme. It was advised that the Board had agreed that the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board be requested to look at the Disabled Facilities Grant process and report back to the Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the position regarding the 2007/08

programme be noted and the proposed programme for 2008/09 as set out in the report and Appendix be approved.

(NB Councillors Fraser and Loftus declared personal and prejudicial interests in the following item of business due to being nominees and left the room for the duration of its consideration.)

COU90 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR - EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE 21ST FEBRUARY 2008 (MINUTE NO. ES81 REFERS)

The Executive Board Sub-Committee had considered a report making recommendations for the appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2008/09 Municipal Year as follows:

Mayor – Councillor Loftus
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Fraser.

The Council noted these recommendations, which would be formally confirmed at the Annual Meeting.

COU91 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2008/09 - EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE 20TH MARCH 2008 (MINUTE NO. ES97 REFERS)

The Executive Board Sub-Committee had considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services seeking agreement to a Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2008/09.

It was advised that the Council's position, in relation to any exposure to Northern Rock, was being monitored.

RESOLVED: That the policies and strategies outlined in the report be adopted.

COU92 NORTH CHESHIRE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST APPLICATION FOR FOUNDATION STATUS

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community providing an overview of the application for Foundation Status by North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust and providing information about the Governors Council.

It was advised that, under the Health and Social Care Act 2003, North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust had applied to become an NHS Foundation Trust. The consultation

period of 12 weeks had commenced on 14th January 2008 and had ended on 11th April 2008, with a decision to be taken by the Summer 2008.

Details regarding what Foundation Status meant was outlined for Members' consideration together with information regarding the implication of achieving foundation status for the people of Halton, and proposed governance arrangements. It was advised that the Partner Organisation Governors would include "One representative from Warrington Borough Council and one from Halton Borough Council". At its meeting on 10th April 2008, the Executive Board had agreed to support the Trust's Foundation application and confirmation of a Halton representative was now sought.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Nelson be appointed as the Council's representative on the Governors Council.

COU93 MINUTES OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

The Council considered the reports on the work of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of the Council on 20th February 2008:

Children and Young People
Employment, Learning and Skills
Healthy Halton
Safer Halton
Urban Renewal
Corporate Services
Business Efficiency Board

In receiving the minutes, the Chairmen thanked Members, officers and Topic Groups for their work throughout the year. In addition:

- (1) the Chairman of the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board (PPB) referred to minute number SAF50 – "The Partnership with Birmingham Trading Standards to Combat Illegal Money Lending in the Borough – Presentation" – and the success of this partnership that had already borne arrests; and
- (2) the Chairman of the Corporate Services PPB congratulated those that had been involved with the job evaluation exercise.

COU94 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports on the work of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of the Council on 20th February 2008:

Development Control
Standards
Regulatory
Appointments

In receiving the minutes, the Chairmen thanked Members and officers for their work throughout the year. In addition, the Chairman of the Regulatory Committee thanked Councillor Cross, who would be standing down at the next elections, and Councillor Wallace who, despite having been in hospital, had not missed a meeting. Praise was also extended to Lisa Capper – Solicitor (Environment and Licensing) who had been assisting the Committee in the Group Solicitor's absence.

(NB At the close of the meeting the Leader thanked the Mayor for the way he had presided over meetings, and for both his, and the Mayoress', hard work throughout the year. In addition, it was noted that four Councillors would be standing down at the next election - Councillors Cross, Lewis, Marlow and Sly - and they were also thanked for their work with the Council.

In response, the Mayor thanked Members and Officers for their support and wished those Councillors who were standing down the best for the future.)

Meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

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The Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
TWA Orders Unit
Zone 9/09
Southside
105 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6DT

30 May 2008

Dear Sir,

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

**THE TRANSPORT AND WORKS (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE)
(ENGLAND & WALES) RULES 2006 ("Rules")**

THE PROPOSED RIVER MERSEY (MERSEY GATEWAY BRIDGE) ORDER

Application is hereby made by Halton Borough Council for an Order under Section 3(1)(b) of the Transport & Works Act 1992, the purpose of which is to authorise the carrying out of works which are of a kind specified in that section for the purposes of constructing a new road bridge between Widnes and Runcorn in the Borough of Halton. In connection with the application a direction is also sought under Section 90 (2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

This letter of application is accompanied by the documents particularised in the schedule attached to it, together with three additional copies of this letter and the documents prescribed by Rules 10, 11 and 12 of the Rules. In payment of the requisite fee for processing the application a cheque in the sum of £139,140.00 made out to the Secretary of State for Transport has today been forwarded to the Department's accounts section. This is on the basis that the total area of the land on which the proposed works will be constructed shown on the works plans deposited with this application is 121.70 hectares.

All requests for further information, notices or any other documents required to be served upon the applicant should be made to DLA Piper UK LLP, 3 Noble Street, London EC2V 7EE (Ref: HB/96801/120000). I should be grateful if you would also kindly acknowledge receipt of this application by writing to DLA Piper UK LLP quoting the same reference.

Yours faithfully



Mark Reaney
Operational Director and Monitoring Officer
(Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources)
Halton Borough Council

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REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 19 June 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Changing the name of a Ward
WARDS: Castlefields

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of a request to change the name of Castlefields Ward to Castle Ward.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to consult electors in the Castlefields Ward on the proposed change of name.
- 2.2 A Working Party of elected representatives be nominated to consider any representations received following consultation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A request has been received from the Leader and Labour Ward Councillors for the Castlefields Ward, to change the name of the Ward to 'Castle Ward'.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 there is a provision for a Local Authority to change the name of an electoral area.

The Council will need to pass a resolution following consultation with such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name.

It is suggested that leaflets be sent to households in the Ward on the proposed name change and information on the issue be posted on the Council's website.

On completion of the consultation exercise a report will be prepared for submission to a Member Working Party. The Working Party will make a recommendation to Council in October 2008 who will make the final decision on the recommendation.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy implications.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of consultation can be met within existing resources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** - There are no implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risk assessment implications.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity implications.

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

None

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5 June 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Children and Young People

SUBJECT Primary Capital Programme

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an outline of the draft Primary Strategy for Change that has been developed as part of the Primary Capital Programme. To seek approval by the Board of the Strategy prior to its submission to the DCSF by 16th June 2008.
- 1.2 The capital investment programme requires approval by Council, however as the DCSF deadline requires schools projects which will be undertaken within the first two years to be named by 16th June 2008 the Board is asked to approve the schools programme for the purposes of the DCSF submission. Full Council will then be asked to ratify the projects at their July meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 **The Primary Strategy for Change be approved; and**
- 2.2 **The building projects prioritised for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 be approved for the purpose of the submission to the DCSF and that Full Council be requested to ratify the projects at its next meeting in July 2008.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

- 3.2 At the Executive Board meeting on 20th March 2008 the requirement to develop a Primary Capital Programme was outlined. It was explained that as part of the Programme all Local Authorities must produce a Primary Strategy for Change which must be formally endorsed by the Council, the Diocesan Authorities and a majority of primary schools.
- 3.3 The aim of the Primary Capital Programme is to ensure primary schools play a lead role in the heart of their communities, through offering local services, providing a 21st learning environment particularly in ICT, development world class standards and promoting personalisation, flexibility, diversity and choice. As part of the Programme consideration needs to be given to local demography, pupil numbers and school standards.

- 3.4 The Primary Strategy for Change for Halton has been developed following consultation with primary schools, Diocesan colleagues and a range of other partners. Three dedicated sessions on have been held with Primary Headteachers and an Extended Services Working Group has met to consider opportunities for local and extended services to be offered through primary schools. Chairs of Governors and Halton Association of Governors have been consulted along with colleagues from other Departments across the Council such as Environment and Health and Community.
- 3.5 A draft of the Primary Strategy for Change has been circulated (Appendix A) to the headteachers of all nursery, infant, junior and primary schools including the primary special school. It has also been sent out to all secondary headteachers and secondary special headteachers. Chairs of Primary Governors have been sent copies and the draft has also been placed on the pages of the Governors Website. Copies have also been sent to the Diocese of Shrewsbury, Diocese of Chester, Liverpool Diocese and Liverpool Archdiocese for final comments. The document has been placed on both the intranet and internet and sent to Departments across the Council for their information and comment. In addition, each member of the Alliance Board has been sent a draft copy. The final date for responses to the consultation is Tuesday, 27th May 2008. Any amendments arising from the consultation will be tabled at the meeting.

4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Authority must develop a strategic approach to capital investment for primary schools over 14 years. For 2009/2010 and 2010/11 the indicative primary capital funding is £8.4 million. Funding from 2011/12 will be subject to public spending review.
- 4.2 The submission to the DCSF on 16th June 2008 must name and provide costings for the schools or projects that will be undertaken within the first two years of the funding i.e. 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. In Halton a re-organisation of primary provision has yet to be undertaken. For the first two years of funding, therefore, projects have been proposed which will not prejudice this process.
- 4.3 The proposed projects for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 are:
- The Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior School. This proposals is supported by the DCSF as it promotes diversity and a change of governance, it represents value for money as it joins funding with BSF and allows the completion of the All-Through School. Many of the pupils from the school come from deprived backgrounds and the school is located in the top 40% most deprived wards within the borough. There are significant condition and suitability issues on all three sites with some pupils still taught in mobile classrooms. Wrap around early years will be provided and extended services offered through the new All-Through School. Primary places will be rationalised once the two form of entry primary element has been

approved.

- Our Lady Mother of the Saviour. This is a voluntary aided Catholic school in Runcorn. It is located in the ward ranked third highest in terms of deprivation within the borough. The school is a one form of entry primary with healthy pupil numbers. There are significant suitability issues and the school requires a complete remodelling. Some investment has been undertaken by the Diocese of Shrewsbury however to complete and compliment the initial investment primary capital funding is required.
- All Saints Upton. This is a voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School. 71.6% of pupils who currently attend this school come from the top two IMD areas. There are significant suitability issues at the school as it currently operates on split sites. Extended Services are offered through the school and within the last twelve months a Children's Centre has been developed and completed on the school site.
- Following an in depth audit of IT provision investment opportunities which will supported full integrated learning systems will be explored across the borough.
- Opportunities will be explored to link funding and utilise surplus capacity in and around schools to support the promotion of the Every Child Matters Agenda and increasing the range of extended services offered through primary schools.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 To trigger funding for Phase 2 developments the Authority must identify how it intends to address demographic change, falling rolls, the Standards Agenda as well as increase the diversity, choice and access to popular schools. It needs to consider a range of provision such as Trusts, Federations, amalgamations and all-age provision.

5.2 Proposals will need to be developed on the future primary school organisation. School and public consultation will then need to be undertaken.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Primary Capital Programme contributes directly to priority SM5: Transforming Learning Opportunities for all Children.

Increase choice, diversity, inclusion and high standards and reduce the surplus capacity within Halton schools.

Transform the learning environment: workforce, buildings, learning resources and technology.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

By providing 21st Century primary provision for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In developing primary provision the authority will seek to improve the sports and dining facilities and work collaboratively with other agencies to encourage healthy eating, promote high nutritional standards and provide access to a wider range of extended services.

6.4 A Safer Halton

New primary provision will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The Primary Capital Programme seeks to ensure that schools become a major resource for the communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 A risk analysis has been undertaken which has identified a number of key risks. The key risks include the timeline for delivery, school organisation and approval of the Strategy.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Primary Capital Strategy must be inclusive and consider the needs of all primary schools. The Programme aims to increase diversity access and choice, address under performance, provide more integrated local services for every child and family.

9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION

9.1 All authorities are required to produce and submit a Strategy for Change identifying their Strategic approach to Primary Capital Development.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 This is a DCSF requirement.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The Primary Capital Strategy must be submitted to the DCSF by 16th June 2008

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Every Child Matters: Primary Capital Programme – Primary Strategy for Change. Department for Children, Schools and Families (6.12.2007)	3 rd Floor Grosvenor House	Lorraine Cox
Draft Primary Capital Strategy	3 rd Floor Grosvenor House Intranet/internet	Lorraine Cox
Presentations and Notes Primary Headteachers Meeting, Diocesan Meetings and Extended Services Meetings	3 rd Floor Grosvenor House	Lorraine Cox
Executive Board Report – Primary Capital Programme – 20 th March 2008	3 rd Floor Grosvenor House Internet	Lorraine Cox

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REPORT TO:	Council
DATE:	13 th August 2008
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT:	Policy and Performance Boards' Annual Reports 2007-2008
WARDS:	All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To receive the Policy and Performance Boards' Annual Reports for 2007-2008.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the 2007-2008 Annual Reports submitted from the Policy and Performance Boards be received.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Article 6 of the Constitution requires each of the Policy and Performance Boards (PPBs) to submit an Annual Report to Council outlining their work, making recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

The Annual Reports (see attached) have now been submitted to the appropriate PPBs for consideration and all have been agreed.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton – none.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – none.

6.3 A Healthy Halton – none.

6.4 A Safer Halton – none.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal – none.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.



Cllr. Mark Dennett
Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

“I would like to start my 2007/08 Annual Report by referring to my previous Annual Report, and the promises made in that report. In my 2006/07 Annual Report I wrote about the foundational year for this overview and scrutiny board. I talked about the partnerships formed to ensure the safeguarding of our children and young people, and also the wonderful initiatives that had been created for our young people like the Youth Bank, which last year approved schemes in excess of £300,000 put forward by young people to benefit young people and approved by young people.

I also talked about the function of overview and scrutiny and the responsibility of holding the Executive Board to account, as well as plans to engage the parents and young people of the Borough in that process.

Over the last year I followed through with those plans by engaging members of the Borough Youth Forum, as well as members of the Parent and Carers Forum, and I am pleased that one of the work topics for 2008/09 – “Access to Services by Young People” – has come directly from that policy of engagement. We also held the second of our annual question and answer sessions with a member of the Executive Board; this time it was Councillor Marie Wright, Executive Portfolio Holder for the Youth Service and Youth Matters who talked and answered questions on the future initiatives for the young people of our Borough.

One of the many highlights of last year has undoubtedly been the significant improvement in attainment that we witnessed at Key Stages 2 and 4, an almost 10% improvement in GCSE results on 2006 and significant strides in Key Stage 2. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our students who did so well and also thank the parents and teachers who supported them in achieving these fantastic results. The results show Halton’s commitment to drive up standards and improve the opportunities available to all of our young people as they move into adulthood.

This year also saw the start of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Many consultations took place both for the public and their elected representatives about the future of Halton’s Secondary Education and the potential future investment of up to £100 million into our Secondary Schools. BSF and the Primary Capital programme, which will look at our Primary Schools, are massive commitments into the future of education in Halton. Their success, as well as tackling some of the

	<p>entrenched health issues facing our children and young people are some of the main challenges facing the authority and its partners.</p> <p>As I write this report the Borough has just experienced its first Joint Area Review of Children’s Services in the Borough, and while the report is due for publication in July, provisional indications are that it will confirm significant progress by all partners working together for the children of the Borough. This is great news for both the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership and sets a strong foundation to build upon for further improvements in the future.</p> <p>Looking back I think it has been a good second year for the board and I would like to thank all of the members of the board, as well as all of the officers involved for their continued support and contribution.</p> <p>Finally, as last year I would like to conclude this report by thanking all of the officers and members (of all parties) involved in all of the ‘additional duties’ that take place to make sure that the children and young people receive that best care and support. Duties such as being a school governor with all of the responsibilities that that entails, statutory inspections of our care homes (regulation 33) or of our social worker teams (Climbié visits), membership of the Local Safeguarding Board, the Adoptions Panel, the Children and Young People’s Alliance Board, to name but a few of the ‘extra duties’ that both members and officers perform to support and improve the lives of the children and young people of our Borough.”</p> <p>Councillor Mark Dennett Chairman, Children & Young People Policy and Performance Board</p>
	<p>MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITES</p> <p>During 2007/2008 the Board comprised eleven Councillors and one representative from – Cllr Mark Dennett (Chairman), Cllr Margaret Horabin (Vice Chairman), Cllr P Drakeley, Cllr F Fraser, Cllr R Gilligan, Cllr T Higginson, Cllr D Inch, Cllr J Lowe, Cllr S Parker, Cllr M Ratcliffe, Cllr J Stockton, Mr C Chorley.</p> <p>The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and it’s partner agencies within Children’s Trust Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and Children and Young People’s Plan.</p>

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met six times during the year and set out below are some of the main issues that the Board has worked on during the year.

Building Schools for the Future

In July 2007, a special meeting of the PPB was held to consider proposals for Building Schools for the Future. In particular it considered:

- The vision and aims for BSF in Halton
- The specific proposals for consultation
- Government requirements for inclusion within BSF
- Next steps

Members were able to seek clarification on the Programme and contribute their views towards the consultation.

Additional consideration was given later in the year to the proposals for school reorganisation when PPB considered options for the siting of a proposed Academy and made recommendations on the preferred option.

Educational Attainment and Narrowing the Gap

Members had a number of opportunities to examine issues relating to school performance and to consider progress in narrowing the gap in achievement for vulnerable children including those with special education needs. In particular Members noted the significant improvement in results at Key Stages 2 and 4 and explored concerns in performance at Key Stages 1 and 3. In addition it examined the progress of vulnerable groups of children and acknowledged the progress that continued to be made in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

Children's Trust Arrangements

Throughout the year Members considered key issues relating to the improvement in outcomes for children and young people in the Borough and in particular progress towards Children's Trust Arrangements. Specific items included progress towards targeting and integrating services on a locality basis through Children and Young People's Area Networks and the development of extended services through school settings. At the final meeting of the year the Strategic Director of Children's Services reported on progress to strengthen Children's Trust Arrangements through the alignment of a range of NHS staff within the integrated management of the Children and Young People's Directorate. The services aligned covered those for the vulnerable and well children and it was emphasised that accountability to NHS structures would remain through:

- The NHS continuing to be accountable for NHS staff professional

	<p>development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance would remain with the NHS via the Director of Commissioning within the PCT <p>WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/2009</p> <p>The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2208/2009) it will carry out Topic reviews examining the following areas:</p> <p>In 2007/2008 a scrutiny topic on school admissions was completed that has assisted in informing issues relating to the BSF programme and the emerging Primary Capital Programme that will be taken forward in 208/2009.</p> <p>Further topics for scrutiny were identified following the Annual Performance Assessment of children's services within the Borough. Topics identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Health • First time entrants to the criminal justice system • Access to services by young people (in response to issues raised by the Borough Youth Forum) <p>These topics will be completed in 2008/2009. Publication of the report on the Joint Annual Review in July will enable the Board to identify future items for scrutiny.</p> <p>SAFEGUARDING</p> <p>Members regularly considered matters relating to Safeguarding, particularly in the areas of monitoring of racist incidents, anti-bullying, private fostering arrangements and the work of the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board.</p>
	<p>Members of the Public are welcomed at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Judith Kirk, Operational Director, Judith.kirk@halton.gov.uk, tel: 0151 471 7545.</p>



Chairman
Councillor
Gilligan

ANNUAL REPORT CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

“ I would like to thank members of the Board for their hard work and the contribution they have made to its activities over the past year. This year key areas have included the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme which covers the impact of the Council’s energy use on the environment and the possibility of efficiency savings to reduce the cost of our energy bill which, if achieved, could lead to cost savings of £480,000 per annum. Job Evaluation and its implications on our staff was a concern and the Board, in making a number of recommendations, congratulated the Trade Unions and Management on their handling of the issues involved.

The Board received progress reports from the Neighbourhood Management Team, made suggestions relating to the timing and accessibility of its meetings, and will monitor progress twice yearly.”

Councillor Bob Gilligan
Chairman, Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2007/08 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), Lowe (Vice Chair), Bradshaw, Bryant, Dennett, Edge, C Inch, Loftus, Nolan, Norddahl, and Wainwright.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to resources, personnel, ICT and e-government, property, committee and member services, legal services, communications and marketing, Stadium, civic catering, procurement, equalities (employment aspects), corporate complaints procedure and area forums. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting departments, namely Policy and Performance, Legal and Member Services and HR, Finance, Exchequer and Customer Services (revenues), Property Services and ICT.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during that time.

Local Authority Carbon Management Programme

The Board considered a report outlining the process for taking forward the Council’s involvement in the Carbon Management Programme. It noted that the Council had applied for and was accepted onto the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. This programme would guide the Council through a number of processes which were set out in the full report for the Board.

The final step was the development of a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan by March 2008 to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. The project plan agreed by Executive Board set a target of reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 33% by 2012. This was an ambitious target and if it were to be achieved, it would likely require some financial investment over the five year period.

At its February meeting, the Board supported the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plans and referred them to Executive Board for approval. The action plan set out measures and sought to reduce the Council's emissions by 20% over the next five years and indicated a cost saving of £480,000 per annum, if achieved once all measures were implemented. The plan also established an aspirational 33% reduction by 2013/14 and indicated that cost savings in the region of £1.6M might be achieved if those targets were met.

Neighbourhood Management

The Board considered the progress to date in the development of neighbourhood management in the borough, current work and issues, and future objectives and challenges. The key ingredients to neighbourhood management were as follows:

- Use of evidence to tackle local issues.
- Multi level partnership working.
- Listening to local communities.
- Tailoring public services to meet local need.
- Making public money work harder.
- Acknowledging that one size does not fit all.

The Director of Neighbourhood Management outlined initiatives including engaging with strategic partners, building neighbourhood partnerships, and delivering early interventions.

Future plans were to track progress against the baseline, implement the partnership delivery plan, commission further interventions, agree neighbourhood action plans, and further support small local community groups.

Progress against those targets was considered at the February meeting, when it was anticipated that during the ensuing six months, neighbourhood management would be involved in the following issues:

- Actions around the external evaluation report.
- Devolving the intervention fund to neighbourhood management boards.
- Providing support for Board members, training etc.

Communications and Marketing

The Board looked at the current context for local government communication, including details of the LGA's reputation campaign. The division's response to the core actions recommended by the LGA included:

- Effective media management.
- Providing every household with an A-Z guide to Council Services.
- Publishing a quarterly Council magazine.
- Branding – effective and consistent linkages of Council brand to services.
- Good internal communications.
- Integration of the Council website.

The Board considered statistics from recent surveys revealing a high proportion of residents and staff who felt informed and/or well informed about standards of service. A draft Corporate communications and marketing strategy was considered, and members asked for an action plan for delivery to be brought forward.

Runcorn Town Hall Refurbishment

Members examined the progress of the Runcorn Town Hall refurbishment project, and called for a presentation which outlined the main objectives, the extent of the works, the factors affecting the design, the overall programme, and the budget and progress to date. The newly refurbished building would include a number of environmental/sustainability factors, such as roof insulation, Brise Soleil, lighting controls/energy saving lights, heating controls and photovoltaic. The results of these factors would be energy efficiency savings to the Council. The works were expected to be completed by June 2008, with the building being fully operational by July 2008.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

During the year the Board has focused a significant amount of effort on monitoring the performance of its reporting departments. Among the performance issues overseen by the Board during the year are:

- The implementation of job evaluation.
- The bringing together of Legal Services, Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- The continuation of consolidation of the Council's training provision.
- The review of the operation of Area Forums.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2008/09) it will carry out full reviews examining the following areas:

- Access to Services.
- Transfer of Assets.
- Performance Monitoring (rolled over from previous year's performance management work, to be reported early in the Municipal year).
- Customer Complaints.

	<p>Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 424 2061 extension 1121 or email Lynn.Caims@Halton.gov.uk</p>
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Cllr. Jones
Chairman



ANNUAL REPORT

EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

“ This has been a very busy and productive year for the Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board and I would like to start by offering my sincere thanks to Board members for all the work they have undertaken. The Board had a very challenging programme of monitoring, scrutiny, visits and policy development. I believe it is making a substantial contribution to improving the way the council and its partners work together and particularly note the increasingly close relationship with the Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership, whose meetings I attend on behalf of this Board”.

Councillor Eddie Jones, Chairman Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2006/07 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Eddie Jones, Frank Fraser, Susan Edge, David Findon, Harry Howard, Stan Parker, David Lewis, John Stockton, Peter Blackmore, Christopher Rowe and Philip Worrall.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the Culture and Leisure Services and the Economic Regeneration Departments. The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its partners) in seeking to improve economic prosperity in Halton and the skills and employment prospects of its residents, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Employment, Learning and Skills priority

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met 5 times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

Community Cohesion

The PPB concluded its topic work on community cohesion. From this, reports were considered by Executive Board and the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Local Area Agreement has taken on board key elements of the topic group work.

Local Area Agreement

The Board considered the development of the draft Local Area Agreement (LAA), particularly in relation to targets for employment, skills and enterprise development. This work commenced with a joint meeting with the Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership which was followed by more in depth discussions at the PPB itself where considerable thought was given to what the local targets should be.

Employment

The Board has kept up to date with the development of the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy. It undertook a scrutiny topic on how the council could help to generate employment in local businesses through the use of its procurement function (final report due June 2008). It completed its review into the operation of Halton People into Jobs coming up with a number of service improvement.

The Board undertook a joint event with the Employment Learning and Skills SSP where local employment projects funded through the Local Strategic Partnership presented their activities and time was taken to explore their impact and potential for joint working.

Community Development

The Board received an annual report on **Community Development** service delivery scrutinising performance indicators around active community groups, initiatives and external funding levered in through the service. Also received annual monitoring information on the Council's Community Development and Youth Grants.

The Board received an annual report on **Community Centre** service delivery scrutinising capacity usage of the Council's five facilities by members of the public, other Council departments and partner agencies.

The Board received an annual report on impact of **Voluntary Sector Core Grant** funding. Mid-year monitoring information on grants and received presentations from Halton Voluntary Action and Citizens Advice Bureau on performance/service.

Libraries

The Board considered a number of reports on Libraries in Halton. This included an update on the service as a whole and a specific report on how the mobile service was performing in the light of the previous review of its operations. The PPB gave much consideration to library books analysis, developing clear recommendations as to how old books could be distributed to support basic learning throughout the borough. The PPB also considered a report on progress made in relation to securing Big Lottery money under the CORE (Community Opportunities through Reading and Engagement) programme.

Community Cohesion

The PPB concluded its topic work on community cohesion. From this, reports were considered by Executive Board and the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Local Area Agreement has taken on board key elements of the topic group work.

Sport

This was an area of particular focus throughout the year. The Sport Development Topic Group has undertaken considerable work in gathering evidence and assessing levels of participation. There was a presentation on the Merseyside Sports Partnership Strategy and consideration of the Sports Facilities Strategy.

Culture

The Board has played an active role in developing the Halton programme of activity for the Capital of Culture that culminated in a full report being approved by Executive Board on 29th March 2007. During 2007-08, the PPB received a number of reports on the progress being made and particularly on the development of the 2008 youth festival. The Board received a presentation on how public art is a core part of the culture of an area and can be incorporated within all projects big or small.

Skills and Enterprise

The Board received a number of reports on skills and enterprise in Halton. It completed its topic review of the Adult and Skills Development Service and received a detailed presentation on skills issues from the Area Partnership Director from the Learning and Skills Council, Greater Merseyside. It also held detailed discussions about the development of a business perceptions survey (that has subsequently taken place). The Board undertook two organised visits to Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and the Heath Business and Technical Park to investigate skills issues and employment opportunities from the two sites. It reviewed progress on the Enterprise Action plan that was developed from the previous enterprise topic group.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2008/09) it will complete the reviews of the following areas:

- Creating local jobs through public procurement
- Skills: Identifying the existing and future needs of businesses; and
- Sports Development

Additionally, the Board will commence reviews of:

- Logistics – Joint with Urban Renewal
- Barriers to Employment
- Facilities in Recreation, Sport and Arts

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Gary Collins 01928 516100 gary.collins@halton.gov.uk



Cllr Ellen Cargill
Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT
***HEALTHY HALTON* POLICY AND**
PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

As Chair of the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board I would like to thank all the members of the Board for the continued hard work as they have looked in detail at many of the challenges facing Halton particularly in relation to Health and Social Care.

Once again we have had a busy and challenging year, particularly in relation to work with Health Partners. A number of important consultations were undertaken during this year particularly proposals and options for the future use of Halton Hospital Campus.

I would like to thank Audrey Williamson Operations Director for her support over the past 12 months

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2007/08 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Ellen Cargill, K. Loftus, R. Gilligan, T. Higginson, M. Horabin, C Inch, M. Lloyd-Jones, J. Lowe, K. Marlow, G. C. Swift, and P. Wallace . The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to improve health in the Borough and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Healthy Halton priority.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Board met five times in 2007/08 with full agendas for each meeting. The Board received reports and presentations on a wide range of Health and Social Care issues. These included:

Carers Services

The importance of the role and needs of Carers was again recognised this year. The Board received a report outlining plans to transfer the Carers Centres from the Council to the Voluntary Sector, which will allow the recognised expertise of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers to enhance services and funding for Halton Carers.

Safeguarding Adults

As in previous years the Board received the annual report of Halton's Multi-agency Adults Safeguarding Committee. The Council retains the lead for this important area of work and continues to establish strong partnership arrangements with agencies including Cheshire Police and Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust.

Complaints and Compliments

The Board plays an important role in receiving the Annual Report from the Health and Community Directorate on Complaints and Compliments. It recognizes and supports the importance of learning from complaints to improve services.

Mental Health Promotion Strategy

The Strategy which was lead by Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust was presented to the Board and warmly supported. Good mental health and well-being are increasingly recognized as important in Halton and requiring a Multi-Agency co-coordinated response.

Better Care Sustainable Services

Last years annual report noted the proposals for North Cheshire Hospital Trust for a new model of Service delivery. At that time the Board requested further updates on the development of these proposals. In September 07 the board was pleased to receive a further report and presentation from the Chief Executive of the North Cheshire Trust. It was clear that planned changes were being implemented e.g. Elective Surgery was taking place at the Halton site. The Board will continue to receive reports in the following year.

Halton Health Campus

Changes in Halton Hospital has led to spare capacity on the Campus. Presentation by Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust on future options led to agreement that it was important that wider consultation with all members of the council. Strategic Project Board has been established and includes the chair of Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board. A clear process has now been agreed to progress future options.

Annual Health Checks

This year the Board has again fully contributed to the health checks for North Cheshire Hospital Trust, 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust and Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust. To ensure that members were fully appraised of each Trust position when measured against the Health Check Standards an additional meeting was arranged prior to the Board Meeting in March. Each Trust gave a detailed presentation with sufficient time for a full debate and discussion on areas of significance. The Board noted for example the improvements in compliance in the standards by the Hospital Trust. Health Care Commission notes the importance of the contribution of OPs Scrutinies Committees to Health Checks and while the Health Checks demand additional time from Members the work is valuable and informative.

WORK TOPICS

In addition to the Board meetings, Members received the following report:

- The Redesign of Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities

It was noted that overall good progress had been made delivering Day Services in the Community. An Action Plan to further improve Services has been agreed and is being implemented.

- Two Work Topics were agreed for 2007/08

Health of Carers - As previously stated the needs of Carers in particular Health needs continue to be a priority for Halton. The report from the work topic will be presented in the forthcoming year and has explored ways of ensuring that Carers health needs are recognised at the earliest possible stage.

▪ Services for People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities

Halton Council has contractual arrangements with a small number of Agencies to provide specialised services. These services have been scrutinised by members to examine their effectiveness. The final report will be presented in the forthcoming year.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board has received quarterly monitoring reports on Social Care performance. Performance has continued to remain strong with the following:

- The establishment of a shared Emergency Duty Service with St Helens that commenced in October 2007.
- No delays in hospital discharge due to Social Care since fines for delays were introduced 4 years ago.
- Establishment of a Joint Transition Strategy for Young People with Complex Needs.
- Increase in preventive service for example the establishment of a new Women's Centre
- Agreement on Lead Commissioning Arrangements with Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust.
- Increase Social Care capacity in Mental Health Services through the appointment of Social Workers in Assertive Outreach and Crisis Resolution Teams.

WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Healthy Halton Policy & Performance Board has agreed Two (2) work topics for 2008/09

- Services for People with Early Onset Dementia
While numbers remain small this is an increasing issue and will benefit from an in depth review.

- Joint Working with Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board and Arrangements to Safeguard Vulnerable Adults

In recognition of the priority this area of work must be given the Two (2) Policy Boards will work together on this work topic

Councillor Ellen Cargill
Chairman, **Healthy Halton** Policy and Performance Board

Councillor Shaun
Osborne
Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT
SAFER HALTON
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008



“Safety, and people’s perception of being safe in all its form remain a major issue in Halton. The Board has, and will continue to focus its energy on making Halton residents feel safe. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Board members who have worked hard to this end.

The Board has had a very challenging programme of monitoring, scrutiny, and policy development, because ‘Safer Halton’ is a truly cross-cutting agenda. I believe it is making a considerable contribution to improving the way the Council and its partners work together to improve the quality of life in Halton. I thank everybody who has contributed to the work of the Board in 2007/08.”

Councillor Shaun Osborne, Chairman Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2007/08 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Osborne, Stockton, Edge, M Lloyd Jones, Morley, Murray, E Ratcliffe, M Ratcliffe, Redhead, Swift, Thompson.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Community Safety and Drugs Team, Bereavement Services, Registration and Consumer Affairs, Risk and Emergency Planning, Environmental and Regulatory Services, Road Safety and Waste Management.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met 5 times during the year. A special Board meeting considered budget implications for 2008/09 and gave consideration to Service Plans for the same period.

The specialist working groups covering Waste, Bereavement, Anti-Social Behaviour, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Domestic Abuse have all met throughout the year. The Chairs of these groups Councillors Thompson, Morley, Stockton and Osborne thank all the Members who have contributed to a considerable work programme.

The main initiatives of the Board’s work for 2007/08 are as follows: -

Environmental and Regulatory Service Issues

The Implementation of the Smoke Free legislation was an early issue for the Board. Its implications were fully discussed, with a focus on the possible problems of enforcing it.

Throughout the year, the Board monitored the performance of waste management, and the development of a waste management strategy. A presentation on the strategy will be given to the Board at its first meeting in the new Municipal Year.

Road Safety Issues

The Board scrutinised the Business Plan for 2007/08 of the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, which set out the vision, strategy and objectives of the Partnership and detailed a range of challenging targets. Progress on these are regularly monitored by the Board.

Community Safety

This was a particular focus for the Board in 2007/08. The Board contributed to new Alcohol and Drugs Strategies and to the Strategic Impact Assessment on community safety that was a requirement of the Home Office. New Working Groups were set up to consider Halton's approach to protection for vulnerable adults and domestic abuse.

The Multi-Agency Problem Solving Working Party (MAPS) reported in 2007/08, setting out a vision for the future delivery of community safety. This is an on-going piece of work that will come to a culmination in 2008/09.

The Board made a significant contribution to the debate over the future of Halton's Fire-work Festival.

Bereavement Services/Consumer Protection/Registration Service

Two major issues emerged in 2007/08. Cemetery provision for 2015 and beyond was considered by the Working Group and the full Board on a number of occasions, including full options appraisals. This is an important issue for the Board and consideration will continue in 2008/09.

Illegal money lending was identified by the Board as a problem in Halton, and a partnership with Birmingham Trading Standards was developed throughout the year to combat this. The results of this delivered over £2million in debt written off, over 1500 victims being helped, 12 guns removed from the streets and prison sentences issued totalling 26 years.

Presentations

It was a policy of the Board to encourage presentations from external bodies related to the Boards work, to be given. These included

- The Youth Inclusion and Support Panel, with the Board seeking ways to ensure its long-term survival.
- The Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, monitoring its work in Halton in 2007/08.
- Community Safety and Cheshire police, as above.
- Night-Stop; and organisation supporting single homeless persons between 16-25 years old.
- Halton Credit Union, understanding its aspirations to expand.

- The partnership with Birmingham Trading Standards to combat illegal money lending in the Borough.
- Students from Fairfield High School, who attended the March meeting and raised their issues about community safety.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

It is proposed that the working groups established in 2006/07 continue their on-going work. These are: -

Environmental Health and Risk Assessment
Waste
Bereavement

The Anti-Social Behaviour group is currently dormant pending the outcome of the review of Community Safety.

The recently formed Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, and the Domestic Abuse Working Parties will produce a final report in 2008/09.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Howard Cockcroft (0151 471 7461) or e-mail at Howard.cockcroft@halton.gov.uk



Councillor
Hignett

ANNUAL REPORT URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD JUNE 2007 – MARCH 2008

“I would first like to thank all of the Members of the Urban Renewal PPB for their support throughout the year. The Board has considered a substantial volume of work through which the Council and its partners has contributed hugely to the regeneration of the Borough. Through scrutiny, debate and discussion the Board has appraised and approved a wide variety of actions which have contributed massively to improving the quality of the physical environment of Halton. It has also contributed to the corporate debate on key policy issues, lending an Urban Renewal perspective to matters such as Health and sub-regional issues. What now remains is to communicate this good news to the community.”

Councillor Hignett

Chairman, Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2007/8 the Board comprised eleven Councillors –

Councillor R. Hignett (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor K. Morley (Vice Chairman)	Labour
Councillor P. Blackmore	Liberal Democrat
Councillor J. Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor E. Cargill	Labour
Councillor D. Leadbetter	Labour
Councillor P. Murray	Conservative
Councillor P. Nolan	Labour
Councillor C. Rowe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor T. Sly	Liberal Democrat
Councillor D. Thompson	Labour

The Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board's primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to bring about the Urban Renewal of the Borough. It is also charged with scrutinising progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Urban Renewal Priority. It is responsible for evaluating performance and formulating policy in relation to the following areas:

- Highways and Transportation,
- Environmental Health and Planning,
- Economic Regeneration and
- Major Projects, with the additional responsibility for
 - the Park Ranger service (as from 2005/6)
 - Contaminated Land (as from 2005/06)
 - Strategic Housing (as from 2006/07).

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met six times during the year. As well as considering Executive Board decisions relevant to the work of the Urban Renewal Board, agreeing the Service Plans of the relevant Departments and monitoring their general activities and performance against them, set out below are some of the main activities and issues that the Board has worked on during the year:

Corporate Responsibilities

- A special meeting of the Board considered proposals put forward by the Post Office for the closure of several Post Offices in Halton, and made representations accordingly.
- The Board also invited a representative of the Post Office to attend a meeting to discuss the move of the Halton Lea Post Office to W.H. Smith. Again, representations were made.
- It was agreed that the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel would comprise the following Members for the Municipal Year 2007/2008: Cllr Hignett (Chair); Cllr Morley; Cllr Polhill; and Cllr Sly.
- The Board considered and made recommendations to the Executive Board on Travellers' Site Provision in the Borough.
- It was resolved that an invite be issued to the Urban Renewal SSP to attend two meetings during each Municipal Year to give an update on their progress.
- The Board considered details of the Action Plan for the Liverpool City Region 2008-2011 (formerly the Merseyside Action Plan).
- The Board received reports on the strategic progress of implementing the Council's Corporate Plan (2006-11) and the adoption of the LAA (Local Area Agreement).
- The Board considered and supported a report which provided an overview of the requirement to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in line with Department of Health guidance.

Highways and Transportation

- The Board reviewed the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) 2007 and agreed that it be submitted to the Executive Board with a recommendation of adoption.
- The Board considered and noted the Local transport Plan Settlement 2008/11.
- The Board was advised of, and agreed to, the outcome to two Consultation Review Panel (CRP) meetings over the 2006/2007 financial year for Halton Village and Birchfield Road, Widnes
- The Board was consulted on an amendment to the approved Birchfield Road Quality Transport Corridor Improvement Scheme.

- The Board received a petition for traffic calming on Stratton Park. It declined the request due to it being contrary to the Council's policy on Traffic Calming, but passed an alternative scheme of enhanced signing and road markings to the local Area Forum for consideration.

Major Projects Department

- Progress on the implementation of the Castlefields and Widnes Waterfront Regeneration programmes (including a 3D animation for the Waterfront) was considered and noted.
- The Board reviewed and approved the Widnes Waterfront North West Development Association Performance Plan for 2008/9.
- The Board considered and approved the Castlefields Tree Strategy.
- The Board received a presentation on progress on regenerating contaminated land and approved the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy and Action Plan 2008-13.
- The Board considered the 'Urban Renewal Strategic Review and Action Plan 2007-10' and their comments were referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

Economic Regeneration

- The Board received a report on the future of the Fireworks Festival. It commented to the Executive Board that it should remain at its current location and that work should be undertaken to resolve various issues.

Planning

- The Board considered and agreed the Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for a statutory period of public consultation

Other

- The Board reviewed the Natural Assets Strategy, which was adopted in 2000, together with associated DVDs entitled 'Swifts in Halton' and 'Pickering's Pasture'. The review was recommended to be published.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2007/8

- The topic report on 'Raising Additional Revenue from Existing Services' was considered and actions endorsed.
- Work progressed on The 'Future of Town Centre Management' topic.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/9

The Board agreed the following topic ideas to be considered by the 2008/9 PPB for inclusion in their work programme for the coming year.

- Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry (Joint Group with Employment, Learning and Skills PPB); and
- Implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge; and
- Housing Strategy (continuation of);

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 424 2061 extension 1125 or email Lynn.Caims@Halton.gov.uk

REPORT: Council
DATE: 13th August 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Appointments to Outside Bodies
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review the Council's representation on outside bodies.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Council appoint representatives to the outside bodies.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Each year the Council undertakes a review of its membership on outside bodies. In accordance with this practice a review has been undertaken and recommendations to serve on the various bodies have been put forward.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton – none.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – none.

6.3 A Healthy Halton –none.

6.4 A Safer Halton – none.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal – none.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 13 August 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Appointment of Independent Member of Standards Committee

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to make a recommendation to Council with regard to the appointment of a new independent member to the Council's Standards Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Council appoint Robert Garner as a new independent member of the Council's Standards Committee until the end of the 2011/2012 Municipal Year.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will recall having agreed at Annual Council to increase the size of the Standards Committee by one additional Independent member and one additional Parish member.
- 3.2 The Standards Committee decided at its last meeting that the Chair and the Monitoring Officer would interview applicants with an elected member of the committee, prior to making a recommendation direct to Council. The vacancy for an independent member was therefore advertised in accordance with the statutory requirements and one application was received. Mr. Robert Garner is presently an independent member of the Cheshire Fire Authority Standards Committee and has recently retired as a self employed assessor and advisor on Investors in People National Standard. Prior to that, he had a thirty seven year career with the Civil Service. He has a good understanding of the workings of local authorities as a result of his professional career, and has a strong belief in high standards in public life. As a member of the Fire Authorities Standards Committee, he has attended the Standards Board for England's Annual Conference on several occasions and has a good understanding of the workings of Standards Committees. It is suggested that he would be eminently suitable as a new additional independent member of the Standards Committee.

- 3.3 Negotiations are currently ongoing in respect of filling the Parish Council vacancy and any progress on this matter will be reported to the meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton – None.
- 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – None.
- 6.3 A Healthy Halton – None.
- 6.4 A Safer Halton – None.
- 6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal – None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Good Corporate Governance including high ethical standards are vital to ensure that public trust and confidence in local authorities is maintained and enhanced. Independent members of the Standards Committee are a key control measure in helping to maintain high standards in the Council’s Ethical Governance arrangements.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None.

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

Application of Robert Garner.